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**GENDER IDENTITY AND THE FUNCTION OF ART
IN JOHN FOWLES'S **THE MAGUS** AND **THE
FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN****

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John Fowles'un **Büyücü** ve **Fransız Teğmen'in Kadını** adlı Romanlarında

Cinsel Kimlik ve Sanatın İşlevi

Cahit Bakır

ÖZ

Bu tezin amacı John Fowles'un **Büyücü** ve **Fransız Teğmen'in Kadını** adlı eserlerinde sanatın işlevini varoluşçu terminoloji bağlamında incelemektir. Bu çalışma Fowles'un yaşam ve sanatın ayrılmazlığı temasına odaklanır ve her iki eserin erkek karakterlerinin, Nicholas ve Charles'ın, benlik kavramlarını yeniden tanımlamaları için sanat yoluyla nasıl bir eğitim sürecine yönlendirildiklerini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışır. Çalışma Nicholas ve Charles'ın, gerçeklikten uzak yaşamlar sürdürmek yerine, benlik veya kendini gerçekleştirme arayışlarında bir üst gerçeklik algısına erişebilecekleri ve kendi varoluşlarını yaratabileceklerini ortaya koymayı amaçlar. Bu süreçte, özgün bir benlik oluşturmak için sanatın oynadığı önemli role ışık tutmak amacıyla çeşitli sanat eserlerine yapılan göndermeler derinlemesine analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sanat, varoluşçuluk, benlik, kendini gerçekleştirme, özgün kimlik

Gender Identity and the Function of Art in John Fowles's **The Magus**
and **The French Lieutenant's Woman**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the function of art in John Fowles's **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman** in relation with existential terminology. It focuses on Fowles's inseparability of life and art theme and tries to disclose how the male characters of both novels, Nicholas and Charles, are directed towards a process of education through art in order to redefine their notions of self. The study aims to manifest that Nicholas and Charles can achieve a higher sense of reality and create their own existences in their search for selfhood or self-realization instead of leading inauthentic lives. In this process, the references to various art forms have been analyzed in depth to articulate the significant role art plays to create a new authentic identity.

Key Words: art, existentialism, selfhood, self-realization, authentic identity

PREFACE

This study aims to reveal the function of art in John Fowles's **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman** in relation with existential terminology. It focuses on how the male characters, Nicholas and Charles, are directed towards a process of education in order to redefine their notions of self, so that they can make moral decisions and create their own existence rather than adhering to their former artificial identities which are shaped by external circumstances. In the process of their psychological journey towards self-identity and authenticity, the function of art will be illustrated in detail to disclose the fact that it is art that will prompt Nicholas and Charles to attain a new sense of freedom in line with Fowles's notion that life imitates art.

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation aims to explore the function of art in John Fowles's **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman** in relation with existential terminology. It focuses on how the male characters, Nicholas and Charles, are directed towards a process of education in order to redefine their notions of self, so that they can make moral decisions and create their own existences rather than adhering to their former artificial identities which are shaped by external circumstances. In the process of their psychological journey towards self-identity and authenticity, the function of art will be illustrated in detail to disclose the fact that it is art that will prompt Nicholas and Charles to attain a new sense of freedom in line with Fowles's notion that life imitates art.

In that regard, it will be emphasized that the autonomy of the text and the writer are undermined in both novels because postmodernism stresses heterogeneity and multiplicity of meanings rather than absolute truth. According to postmodern theory, authors are no longer regarded as omniscient, God-like writers, but rather the production of the text has come to be seen as intertexts, which means that a text is a compilation of other texts because it is comprised of references to other texts. In this study, the relation of existentialism with both texts will be stressed as well, in that, it will be revealed that in both **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, John Fowles tries to free his male characters, Nicholas and Charles, from external circumstances to redefine their notions of self and the world according to 20th century existential terminology.

According to existentialism, humans should define their own meanings as they are free in their acts and they should create their own existence and live accordingly. Hence, the protagonists of the novels, Nicholas and Charles, who have artificial identities and are unable to lead authentic lives, are made to initiate a psychological journey toward self-identity and authenticity. As existentialism puts emphasis on individual existence, freedom and choice, Nicholas and Charles, both of whom have full faith in reason and science, need to start an inner journey towards the core of their selves. In this process, they are required to confront their inauthentic

lives and to be disconnected from their previous selves in order to come to be aware of self-realization, the freedom to choose and accept responsibility for their own acts.

In this process of psychological journey into self, Fowles emphasizes that it is art that will prompt Nicholas and Charles to attain personal authentic freedom. Thus, in both texts, the various references to other art forms will be studied in detail. In Chapter I, postmodernism and existentialism will be delved into in order to highlight that in both texts, John Fowles benefits from these 20th century emerging theories to prompt male characters to attain self-realization. In Chapter II and Chapter III, the references to various art forms will be discussed to disclose the significant role art plays in the quest for self-realization. Eventually, in Chapter III, in relation with postmodern theory, the importance of the freedom of the novel genre, as an art form, from its author will be addressed as well.

1. POSTMODERNISM/EXISTENTIALISM

John Fowles's novels **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman** are postmodern texts which combine a variety of allusions to other literary, scientific and sociological texts, and in both novels, there are a great deal of references to other art forms such as paintings, music and sculpture. Art plays a crucial role in both novels for the male characters, Nicholas and Charles respectively, in order to exterminate their former inauthentic lives, which are shaped by external factors, and to find their existential selves and live accordingly. To help Nicholas and Charles attain personal freedom and to create their own existences, John Fowles tries to initiate an inner journey in them towards the core of their selves through art.

In order to have a better understanding of what the function of art is in Fowles's novels, we, first of all, need to look at what postmodernism is. Postmodernism as Linda Hutcheon suggests is "a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges." (3) It is a revolt against the traditional/realist view of literature and questions the very concepts of autonomy, originality, authenticity, certainty, totalization, center, continuity and so on. Instead, it emphasizes discontinuity, disruption, decentering, and dislocation. Because readers are not seen as passive consumers of the texts unlike in the traditional novel genre, but rather are required to actively participate in the creation of the novel as co-creators, postmodern fiction is "an implicit /or sometimes explicit critique of realist approaches both to narrative and to representing a fictional world." (**The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction**, xvi)

Unlike the traditional novel, postmodern texts threaten narrative continuity and instead of clear-cut endings, in those texts, there are multiple endings. As Hutcheon states: "Narrative continuity is threatened, is both used and abused, inscribed and subverted. The nineteenth century structures of narrative closure (death, marriage; neat conclusions) are undermined by those postmodern epilogues that foreground how as writers and readers, we make closure." (59) The traditional novel endings are subverted in postmodern fiction and the multiplicity of meanings are emphasized: "Poststructuralism favours a creative approach to interpreting the literary or artistic text that demonstrates how its meanings are always multiple and

deferred rather than fixed, and this is true with the 'postmodern' approach to interpreting texts." (Nicol, 6)

Postmodern theory stresses the fact that as there is no absolute truth, meaning is relative and thus multiple. As Hutcheon states: "Postmodernism questions centralized, totalized, hierarchized closed systems: questions, but does not destroy. It acknowledges the human urge to make order, while pointing out that the orders we create are just that: human constructs, not natural or given entities."(42) Postmodernism emphasizes that reality is not naturally given but constructed by humans, and so it rejects grand narratives and stresses multiplicity and heterogeneity rather than homogeneity. In literary texts, it questions the autonomy of the text and the writer by referring to the texts as intertexts. In such texts therefore, there are a great deal of references to other texts. They use intertextuality to question the very concept of what a writer is and what purpose s/he has in creating a single text.

In his essay "The Death of The Author" Roland Barthes, who is one of the most important literary critics of the twentieth century, questions the autonomy of the author in creating the text and instead puts the reader and the writing in the focus of attention. He asserts that the text stands on its own and therefore, destroys the authority of the intentions and ideas of its author. Traditionally, according to Barthes "the author was always conceived as the past of his book, he seemed to nourish the book, to exist before it, think and suffer for it." (4) Yet, for him "the voice loses its origin, the author enters his own death" (2) and only then the process of writing begins.

However, in traditional criticism the author is given the central position. Pokorn states: "works of unknown and uncertain authorship were believed to possess an authority far inferior to that of works which circulated under the names of auctores, the truth of the text was thus attested by the great authority of the author." (495) The author was regarded to be god-like and the only creator of the text: "the author or the name of the author is what fosters the 'work' as opposed to the 'text.'"(**Intertextuality** 71) In traditional criticism, "the author is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it is in the

same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child.’’ (Barthes, 4)
Nevertheless, unlike traditional criticism:

The modern writer (scriptor) is born simultaneously with his text; he is in no way supplied with a being which precedes or transcends his writing, he is in no way the subject of which his book is the predicate; there is no other time than that of the utterance, even every text is eternally written here and now. This is because ... to write can no longer designate an operation of recording, of observing, of representing, of painting ... (Barthes 4)

Barthes opposes the Romantic idea of authorship which stresses individuality, uniqueness and originality of the author. However, for Barthes ‘‘language knows a subject not a person’’ (3) and as Andrew Bennet puts it: ‘‘Barthes develops this point into a recognition that the origin of the text is not a unified authorial consciousness but a plurality of voices, of other words, other utterances and other texts.’’ (72) The modern author, for Barthes, does not, in writing the book, give ‘‘a single ‘theological’ meaning (the message of the Author-God), but is a space of many dimensions, in which are wedded and contested various kinds of writing, none of which is original: the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousands of sources of culture.’’ (‘‘The Death of the Author’’ 4) The idea of ‘colloboration’ which suggests that a text is ‘‘constructed from a mosaic of quotations,’’ (Allen 73) gains prominence and the production of literary texts is regarded not as solitary, unique, omnipotent and autonomous as the Romantic conception of authorship suggests. In this sense, intertextuality, as Derrida says, means that: ‘‘nothing exists outside the text.’’ (**Intertextuality** 74) Allen states:

Barthes’s use of textual and intertextual theory destroys the ‘myth of filiation’: the idea that meaning comes from and is metaphorically at least, the property of the individual authorial consciousness. The modern scriptor, when s/he writes, is always already in a process of reading and of re-writing. Meaning comes not from the author but from language viewed intertextually. (74)

It must be noted that literature has an extremely problematic attitude to language as Jefferson states: ‘‘Literature is thought by many structuralists to have a special relationship to language, it involves a unique awareness of the nature of language itself. Literature is always about the language ... as Todorov says the writer

does nothing more than read the language.” (94) Barthes says: “Language is literature’s Being, its very world: the whole of literature is contained in the act of writing and no longer in those of ‘thinking,’ ‘telling,’ or ‘feeling.’ (Jefferson 96) Hence, as language does not have any stable meaning but the meaning is always on the move, the relationship between signifier and signified is not fixed but always in a process of change and the meaning of the texts are plural. As Barthes says: “if words had only one (dictionary) meaning, there would be no literature. Literature is based on the very plurality of meanings ... a work is eternal not because it imposes one meaning on different men, but because it suggests different meanings to one man.” (Jefferson 98) That’s why, in both **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant’s Woman** there are multiple endings for the readers to actively participate in the process of writing rather than being passive consumers of literary texts.

Readers are required to take part actively in the creation of the text and come to realize that in a single text there are multiple meanings rather than an absolute meaning conveyed by the author. As the writer needs to nourish himself from other texts and sources, originality becomes no longer possible according to postmodernism, because the text is closely related to other texts that are already in existence. Thus, no text has independent meaning of its own as Graham Allen, in **Intertextuality** has noted:

The act of reading, theorists claim, plunges us into a network of textual relations. To interpret a text, to discover its meaning, or meanings is to trace those relationships. Reading thus becomes the process of moving texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the interdependent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes intertext (1).

The fundamental concept of intertextuality is that no text is either unique in itself or original but rather, it is comprised of references and allusions to pre-existing texts. It undermines the autonomy of the text which means that every text exists in relation to the other. Abrams says:

Intertextuality signifies the multiple ways in which any one literary text echoes, or is inseparably linked to, other texts, whether by open or covert citation and allusion,

or by the assimilation of the features of an earlier text by a later text, or simply by participation in a common stock of literary codes and conversations (200).

Since the text does not have a stable and fixed meaning but rather the meaning is always plural, truth is similarly found to have no real status in the literary text. Jefferson states: “Truth is not something fixed and solid beyond and behind the literary text, and to which the text can be reduced: it is simply what comes last in the text.” (110)

In postmodern theory “the death of the author is seen primarily from the viewpoint of the reader.” (Beetens, 306) Yet, this view, Jefferson says: “depends on seeing the reader, not as a unique individual, a private being, but as a vessel or meeting point for a variety of cultural codes and literary conventions.” (111) It is clear that literary texts do not reflect reality, nor do they reflect the ideas of the author. Language precedes the author and determines how he views not only the external reality, but also his self. Therefore, according to postmodern theory, the primary determiner of meaning in the text is the reader who is the active producer of meaning.

In that regard, another important technical device in postmodern texts is metafiction which “is fiction ... which is ‘self-conscious,’ that is aware of itself as fiction ... or ‘self-reflexive’ or ‘self-referential’ fiction, that which reflects on or refers to itself as a work of fiction rather than pretending it is offering the reader an insight into the real world.” (**The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction**, 35) Metafictional novels are aware of their fictional status just as John Fowles in **The French Lieutenant’s Woman** interrupts the novel in Chapter 13 to comment on the very nature of the novel genre and offers three different alternative endings. According to postmodern theory, fiction does not reflect reality, and is always aware of itself being a fiction:

Theorists of metafiction themselves argue that this fiction no longer attempts to mirror reality or to tell any truth about it... Fiction does not mirror reality; nor does it reproduce it. It cannot. There is no pretense of simplistic mimesis in historiographic metafiction. Instead, fiction is offered as another of the discourses by which we construct our versions of reality, and both the construction and the need for it are what are foregrounded in the postmodernist novel.” (Hutcheon, 40)

In **The French Lieutenant's Woman** the line between reality and fantasy is blurred and Fowles, despite setting his novel in the 19th century, narrates it from the point of view of a 20th century perspective. He interrupts the novel and comments on the very nature of the novel genre, stressing that it is a human construct and he does not have full authority over the characters. Therefore, historiographic metafiction, as Hutcheon says:

refuses the view that only history has a truth claim, both by questioning the ground of that claim in historiography and by asserting that both history and fiction are discourses, human constructs, signifying systems, and both derive their major claim to truth from that identity. This kind of postmodern fiction also refuses the relegation of the extratextual past to the domain of historiography in the name of the autonomy of art.” (93)

Just as the novel genre has evolved from that of traditional/realist to postmodern fiction, denying the central position of the author in the creation of the text, John Fowles, in both **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, tries to free his male characters, Nicholas and Charles, from external circumstances, which have shaped their lives, to redefine themselves according to 20th century existential terminology. According to Fowles, the novel, as an art form, should free itself from the autonomy of its author just like Nicholas and Charles, who are made to start an inner journey in order to find their real existential selves. They both have artificial identities constructed by external circumstances and thus they need to attain their real existential freedom. Hence, they need to undergo a process of learning to create a new authentic identity and to have a new sense of responsible freedom as existentialism puts emphasis on individual existence, freedom and choice. Existentialism supports the idea that humans should define their own meaning in life, and they should make plausible decisions although they live in an irrational world. It stresses the meaninglessness of human existence and is of the opinion that there is no rational explanation of existence. According to existentialism, individuals are born free and they must take personal responsibility for themselves. As Sartre, in **Being and Nothingness**, states: “The essential consequence of our earlier remarks is that

man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being.” (553)

Sartre rejects all forms of deterministic parameters in shaping one’s life and according to him, humans must take the responsibility of their decisions and create a meaningful life for themselves because for him: “...‘existence precedes essence.’ ... This slogan expresses two related ideas: that individuals do not have natures or essences that determine their behaviour and that there is no such thing as human nature or a human essence. A person ‘first exists: he materialises in the world, encounters himself, and only afterwards defines himself’ (Webber, 8)” Sartre emphasizes that humans’ personal properties are not given at birth but rather they are formed by the choices they make, which means they are responsible for the decisions they make. In order to be able to have an authentic existential freedom, they should have an existential inner journey to create their own existence and live accordingly: “Sartrean existentialism (a philosophy to which Fowles adheres) begins with the recognition that human existence is pointless, as there is no inherent purpose to life and insists that one’s responsibility is therefore to determine the meaning of one’s life for oneself by making committed responsible choices.” (Nicol, 107) Humans are responsible for their character or individuality and thus they need to take all responsibility for their actions rather than blaming external circumstances for what befalls them. Yet, being free does not mean being without responsibility, but rather being free means being responsible for whatever a person does. Sartre states: “... man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being.” (“Existentialism and Human Emotions” 18) Since people do not have a fixed human nature, existentialism rejects all determinisms by stressing the freedom of man. Hence, people should create an existential life for themselves by taking moral action.

2. THE MAGUS

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

(**The Magus** 71)

This quote from the poem “Little Gidding” that Nicholas d’Urfe, the protagonist and narrator of *The Magus*, finds on his way to Conchis’s realm, demonstrates the process Nicholas will undertake to be able to get rid of his former inauthentic self for the sake of reaching a truly existential freedom. As the poem suggests, in this process, Nicholas will arrive where he has started but he, at the same time, will be able to understand the significance of his existence through the process of suffering before he finds his authentic real self. On his journey to his inner self to achieve a new existential identity, Nicholas will need to go through an educational process through art. Thus, Nicholas starts unfolding the plot years after his experience in Bourani to inform the readers about the process he has undertaken towards the world of his very own selfhood.

In the very beginning of the novel, Nicholas d’Urfe informs the readers about the circumstances under which he has been brought up and as a result, what a split personality he has had. It is quite plain that during his childhood the most important person to affect his life was his father who was a quite strong follower of “Discipline and Tradition and Responsibility” (**The Magus** 17), the traits that make him a complete anti-thesis of existentialism. As his father was a conventional military man, he silenced all the voices even when he was not present. As Nicholas says of his mother: “... she never argued with him and always behaved as if he was listening in the next room even when he were thousands of mile away.” (**The Magus** 17) Therefore, as Lorenz states: “as a result of his training, Nicholas puts a higher value on words and appearance than on substance,” (72) and this attitude of his is reflected both in his inner world and in his relations with women.

Even in his early years, Nicholas is forced to lead two quite different lives and thus when he joins the army: “to be “Brigadier “Blazer” Urfe’s son in public” and nervously reading *Penguin New Writing* and poetry pamphlets in private,”(**The Magus** 18) Nicholas seems not to be content with these circumstances and is ready to blame his parents for his inability to have a truly authentic existential self. As a matter of fact, Nicholas loves to play this bully father’s son because the reason he hates ‘discipline, tradition and responsibility’ comes not from his inner self but rather from his hatred towards his father, which hinders him from making a real decision to attain real personal freedom. Likewise, as he does not take responsibility for his life, he blames his parents and the external factors that he supposes prevent him from being successful in life. Hence, after his parents die in a plane crash, he mistakenly feels “an almost immediate sense of relief, of freedom.”(**The Magus** 19)

Since Nicholas feels himself restricted from achieving a higher sense of individuality and freedom because of his patriarchal background, he “compensates by preying sexually on young women.” (Wolfe, 87) In his affairs with women, he does not commit himself to his relationships but rather regards them like a sport, and thus, he is only able to create superficial relationships because he is not able to get involved in his affairs emotionally. Since he is extremely selfish and egoist, he has a limited vision in his approach to women and he ends up being a womanizer, an irresponsible and sexist person because he is “not motivated by freedom,” and thus “he simply fears the responsibility of a close sexual tie.” (Wolfe, 86). He categorizes women in his mind and does not regard them as whole human beings because “he is influenced rather strongly by Victorian notions of morality and correctness.” (Boccia, 243) This attitude of Nicholas towards women hinders him from seeing them as his equal and he undervalues them as Nadeau says: “he objectifies the female by informing his perception of her with two irreconcilable conceptions of her being. She is either pure, innocent, and virtuous (virgin) or sensual, sexually indiscriminate, and untrustworthy.” (“Fowles and *Physics: A Study of the Magus A Revised Version*” 272)

Alison, whom Nicholas meets while he is still in London, falls definitely into the second category according to his limited vision towards life and thus he defines her as a person who is “bizarre, a kind of human oxymoron.” (**The Magus** 26) He

goes on categorizing her: “I discovered two things about Alison: that behind her bluntness she was an expert coaxer, a handler of men, a sexual diplomat, and that her attraction lay as much in her candour as in her having a pretty body, an interesting face and knowing it.” (**The Magus** 29-30) For him, Alison remains a woman who has had an abortion, and who is easy to sleep with and therefore, he reduces her to a mere sexual object because “unable and unwilling to see the women with whom he is romantically involved as subjects, Nicholas instead considers them only within his own autoerotic, pornographic fantasies.” (Lenz, 89) He does not value what Alison offers him and does not take responsibility in his affair with her:

... I knew what she wanted me to say, but I couldn't say it. I felt as a sleepwalker must feel when he wakes up at the end of the roof parapet. I wasn't ready for marriage, for settling down. I wasn't psychologically close enough to her; something I couldn't define, obscure, monstrous, lay between us, and this obscure monstrous thing emanated from her not me. (**The Magus** 39)

As he has no commitment to his relationship with Alison, he says that he has been deceiving her with another woman, Greece, even before he steps on the island. This clearly demonstrates the fact that he has fallen in love with the image he created in his mind: “I had fallen in love with the picture long before I saw the reality.” (**The Magus** 41) It is quite obvious that Nicholas d'Urfe idealizes women in his mind as objects and cannot understand their real value. Since he does not accept responsibility in his life and drops the girls he is dating out of boredom, he wants to leave for Greece, but with no authentic purpose in mind: “I didn't know where I was going, but I knew what I needed. I needed a new land, a new race, a new language; and although I couldn't have put it in words then, I needed a new mystery.”(**The Magus** 21) Not having a real existential notion of self-awareness to access true freedom, Nicholas decides to abandon England thinking that this would free him from the burden of both his family ties and Alison. However, as Susana Onega Jaen states: “...d'Urfe presents himself as an intelligent but spoilt young man, who wants to lead a full, creative life, but for the wrong reasons and primarily, for the sake of impressing others.”(**Form and Meaning in 'The Magus'** 74) Even when he is in Greece and he realizes that he is not a successful poet, that is, he is nothing, he wants

to commit suicide but for aesthetic reasons as he wants “a Mercutio death .. to be remembered, not the true death of a true suicide.” (**The Magus** 64) His motive to end his life does not come from his inner self, and thus, he is not able to gain personal freedom.

As Nicholas fails to maintain an authentic existential life, he needs an external force to eradicate his false life and wrong perceptions of women. It is Maurice Conchis, the magus, who “suggests that through women men can shed inhibiting social constructions and learn to act in accordance with their true selves, thereby pursuing existential authenticity.” (Lenz, 93) Thus, Nicholas needs to confront his artificial life and come to understand the true meaning of freedom by taking responsibility for his acts rather than putting the blame on his parents and external factors. That is, he needs to get rid of his former inauthentic self and hold only himself responsible for what he has done. As Sartre states: “Freedom is existence, and in it existence precedes essence,” (**Being and Nothingness** 567-68) because “in an existential world, we must take on the responsibility to create a humane world ourselves because no God will give it to us.” (Boccia, 242) What Conchis tries to do is to make Nicholas figure out “how to redefine his notions of self and world. To do so, Urfe, the self-centered womanizer, will have to be re-educated by means of a series of trials intended to test and correct his perception of reality.” (Onega, 41). Conchis makes use of a great deal of art forms such as music, cinema, theatre, drama, stories, sculpture and paintings besides Greek myths, hypnosis, Nazi doctrines and mysterious events which aim to blur the line between reality/unreality to make Nicholas understand that there are multiple realities rather than an absolute truth. In order to come to this understanding, Nicholas d’Urfe, who is a sexist, self-centered womanizer and thus is only able to form superficial relationships in his affairs with women and has a limited perspective towards reality, should comprehend the “polymorphous nature of truth and the futility of drawing boundaries between literature and non-literature, that is between the real and the unreal, the conscious and the unconscious.” (Onega Jaen, 83)

In the text, Conchis uses art forms to urge Nicholas “to move beyond his extremely isolated, divided, egocentric and masculine world view and accept instead an ideology of interconnection and wholeness that Conchis associates with the

feminine” (Lenz, 94), because, as Peter Wolfe says: “... none of Fowles’s male characters knows how to conduct a warm human relationship. None wants to share or commit himself. None can separate love from social prejudice.”(John Fowles, **Magust and Moralist** 39) That is why, for John Fowles, men can be instructed to have a new real existential identity through women like Nicholas d’Urfe in **The Magus** and Charles Smithson in **The French Lieutenant’s Woman**, so in **The Aristos**, he emphasizes the fact that:

Man is more guilty than woman here, since men have always required public and social rather than emotional and domestic-revolt in life. In spite of the male myth about female vanity, it is the men who are in the more greedy pursuit of this chimera of eternal youth. The Western male has, in our society, become increasingly Moslem in his attitude towards marriage and women. (96)

For that reason, in **The Magus**, “in contrast to the abusive, pornographic, and self-centered masculine perspective that Nicholas embodies, Conchis, Lily/Julie, Alison, and Lily de Seitas embody a feminine perspective committed to self-actualization and connection. Fowles associates those values explicitly with women.” (Lenz, 91) Nicholas d’Urfe is unable to appreciate what Alison offers him and Conchis organizes a masque in which he blurs the line between reality and fantasy to make Nicholas question his long held beliefs about his relationships with women and “to chasten, discipline and instruct him” (Lewis, 21) through art forms. Therefore, the godgame consists of paintings, artistic performances, recitations of lines of poetry, and music, allusions to literary works, depiction of art objects, pseudo-scientific pamphlets and Conchis’s fictional stories. Thus, art plays a crucial role on Nicholas’s education towards a new existential self by disconnecting him from his former artificial self.

Hence, Conchis in Bourani, his own realm, shows Nicholas some paintings and only when Nicholas comes across those paintings does he understand the beauty of the moment, as art reflects nature as it is. This is what Alison represents in the painting: “It showed a girl by a sunlit window with her back turned, apparently, drying her loins and watching herself in the mirror at the same time. I was remembering Alison, Alison wandering about the flat naked, singing, like a child. It

was an unforgettable painting.” (**The Magus** 100) The painting has the power to show Nicholas how precious life and the moment are. However, Nicholas is still yet to understand the true nature of a higher form of reality as he cannot fathom “the polymorphous nature of reality which is precisely what Maurice Conchis wants him to learn from the start.” (Onega Jaen 82) Thus, to make Nicholas understand the true meaning of existential freedom, Conchis “forces Nicholas’s life to imitate art.”(William J. Palmer 45)

Nicholas, who is not aware of his own illusions and delusions, is always drawing a strict line between fantasy and reality but when he sees works of art at Bourani, he comes to realize a totally different re-interpretation of reality. Thus, Maurice Conchis has furnished his villa with diverse art works such as a Modigliani and Bonnard paintings, Rodin and Giacometti sculptures and a Pleyel harpsichord, ancient Greek vases and Edwardian ‘curiosa,’ that is, “the villa is presented as a sort of tabernacle of the fine arts and Conchis, as an artist himself, a wonderful musician who further captivates him with his music.” (Onega Jaen, 87) What Conchis tries to do is to educate Nicholas to gain real personal freedom by initiating in him an inner journey to define his self with the help of art. Therefore, the purpose Conchis serves is to shatter Nicholas’s false notion of differentiating between male/female and fantasy/reality perspective.

As Palmer says, in **The Magus**, Conchis’s, “concept of art is straightforwardly Platonic. Art should both entertain and instruct, and the decor of Conchis’s world aims at teaching life to imitate art, teaching Nicholas to interpret, react to, and finally join the existential godgame. Art must delight, and surely it must instruct but also it must involve.” (**The Fiction of John Fowles**, 59- 60) In **The Aristos**, John Fowles says: “All artefacts please and teach the artist first, and other people later. The pleasing and teaching come from the explanation of self by the expression of self, by seeing the self, and all the selves of the whole self; in the mirror of what the self has created.” (151) Thus, Conchis in **The Magus** aims to start a process of education in Nicholas by making him participate in the godgame actively through art. In order to create an authentic existential self, Nicholas needs to actively participate in the masque. Wolfe states: “Existentialism is an action-philosophy. Discouraging passive thought, it favors direct participation. The

existentialist discovers reality by acting on it.” (25) In this teaching process, it is art that plays the most significant role in enabling Nicholas’s direct participation. As Boccia states: “we may perceive the godgame as an educational process which functions through the use of art and is intended to teach people their responsibility to act in humane ways.” (237)

Also, Conchis uses art to emphasize Nicholas’s problem with women. As Nicholas categorizes women in his mind and he is unable to see them as whole human beings, he comes across the picture of Lily/Julie that has fascinated him, placed between two nasty paintings which shocked him: “It involved two satyr and a woman and was very obscene indeed. Nor were the paintings on the amphora of a kind any museum would dare put on display.” (**The Magus** 106) Later, when he meets Lily/Julie, he observes that she is almost the same as in the painting:

I knew I was supposed to be looking at Lily. It was unmistakably the same girl as in the photographs; especially that on the cabinet *curiosa*. The Boticelli face; grey violet eyes. The eyes especially were beautiful; very large, their ovals faintly twisted, a cool doe’s eyes, almond eyes giving a natural mystery to a face otherwise so regular that it risked perfection. (**The Magus** 158)

This quote from the book plainly demonstrates that Nicholas d’Urfe puts women into categories and idealizes some of them like Lily/Julie while he looks down on those like Alison who he thinks are easily available because “... Nicholas makes a strict distinction between ideal and sexual love, ... he insists on separating Artemis from Aphrodite ... he divides the women he knows into the pale and the dark, Madonnas and whores...” (Raper, 62) Nicholas’s technique on women is to play the cynical, indifferent and unpredictable man who likes producing a lonely heart. To shatter his problematic perception of women and his failing to see them as whole human-beings, Conchis creates the atmosphere for Nicholas to realize his perverted understanding in his affairs. Hence, Lily/Julie plays the “role of a delicate, innocent, rare and intelligent young woman, little versed in sexual matters” and thus “Julie and Alison come to represent in Nicholas two quite disparate personalities.” (Onega Jaen, 84-85) Nicholas only remembers Alison when he is in sexual aspiration, but Conchis tries to make him understand that in reality “Alison, like all

the real women, possesses in herself both the potentialities of the ideal virgin and the ideal temptress.” (Onega Jaen, 102) As Nicholas cannot comprehend this fact, but rather interprets reality in terms of his own limited point of view, Conchis presents Lily to Nicholas in an idealized way to make him fall in love with her.

Then, Nicholas meets Lily/Julie’s twin Rose/June who unlike her is dressed in a bikini and is lying under the sun and is not as idealized as Lily who is shown to Nicholas as if coming out of the picture. However, as Onega Jaen puts it: “Lily and Rose are complementary aspects of one whole, unique reality, the embodiments of two opposed psychological aspects co-existing in every woman. This fact explains why d’Urfe is alternately attracted by both of them and also why he finally chooses Lily who stands for the virginal aspect of woman.” (**Form and Meaning in the Magus** 101) However, in reality it is Alison who has those complementary aspects of a woman, yet Nicholas is unable to realize her traits.

Therefore, the aim of the masque is to start a process of education in Nicholas to force him to reinterpret his attitude towards his own self and towards his perception of the world in general to destroy his artificial identity and instead create a new sense of freedom. This is an inner journey to the world of selfhood to attain an existential moral awareness. As Wolfe states: “All reform starts with the self – what one is and what one wants. Self discovery underlies all public reform and planning. The Godgame is both a preparation for and a distillation of life.” (111-112) Thus, to be able to “achieve the hoped for self-knowledge” (Al-Sudairy,11), Nicholas enters the “polysemantic world” (**The Magus** 285) which is the realm of Conchis who:

... has grasped that god leaves man free ... decides to play god for the man of his day, commanding them to be free by first asserting and then gradually withdrawing his control of their lives. This is the God-game, as played in the novel. It rests on the notion that a man can touch another man to be free by playing god to him and then revealing that he is not a god, that there is no god and that each man must be his own god. (Fleishman, 300)

Nicholas needs to learn that he is not bound by external factors but rather free in his acts. Sartre states: “... for human reality, to be is to choose oneself; nothing comes to it either from the outside or from within which it can receive or

accept.”(**Being and Nothingness** 440) Therefore, the purpose of the masque is to make Nicholas come to the realization that real freedom can be achieved only from within rather than from outside.

In order to make Nicholas establish a connection between his own life and all the art forms and stories used in the novel, Conchis tells his own life story with clear messages in the end. Yet, we as readers, are never sure whether all those stories Conchis tells about his background are true or not, rather these stories lead Nicholas to compare his experiences and to be able to realize his problematic short-sighted interpretation of reality:

Since many of the scenes in Conchis’s plays are later replayed in Nicholas’s own life, Fowles’s theme of life imitating art is most fully defined in the characterization of Conchis as a dramatic artist and in the metatheatrical situation that Conchis creates. The whole intention behind Conchis’s professionally mounted meta play is to bring together the worlds of art and life. (Palmer, 63-64)

Just as Nicholas with his friends had founded a club and they “... argued about being and nothingness and called a certain kind of inconsequential behaviour ‘existentialist’” (**The Magus** 19), Maurice Conchis tells Nicholas that they had established “The Society for Reason” where they had given science or reason utmost importance as they believed: “Man can progress only by using his reason.” (**The Magus** 193) As Nicholas had mistakenly believed to be an existentialist, Conchis, likewise, believed in the power of science to create a better universe as he:

has tried to change the world through logic and argument by means of The Society for Reason. His attempts failed miserably. When the organization called for universal peace and understanding, it was attacked from all sides of the political spectrum. Conchis, and by implication Fowles, seems to have decided that there is a more fruitful method of re-educating people: art. (Boccia, 238)

In **The Magus**, science is widely compared with art in both the stories Conchis tells, and Nicholas’s own life because in their past lives both Conchis and Nicholas had full faith in science which they thought would lead them to the ultimate truth and thus Conchis tries to re-educate Nicholas through art rather than science.

However, Nicholas is still unable to understand the real meaning of the masque and the role art plays in his educational process. In Bourani, Nicholas discovers a pamphlet called “On Communication with Other Worlds” which states:

To arrive at even the nearest stars man would have to travel for millions of years at the speed of light...Nor can we communicate by other means... We are forever isolated, so it appears, in our little bubble of time ... But it is without doubt that there are other planets round other stars, that life obeys universal norms... Only one method of communication is not dependent on time. Some deny that it exists. ... This is the only means we shall ever have of communicating with mankind in other worlds. *Sic itur ad astra.* (**The Magus** 195)

Here, Conchis emphasizes that there is no telepathy and this method of communication cannot be proven through science and thus science is not the ultimate truth that allows human-beings to achieve their freedom. Fowles states: “We all live in two worlds; the old, comfortable man-centered world of absolutes and the harsh real world of relatives. The latter, the relativity of reality, terrifies us; and isolates and dwarfs us all...Yet all these lonelinesses are a part of our growing up, of our first going out alone, of our freedom.” (**The Aristos** 39-40) Therefore, it is art rather than science that leads us to gain a real existential freedom:

The scientific mind, in being totally scientific, is being unscientific... the scientist atomizes, someone must synthesize; the scientist withdraws, someone must draw together. The scientist particularizes, someone must universalize. The scientist dehumanizes, someone must humanize... Art even the simplest, is the expression of truths too complex for science to express, or to conveniently express. This is not to say that science is in some way inferior to art, but that they have different purposes and different uses. Art is a human shorthand of knowledge, a crucible, an algebra, a tremendous condensing in the case of great art of galaxies of thoughts, facts, memories, emotions, events, experiences... (**The Aristos** 151)

Nicholas is still unable to interpret what he reads in the pamphlet, and thus, cannot understand the polymorphous nature of reality. To make Nicholas draw parallels between his life and the stories in the novel, Conchis goes on narrating his experience of World War I to Nicholas and tells him despite being reluctant in the

beginning, he joined the war because of social responsibility. Before the war, he had met Lily and fallen in love with her. He describes Lily like an art object to Nicholas: “She had, yes, I suppose a Botticelli beauty, long fair hair, grey violet eyes.” (**The Magus** 118) He decides to go to war as Lily, who is the voice of the society, demands him to do by singing: “We shall miss you, we shall kiss you, / But we think you ought to go.” (**The Magus** 121) Then, as he feels himself a coward in front of Lily, he decides to volunteer for the war. After the horrible moments Conchis experiences during the war he decides to run away from the army and tells Nicholas: “I am going to explain to you why we went to war. Why mankind always goes to war. It is not social or political. It is not countries that go to war, but men.” (**The Magus** 127) Then, when he plays the dice with Nicholas and Nicholas rejects playing, he calls him a coward just as he had felt himself a coward when he did not want to join the war. When he throws six and Nicholas rejects taking the pill he says: “What you have just decided is precisely what I decided that morning forty years ago at Neuve Chapelle. You have behaved exactly as any intelligent human being should behave.” (**The Magus** 129)

What he tries to teach Nicholas is to get away from patriotism, propaganda, honour, that is, all social burdens and instead to start a quest for authenticity through an inner journey to reach freedom. Therefore, as Nadeau puts it: “Conchis intends ... to make Nicholas aware of the absurdity of sacrificing life and freedom in the service of nonexistent grand abstractions.” (268) Hence, he tells Nicholas that: “There is no plan. All is hazard. And the only thing that will preserve us is ourselves.” (**The Magus** 132) In World War I, which was called ‘the war to end all wars’ people believed that they were fighting for a good cause. However, Conchis emphasizes the fact that contrary to grand narratives such as patriotism, freedom and honour that people had believed they fought for, there is no great plan as everything is pure chance or hazard. Fowles states in **The Aristos**: “Hazard has conditioned us to live in hazard. All our pleasures are dependent on it... Wherever time passes, there is hazard.”(18)

To further shatter Nicholas’s mistaken interpretation of reality/fantasy, Conchis who claims to be a bird-sound collector tells the story of Henrik Nygaard.

Just as Nicholas had fallen in love with Greece the moment he arrived there, Conchis likewise falls in love with the landscape:

It was a place where nature was triumphant over man. Not savagely triumphant as one may feel in the tropics. But calmly nobly triumphant. It is sentimental to talk of a landscape having a soul, but that one possessed a stronger character than any other I have seen, before or since. It ignored man. Man was nothing in it... I realized in two or three days that I had fallen in love with it. (**The Magus** 304)

There he meets Henrik Nygaard who was a Jansenist and believed in divine cruelty as he thought “he was elect, especially chosen to be punished and tormented.”(**The Magus** 308) When Maurice Conchis offers him help by explaining that he is a doctor and starts talking about modern methods of treatment for cataract, Henrik “turned and went back into the hut... suddenly he appeared again. In his hand he held what I held, Nicholas, when I came on you this afternoon. A long axe.” (**The Magus** 311) Only after he tries to kill Conchis, does Conchis become aware of his false notion of placing science and reason above everything:

Up to this point in my life you will have realized that my whole approach was scientific, medical, classifying. I was conditioned by a kind of ornithological approach to man. I thought in terms of species, behaviours, observations. Here for the first time in my life I was unsure of my beliefs, my prejudices. I knew the man out there on the point was having an experience beyond the scope of all my science and all my reason, and I knew that my science and my reason would always be defective until they could comprehend what was happening in Henrik’s mind Perhaps something telepathic passed between Henrik and myself. I do not know. (**The Magus** 314)

As a result of this experience with Henrik Nygaard, Conchis stops bird-sound collecting, because he realizes that Henrik Nygaard is meeting God and that meeting is “mystical, vital, and powerful beyond the scope of reason” (Wolfe, 108) and this experience teaches Conchis “of a radical truth, the complexity of reality” and also “that man is radically free.” (Onega Jaen, 96) Thus, Conchis realizes that

science is not absolute truth to interpret reality and he tries to show Nicholas not to limit himself to just one narrow side of reality.

Likewise, in ‘The Story of the Swiss and Goats’ Conchis, by deliberately drawing parallels between this story and Nicholas’s own life, tries to teach Nicholas that to be happy he must know himself and live with what he is: “Greece is like a mirror. It makes you suffer. Then you learn. / To live alone? / To live. With what you are.” (**The Magus** 101) Just as Nicholas is collecting ‘girls,’ and Conchis was collecting bird-sound in his youth until he met Henrik Nygaard, the Swiss was also collecting watches, had read a lot about Greece and had even learned classical Greek by himself, yet his only passion became goats and then he started to live alone without being visited by anyone and according to Conchis he became the happiest man he has ever seen as he learned to be happy with what he is:

which analogically reflects precisely what d’Urfe who misunderstands the correct use of art has failed to do with Alison. Alison has always fallen short of his expectations because Nicholas expected her to embody his own idea of woman, and cannot take her for what she really is. By telling him the tale of the Swiss at this precise moment Conchis is rejecting his point of view... (Onega Jaen, 90)

Nicholas is unable to lead an authentic life because he fails to live according to his inner self, and he cannot see what Alison stands for but rather tries, all the time, to put her into the categories in his own mind. Then, Conchis tells the story of Alphonse de Deukans for Nicholas to understand his abuse of the function of art. In de Deukans’ realm, there exist nearly all form of art ranging from paintings, harpsichords, museum pieces, galleries, porcelain, keyboard instruments, clavichords, spinets, virginals, lutes, guitars to Renaissance bronzes, a faience, an armoury: “he had devoted all his life to this collecting of collections ... He collected in order to collect, of course.” (**The Magus** 181) Yet, Conchis states that the most important piece of art for de Deukans was ‘Mirabelle, *la maitresse-Machine*,’ in which “a naked woman, painted and silk-skinned, who when set in motion lay back in her faded four-poster bed, drew up her knees and then opened them together with her arm....This repulsive thing had been made in Italy in the early nineteenth century.

For the sultan of Turkey.” (**The Magus** 181-82) De Deukans favoured it over millions of other art objects since “she had a device that made it unlikely that she would ever cuckold her owner.” (*The Magus* 181-82) Onega Jaen states: “Mirabelle stands as the symbol of the hideous egoism of all collectors, but also points directly to the life-killing effects of d’Urfe’s attitude to women in general and to Alison in particular.”(94) When De Deukans’s realm is burnt down, all art objects and books are destroyed and two days later De Deukans is found dead in Paris as he has committed suicide because “in order to exist” a collector “must tangibly possess the objects that obsess him.” (Jaen, 95) That’s why, as John Fowles states in **The Aristos**: “It is the possessor who is always the possessed. Our mania for collecting not only objects worth money but experiences that have cost money, and our regarding of such a thesaurus of experiences as evidence of a valid existence... We seem to ourselves to live in exile from all we cannot afford. The pleasures that cost nothing come to seem worth nothing.” (128) De Deukans, who is a possessor/collector of art objects just like Nicholas who is a possessor/collector of girls, is not able to exist without his collection so he has nothing to do but commit suicide as he does not have an authentic life. For Nicholas to be able to make a connection between his own life, as he has always abused women, and why De Deukans collected art objects, Conchis tells him: “I was twenty-five your age, Nicholas, which will perhaps tell you more than anything I can say how unable I was to judge him.” (**The Magus** 183) Palmer states:

Fowles uses the themes of collecting and of pornography to represent man’s socially cultivated talent for dehumanization. Pornography is Fowles’s ultimate symbol of loss of identity and the obscenity of the deconstruction of human-selfhood... the collector and the pornographer are intent upon turning living things into objects that can be used, exploited and controlled according to the owner’s whim. (54)

Thus, in order not to be just a collector of novels, Conchis tells Nicholas that he has burnt all his novels. The purpose of this act is to free himself to write his own novel rather than being just a consumer of fiction just like he gave up collecting birdsounds after meeting Henrik Nygaard, which De Deukans is unable to achieve

because he is a collector of art and is dependent on his collection without which he cannot exist.

Moreover, in 'The Story of the Prince and the Magician' Nicholas is directed to realize the resemblance of the story and his own life. In the story, there was a prince who did not believe in princesses, islands and God, because his father told him that such things were non-existent. But one day the prince leaves his father's domain and happens to see islands and princesses. And then, he meets a man who claims to be God. When he returns home, his father tells him that he has been deceived by a magician. Later on, he again abandons his father's property and meets the man who this time tells him that he has been deceived by his father. In his next encounter with his father, who accepts that he is a magician rather than a king, he demands to know the real truth that is beyond magic. Yet his father answers that there is no truth beyond magic, which distresses the young prince, and thus, nearly causes him to kill himself. As death appears by magic the prince gets frightened and recalls the beautiful unreal islands and the unreal but beautiful princesses to which the king says: "You see my son... you too now begin to be a magician." (**The Magus** 562) Conchis tries to teach Nicholas that in the world, there is nothing certain and no absolute truth, as "truth and fact do not exist objectively but inhere, instead in the perceiver." (Wolfe, 119) In all these stories, the line between reality and fantasy is blurred, and Nicholas is unable to differentiate one from the other because: "as both the story and the masque develop, we see how the story of Conchis's life becomes more and more fictional and the masque more and more disquietingly real." (Onega Jaen, 92)

Then, in World War II, Conchis tells how a troop of Austrians took control over Phraxos and their commander, Lieutenant Anton Kubler, is a well-read man, and so sensitive to art and literature. With the help of the three leading villagers they persuade Conchis to be the mayor of the village. After that, four German soldiers are killed by the guerrillas. After the guerrillas are found and arrested, Colonel Wimmel, who is responsible for that part of Greece orders Conchis to make the guerrilla leader tell all the information he knows, but the guerrilla leader simply looks at Conchis with a kind of hatred in his expression and cries *eleutheria* which means freedom, yet Conchis is unable to understand the guerrilla just like he is not able to understand

Henrik Nygaard in the beginning. Colonel Wimmel orders Conchis to execute two of the guerillas with the rifle or else he would kill twenty men for every German that was killed by the guerillas. From then on, Conchis tells Nicholas that he “acted without reason. Beyond reason.” (**The Magus** 438) He raises the gun to kill the guerrillas and presses the trigger yet there is just an empty click. He is ordered by Colonel Wimmel to club them to death so that he will spare his and the other seventy-nine hostages’ life and Conchis pleads to Wimmel “in the name of European civilization to stop this barbarity.” (**The Magus** 440) Nevertheless, as Wimmel does not step back, Conchis refuses to kill them and in return, he and the other hostages are shot to death. Luckily, Conchis does not die and he tells Nicholas: “My reason has repeatedly told me I was wrong. Yet my total being still tells me I was right.”(**The Magus** 442)

After this incident Anton kills himself and Conchis hands the report Anton wrote to Nicholas, in which he related what kind of inhuman cruelties the Nazis have carried out and as he observed them and did not do anything he condemns himself to death. However, it is quite clear that Anton’s death is not like Nicholas’s wish to commit suicide because Nicholas has wanted a Mercutio death and to be remembered afterwards. Hence, Nicholas is not able to interpret what he is told and thus Conchis tells him: “You are someone who does not understand what freedom is. And above all that the better you understand it the less you possess of it.”(**The Magus** 446). As Nicholas is still yet to know his true self he asks Conchis “What makes you so sure you know my real self?” to which Conchis answers: “I do not claim that. My decision is based on the certain knowledge that you are incapable of knowing it yourself.”(**The Magus** 447) Nicholas compares himself with Lieutenant Anton who commits suicide as he is torn between doing his duty and acting according to his inner self. Conchis tries to show Nicholas the clash between the totalitarian Nazi philosophy and what freedom and existentialism are. In Nazi philosophy, everything is related to the whole and thus there is no importance of individualism and no thinking about the self. For Nazis, who deny the moral values, nothing is important except the duty. By narrating Anton’s story, Conchis is trying to realize his true self and choose freely rather than going after a heroic life.

As existential theory suggests, a person is free in his acts but has to find meaning in his life, and accept responsibility in his acts. Thus, Urfe's major sin is his incapacity to accept responsibility for his free acts, his tendency to turn life into fiction and rejecting the real in favour of the unreal which is generated by his short-sighted interpretation of reality. If he is to be healed, he must distrust his senses and foster his imagination. For this purpose, he is constantly drawn into mysteries and obviously trained to open his mind to them and as a part of his educational process through art, Nicholas who is isolated, selfish, alienated and thus too self-centered is given hypnosis by Conchis. During hypnosis, he is transformed into pure being by eradicating his former self:

There was no sensation of beauty, of morality, of divinity, of physical geometry; simply the sensation of the situation. As an animal might feel ... I was aware of existing, and this being aware of existing became more significant than the light, just as the light had become more significant than the wind ... The wind and the light became mere secondaries, roads to the present states, this state without dimensions or sensations; awareness of pure being. Or perhaps that is a solipsism; it was simply a pure awareness. (**The Magus** 243)

Nicholas comes to realize that 'existence precedes essence' as Sartre suggests. For Sartre, there is not any predefined form that people are subject to. People should create their own meaning and take responsibility for their own acts as they result from absolute individual freedom. During hypnosis, only after realizing that he is not bound by external circumstances as he has absolute individual freedom, does Nicholas understand what reality is:

I had the sense that this was the fundamental reality and that reality had a universal mouth to tell me so; no sense of divinity, of communion, of the brotherhood of man, of anything I had expected before I became suggestible. No pantheism, no humanism. But something much wider, cooler and more abstruse. That reality was endless interaction. No good, no evil; no beauty, no ugliness. No sympathy, no antipathy. But simply interaction. The endless solitude of the one, its total enislement from all else, seemed the same thing as the total inter-relationship of the all. All opposites seemed one, because each was indispensable to each. The

difference and the indispensability of all seemed one. I suddenly knew, but in a new hitherto unexperienced sense of knowing, that all else exists. (**The Magus** 244)

Hypnosis becomes a kind of awakening for Nicholas, an actual existence. He is given the opportunity to see the world differently. Under hypnosis, he feels significant like a germ which is the opposite of how he feels in his normal life. As he has positioned himself in the center of universe and thinks everything just revolves around him, but now he experiences pure being:

Knowing, willing, being wise, being good, education, information, classification, knowledge of all kinds, sensibility, sexuality, these things seemed superficial. I had no desire to state or define or analyse this interaction, I simply wished to constitute it – not even “wished to do” – I constituted it. I was volitionless. There was no meaning. Only being. (**The Magus** 244)

Only after Nicholas’s self disappears, there is the arrival of reality. The description of the universe is given and Nicholas comes to understand that it does not have a center, yet he still feels himself as significant as a microbe, but not in the center, because he is a part of being and everything is interrelated:

An enormous and vertiginous sense of the innumerability of the universe; an innumerability in which transience and unchangingness seemed integral, essential and uncontradictory. I felt like a germ that had landed, like the first penicillin microbe, not only in a culture where it was totally at home, totally nourished; but in a situation in which it was infinitely significant. A condition of acute physical, and intellectual pleasure, a floating suspension, a being perfectly adjusted and *related*; a quintessential arrival. An interrecognition... the becoming and the being were one. (**The Magus** 245)

However, as this understanding is given to Nicholas freely and he has not undergone any kind of suffering yet, he wakes up from the hypnosis without any understanding of this experience. He has the same kind of experience on Mt. Parnassus with Alison. On the top of the mountain he describes nature: “Below, for a hundred miles in each direction, there were other mountains, valleys, plains, islands,

seas; ... With a splendid classical simplicity someone had formed in small stones ... the letters ... 'light.'... The peak reached up into a world both literally and metaphorically of light. It didn't touch emotions; it was too vast, too inhuman, too serene; ..." (**The Magus** 263-64) On Mt. Parnassus he is again reminded of the experience he was given during hypnosis. The landscape is so great that man becomes a tiny object like penicillin, like the first germ. Looking down at the vastness of nature he realizes his smallness but significance as he is a part of it. As he experiences the landscape and the sublime in nature, he loses his sense of reality which becomes a kind of awakening, the same experience he has had during hypnosis.

However, when he sleeps with Alison after the experience on Mt. Parnassus, he compares her with Lily/Julie whom he idealizes: "I imagined lying in the same position with Julie, and I thought I knew it would be infinitely disturbing and infinitely more passionate; not familiar, not aching with fatigue, hot, a bit sweaty..." (**The Magus** 269) He again is still far away from seeing Alison as a whole human-being and reduces her to a mere sex object and thus after awakening from the hypnosis and his experience on Mt. Parnassus, he is still unable to understand the purpose Conchis's godgame serves.

June /Rose lies to Nicholas that the masque is actually a film produced by Conchis which is called **Three Hearts** and that it is financed by a Lebanese company called Polymus Films. It is set on an island, two twins June and Julie Holmes, who have graduated from Cambridge, are to play in it together with a Greek poet who falls in love with each of them. And Nicholas is to play the role of the Greek poet. June tells Nicholas that what Conchis tries to do is to create a world where everything is uncertain, yet Nicholas is still unable to interpret what he is told and thus suspects that he is all the time being watched by God, that is Conchis. Nicholas tries to give meaning to the relationship between two men, himself and Conchis, by referring to literature. He mentions **The Tempest**, a Shakespearean play which is also set on an island like **The Magus**. It is also a world of magic and fairies where there is not a strict line between reality and unreality. Prospero who is sent to the island by force by his brother, Antonio, is also a sorcerer like Conchis. He has a beautiful daughter called Miranda who has never seen another man except Caliban,

the first native on the island and who tries to rape Miranda. Therefore, when she sees Ferdinand she falls in love with him which is a parody of love at first sight because he is the only man Miranda has ever seen besides her father and Caliban. Nicholas, who associates himself with Ferdinand, is happy with his role as he thinks if he obeys Conchis, he will get Lily just as in the play Ferdinand gets Miranda. Conchis is a kind of a father figure for Lily/Julie like Prospero and Miranda in **The Tempest**, and Nicholas wants to get Lily/Julie. Then, Conchis acts upon Nicholas's subconscious Oedipal drives. Nicholas identifies himself with the hero, Ferdinand, yet what Conchis tries to do is to show him that he is Caliban, not Ferdinand. Miranda falls in love with Ferdinand and likewise when Nicholas sees the picture of Lily/Julie and just afterwards she appears just as in the picture, Conchis is playing music on his harpsichord to create the appropriate atmosphere for Nicholas to fall in love with her because:

Plato claims that music has a harmony and order that, when learned, could help form a moral life; the harmoniously put-together will avoid immorality and injustice. Fowles both endorses and extends this view of music. Music can promote sanity and health at all levels. Music puts no barrier of meaning between player and hearer... Blending form and content, substance and symbol, it overrides linguistic differences. This universality builds a mood, freshens the spirit, and describes a reality all at once. (Wolfe, 106)

As a matter of fact, Nicholas is still far from realizing how a split life he has had and thus by playing the music, Conchis is still playing on his Oedipal drives as Lily makes a sign not to disturb him. Nicholas is unable to interpret the real purpose of the masque as, after all these experiences, his actions show that he has learned nothing so far. In order to get away from his artificial identity to create his own existence, he must learn to separate life from fiction which means learning to accept his radical loneliness and the major truth that there is no applause by a watching God and no final reward beyond the passion to exist. After all these experiences in Conchis's godgame which he is not able to interpret, the trial awaits him to face his subconscious.

After Nicholas has the chance to have sexual intercourse with Lily/Julie which he considers “as a total victory for his masculine-ego, evidence of his male right to possess any object he desires,”(Boccio, 83) he is taken to the trial by three men in black. At the trial, women and men are dressed in different costumes; “the stag-devil, the crocodile-devil, the vampire, the succubus, the bird-woman, the magician, the coffin-sedan, the goat-devil, the pierrot-skeleton, the corn-doll, the Aztec, the witch.” (**The Magus** 511) They all appear in masks and there are different symbols on the wall such as symbols of life and power, the eight-spoked wheel, which is one of the oldest symbols of Buddhism signifying spiritual change, a black cross but not the Christian cross. He looks at recurring patterns from different myths and religions. The Christian cross is also derived from ancient religions because all myths and religions are eclectic, that is, they borrow from each other. And all these motifs and patterns in Nicholas’s subconscious have some common points with Jung’s collective unconscious as the symbols on the chairs, the Buddhist wheel, crescent moons and other ancient symbols belong to different cultures but borrow from each other. Conchis deliberately chooses symbols which clearly draw Nicholas’s attention to Jung’s collective unconscious.

Then, the trial begins and Nicholas is told that they wish to think that in the empty box there is a virgin goddess who they have never seen and they call her Ashtaroth, the Unseen who is also: “Ishtar in Babylonia, Astarte in Greece and Ashtareth to the Jews. She is also related to Isis, Aphrodite and Demeter and is the goddess of love, beauty, motherhood, war, virginity and prostitution. The trial doctors say that in her resides the essence of a real woman like Alison.” (Munteanu, 3)

All the figures are introduced to Nicholas respectively and then his character’s weaknesses are presented to him. First of all, the woman from Edinburgh starts setting forth Nicholas’s personality:

The subject shows characteristic symptoms of mingled fear and resentment of authority, especially male authority and the usual accompanying basic syndrome: an ambivalent attitude towards women, in which they are seen both as desired objects and as objects which have betrayed him...the subject has preyed sexually and emotionally on a number of young women. (**The Magus** 517)

She moves on to present Nicholas's background stressing his being a member of a conventional military family in which there were a lot of taboos brought about by an authoritarian paternal regime and resulting in two different lives. Nicholas is, then, said to have been blinded by his environment and his past. This has led to his inability to realize what a distorted point of view he has had towards life in general. Yet, Nicholas is still unable to interpret what he has seen. Instead, his only desire is to take revenge from Lily/Julie who, he thinks, has used his emotions and sensibility. Nevertheless, when he is given the chance to punish her by whipping and to be "both the judge and the executioner" (**The Magus** 524), he suddenly realizes that he has become Colonel Wimmel who, he says, was inside him and he comes to understand what he has done to Alison: "The better you understand freedom the less you possess it."(**The Magus** 526) He feels the same experience as he did during the hypnosis and on top of the Mount Parnassus: "I felt myself physically dwindling; as one dwindles before certain works of art, certain truths, seeing one's smallness, narrow-mindedness, insufficiency in their dimension and value." (**The Magus** 527)

After the trial, pornographic films are shown to Nicholas and the woman in these films is said to represent the mother goddesses and with her, Lily/Julie are presented. Isis, the Egyptian goddess, Kali, Hindu goddess of death and destruction and Astarte, Mesopotamian goddess of fertility and sexuality are mentioned. The film shown to Nicholas merges all ancient goddesses together with the fabulous whore, Lily/Julie to show Nicholas that his whole sense of women is dirty and perverted. As in pre-patriarchal societies where femininity was beyond patriarchal values that have shaped Nicholas's perverted attitude towards women, there were not any social institutions to call the women 'whore,' because they were represented by goddesses. In ancient Greek, Egyptian and Middle Eastern mythologies and religions in which femininity had a more significant role, mother goddesses were regarded to be more powerful as they were life-giver unlike mythologies which were male-oriented and thus attacked pre-patriarchal female-oriented mythologies. Women were not split as virgin and whore in pre-patriarchal mythologies, so the film signifies the perversion of the relationship between male and female. Therefore, what Conchis tries to make Nicholas look behind patriarchal values in order to see the value of

Alison who does not conform to the rules put forward by patriarchal system and he wants him to see Alison as a liberated young woman.

In the film, Joe enters the scene and makes love with Julie which seems nasty to Nicholas as a 'nigger' and a white woman make love. Joe is described, in the film, as a black bull, in the manner of old fashioned pornographic films. Sex is represented as obscene, disgusting and like that of animals. When Nicholas meets Joe for the first time in the novel, June/Rose tells him that Joe is mute and Nicholas attacks him verbally by calling him a 'eunuch.' Nicholas feels threatened by Joe's masculinity because inwardly he is a racist. When Nicholas wants to sleep with Lily/Julie in the White Chapel, they hear something and assume that it is Joe, the black who disturbs him. Yet, it is he himself who tries to have sex in the church and as he is behaving like an animal in a sacred place, he is to be shown that he is the animal in the church in reality, not Joe, as he projects his own black perverted side onto Joe. He is made to watch the pornographic film which he finds disgusting, but he still keeps watching the film and taking delight in it which suggests perversion because only a perverted person can go on watching such a nasty pornographic film.

In the next film, he realizes the naturalness of sex: "What they did was in itself without obscenity, merely private, familiar; a biological ritual that takes place a hundred millions times every night the world turns." (**The Magus** 538) There is no comment but Joe and Lily/Julie just make love and only then does he realize that he is a pervert in reality: "Suddenly I understood who they were: and who I was; how prepared this moment. I too had a new role." (**The Magus** 538) Here, he identifies himself as Iago from **Othello**, another play by Shakespeare who is "master manipulator of the lives of others' with no concern for human emotion or love" (Palmer, 49) since in the play Iago is envious of Othello and causes him to kill his wife Desdemona. Othello is also black like Joe and thus by being associated with Iago, Nicholas is confronted with his evil side. Urfe needs to understand that he is the outsider and manipulator of others's lives rather than Joe. Peter Wolfe claims:

Urfe compares himself to Oedipus, Orestes, Orpheus, Theseus, Adonis, Candide, Adam, Robinson Crusoe, and the self-destroying rebel-son, Icarus. Several Shakespearean echoes are sounded... Urfe is also likened to Iago and Malvalio,

Shakespeare's two leading figures of vice, egotism, and immorality. These figures are also outsiders, and like them, Urfe chafes at being left out. (100)

Towards the end of the film, Nicholas sees Alison and himself and is shocked as he feels troubled about whether his love making with Alison has been recorded or not. Therefore, as Palmer states: "Conchis turns all of Nicholas's own inhumanity back upon him" (49) as he exploits Alison sexually. After that, he realizes the difference "between his false relationship with Alison and the true art of living and loving" and thus Conchis is trying to show him "to stop collecting pornographic relationships and to begin to imitate art." (Palmer, 50)

After the trial, Nicholas, who needs to understand that it is all hazard and happens by chance, is still unaware of the real purpose of the godgame and when he meets Leverrier in Rome and wants to compare notes with him, Leverrier reacts: "The essence of ... his ... system is surely that you learn not to 'compare notes.'" (**The Magus** 581) Leverrier refuses to talk about Phraxos as he emphasizes freedom achieved by his individual way, and thus they must not compare notes. Leverrier understands that the masque is a performance but unlike Nicholas, up to that moment he understands that there is a truth in it because if Nicholas had made any sense of the masque, he would not go to Leverrier. Leverrier does not want to interfere in Nicholas's perception of the godgame. Nicholas himself needs to find it through an inner journey to the core of self, because according to John Fowles: "... existentialism 'tries to re-establish in the individual a sense of his own uniqueness.' A man coming alive to himself in an absurd world of both literal and metaphorical death (such as the death of selfhood or the death of love) is Fowles's, Heraclitus's, and Camus's concept of an 'aristos' or 'good man.'" (Palmer, 7)

When, after the trial, he goes to London to interrogate who Conchis is, he meets Lily de Seitas, the twins' mother. She tells Nicholas why her daughters slept with him. When Nicholas accuses them of sleeping with a 'negro,' she does not mind: "Of course, if you wish to live in the world of received ideas and received manners, what we did, what my daughters did, is disgusting. Very well. But remember that there is another possible explanation. She may have been being very brave. Neither I nor my children pretend to be ordinary people. They were not

brought up to be ordinary.” (**The Magus** 612) Their aim was, she tells Nicholas, to teach him the fact that “physical pleasure and moral responsibility are two very different things.” (**The Magus** 638) Nicholas manipulates women into sexual relationships and abstains from taking any responsibility in his affairs since he is a sexist person who has a misogynist perspective towards the female. Therefore, Lily de Seitas says: “My daughters were nothing but a personification of your own selfishness.” (**The Magus** 612) She tries to awaken Nicholas’s consciousness to see the higher form of reality and what Alison stands for:

You are really the luckiest and the blindest young man. Lucky because you are born with some charm for women, even though you seem determined not to show it to me. Blind because you have had a little piece of pure womankind in your hands. Do you not realize that Alison possessed the one great quality our sex has to contribute to life? Besides which things like education, class, background are nothing. And you’ve let it slip. (**The Magus** 612)

It is plain enough to state that Lily/Julie and Lily de Seitas try to prompt Nicholas to “a process by which his disconnection from and objectification of women can be gradually replaced with respectful, authentic relationships.” (Lenz, 95) Conchis has chosen Nicholas for his godgame as he believes that the “masculine view of the world must reverse itself.” (Raper, 67) When Lily de Seitas and Nicholas go into a gallery of china, she presents Nicholas a china plate on which were “a naively drawn Chinaman and his wife, their two children between them, eternal ceramic fossils, in the centre.” (**The Magus** 635) One can argue that the plate symbolizes the happy family and it functions as the iconic image of what may help Urfe for his existence. It offers him an unheroic life, removed from his literary speculations, as the Swiss shepherd had done, may turn into a source of happiness. Likewise, Conchis has presented Urfe a basic simple life by suggesting him to get married, because for Conchis, Urfe’s major sin is not to be able to separate life from fiction as Urfe wants to lead a heroic life.

When Nicholas meets Mitford, who later was arrested for being into fraud, he comes to understand the things he has in common with Mitford, who is his alter-ego, and how barbarian he seems to Lily de Seitas: “I disliked Mitford because he was

cross and mean, but even more because he was a caricature, an extension, of certain qualities in myself; he had on his skin, visible, the carcinoma I nursed inside me.... I thought of Lily de Seitas; how to her I must seem as Mitford did to myself. A barbarian.” (**The Magus** 627)

However, only after he slaps Alison does Nicholas comes to the realization that he is not being watched as he has always thought: “There were no watching eyes. The windows were as blank as they looked. The theatre was empty. It was not a theatre... perhaps it had all been to bring me to this, to give me my last lesson and final ordeal.” (**The Magus** 666)

From the start, the purpose of the masque organized by Conchis has been to make Nicholas understand that he is not in the centre of the universe and that he should change his short-sighted interpretation of reality in order to see the polymorphous nature of it. Thus, Conchis initiates an inner journey to self-awareness in Nicholas to be able to attain existential freedom and create his own existence, instead of sustaining an unauthentic life. The aim of the masque is to awaken in Nicholas the need to look inward and thus: “The world and the people of **The Magus** are defined as mirrors into which Nicholas must look in order to find his real self ... The whole intent of the godgame is for Nicholas to look closely into these mirrors and there to discover his own distorted image” (Palmer, 100) Hence, in order to achieve a new existential identity Nicholas is required to put aside his former self which has been shaped by external circumstances and attain a higher sense of reality by moving from the “quotidian time of a trivial reality to a higher reality of cosmic transcendence and timelessness.” (Fawcner, 118) In order to be able to achieve this higher sense of reality and create his own existence by going through an existential journey to selfhood, Nicholas is educated through art, as Fowles believes life should imitate art because it is art that “... permits us to rehearse life, to act out a series of alternatives so that we know how to act in ‘real life’ situations.” (Boccia, 237)

3. THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN

The French Lieutenant's Woman, which is a re-writing of the past and which compares Victorian and Postmodern periods as a postmodern text, narrates a story set in the Victorian period, yet from a contemporary perspective. Although the story is set in Victorian England in 1867, it is narrated in 1967, one hundred years later, which provides the writer the chance to have a closer look at the depths of Victorian society through new emerging theories like existentialism and historiographic metafiction. Brook Lenz states: "Despite the fact that the narrator couches his story in the conventions of the Victorian novel, **The French Lieutenant's Woman** is fundamentally a contemporary postmodern work that interrogates various ways of constructing experience." (103) As people are trapped in the conventions of Victorian society in which they have to sustain their lives according to the norms and rules that society imposes on them, they lose their individuality and can only find a proper place in the social hierarchy as a member of a group instead of leading an authentic (existential) life.

However, John Fowles provides an alternative existence to Charles who has a life strongly attached to social conventions and thus is unable to lead a meaningful life because of his artificial identity. As Charles, the protagonist of the novel, comes from an aristocrat family, he has never worked in his life and so spends his time travelling and collecting fossils. He calls himself a scientist and at the same time a Darwinist since he is interested in paleontology. Yet, for the narrator, he is far from even understanding what Darwinism is: "Charles called himself a Darwinist, and yet he had not really understood Darwin. But then, nor had Darwin himself." (**The FLW** 52) Just like Nicholas d'Urfe in **The Magus**, Charles Smithson needs to redefine his notion of self and the world. In order to be able to discover personal authenticity, he needs to start an exploration into his inner self.

Just as Conchis organizes the godgame in **The Magus** for Nicholas to attain existential freedom by being educated through art, this time it is through Sarah Woodruff that John Fowles initiates this process in Charles Smithson. In order to achieve his true existential self, Charles, a prototype of the 19th century, needs to exterminate his artificial identity which is shaped by external circumstances.

Fawkner claims: “The whole novel is written from the point of view of a narrator looking upon Victorian happenings with the awareness and insight of a twentieth-century existentialism that involves a radically different apprehension of time from that of an 1867 gentleman like Charles Smithson.” (54) With regard to that existential insight and awareness, Charles is required to realize that his (artificial) identity is constructed by external circumstances and he should embark on a quest into the world of selfhood in order to, first, destroy his artificial identity, and then, construct an authentic one.

Charles Smithson, who is waiting to inherit wealth from his unmarried uncle, is engaged to Ernestia Freeman who is the daughter of a rising class member as a result of the Industrial Revolution. However, it has become quite obvious even in the very first pages of the novel that Charles does not truly love Ernestia but rather is forced by conditions outside of his inner self to pretend to love her. He is afraid of becoming a ‘fossil’ like his uncle and is afraid that “life was passing him by, that he was being, as in so many other things, overfastidious, lazy, selfish ... and worse.” (**The FLW** 88) He occupies his mind by travelling and regards travelling as a substitute for not marrying. With such thoughts in mind, “one morning he woke up. Everything had become simple. He loved Ernestia.” (**The FLW** 89) Like Nicholas, he has more than one face towards life since he is unable to live according to his inner self: “Charles ... had more than one vocabulary. With Sam in the morning, with Ernestia across a gay lunch, and here in the role of Alarmed Propriety ... he was almost three different men...” (**The FLW** 157) That’s why, like Nicholas, he needs to “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.” (Jackson, 226)

The moment Charles comes across Sarah’s face he realizes how different she is from the other women of his age: “There was no artifice there, no hypocrisy, no hysteria, no mask: and above all, no sign of madness.” (**The FLW** 10) Charles learns from Ernestia that in Lyme Regis they call her Poor Tragedy and The French Lieutenant’s Woman. Despite being seen as an outcast by society, “Sarah seems to sense that she belongs to another age, to the future. In contrast with Ernestia ... Sarah has the frank countenance and direct look of the modern emancipated woman of the

twentieth century, an expression that in the nineteenth century is entirely disconcerting.” (Fawcner, 87) Unlike Ernestia, who has an artificial self constructed by external factors, Sarah is the liberated New Woman because “Ernestia belongs to unreality, to a world that is shallow, false and dead compared with Sarah’s. The realistic/romantic dualism is inverted here; it is the ‘romantic’ Sarah who represents reality while Ernestia stands for comfortable escape.” (Fawcner, 120) In the text, Sarah has stayed out of the roles which have been constructed by Victorian social conventions and comes to know her real self better than Charles, and therefore, she comes to represent “a way of being, and knowing, that masculine Charles – and all that is rational, enlightened, progressive, and self-satisfied in his age – has left behind.” (Warburton, 178)

However, in the text, we do not hear about Sarah from her own voice, but rather, she is described from Charles’s perspective. As Micheal states: “within the novel there is no representation of Sarah as an independent being. Charles’ interpretations of Sarah are so varied and so inconsistent...” (Micheal, 229) Yet, we see, in the text, that Sarah is liberated from social conventions and comes to serve “an educational function in **The French Lieutenant’s Woman**, prompting Charles, and readers along with him, to evaluate the hypocrisies and injustices inherent in his worldview and to pursue a more existentially authentic existence.” (Lenz, 114) Sarah has rejected to belong to the traditional/conventional Victorian values and has created her own identity as a free woman. Being in the process of achieving a personal authenticity, Sarah knows her (authentic) identity better than Charles does, and so, “in her own freedom, she knows how to encourage the grasping of freedoms by others.” (Palmer, 75)

In the text, Sarah regards her relation with Charles (or Charles’s education process) as a work of art, which she clearly discloses in the final ending of the novel. Just as Conchis organizes the masque to initiate an educational process in Nicholas through art, in **The French Lieutenant’s Woman**, Sarah and Fowles, in the form of the narrator interrupting the narrative, try to make Charles, who regards himself as a scientist, understand the fact that he should search for a new real identity to discover personal authenticity through art rather than science because:

The specific value of art for man is that it is closer to reality than science; that it is not dominated as science must be, by logic and reason; that it is therefore essentially a liberating activity, while science – for excellent and necessary causes – is a constructing one. Finally and most importantly it is the best, because richest, most complex and most easily comprehensible, medium of communication between human beings.” (**The Aristos** 184)

In the text, the person who plays the crucial role in shaping Charles’s opinion of Sarah is Dr. Grogan who represents scientific thinking since he values reason beyond all things. He views society as a mechanical organization because “his sense of progress depended too closely on an ordered society.” (**The FLW** 166) As Dr. Grogan is blinded by science, he attributes Sarah’s plight to melancholia and explains it in scientific terms by referring to a German doctor who divides melancholia into several types. According to him, Sarah’s melancholia is the worst kind, obscure melancholia, and he sees no remedy for her plight: “You must not think she is like us men, able to reason clearly, examine her motives, understand why she behaves like she does. One must see her as a being in a mist. All we can do is wait and hope that the mists rise. Then perhaps ...’ he fell silent. Then added, without hope, ‘Perhaps.’” (**The FLW** 170) Being a radical follower of reason, Dr. Grogan is, like Charles, unable to interpret what Sarah stands for: “Increasingly convinced of Sarah’s commitment to her misery, Grogan ultimately defines Sarah in terms of a stereotypically feminine reliance on emotion and incapacity for logic ... Grogan imposes patriarchal standards onto her situation, and encourages Charles, a fellow Darwinian, to likewise consider her an object to analyze and categorize.” (Lenz, 106-7)

One can argue that from the viewpoint of not only Dr. Grogan but also Mrs. Poulteney, who employs Sarah in her house after the scandal with Varguennes, Sarah has no appropriate place in Victorian society and therefore, “Sarah feels entirely out of place in the world. She feels born to suffer, born to be isolated.” (Jackson, 229) Mrs. Poulteney who “acknowledged no bounds to her authority” (**The FLW**, 21) treats her servants badly and the servants can hardly put up with the way they are treated and as a result, they flee the house: “Madam, I should rather spend the rest of my life in the poorhouse than live another week under this roof.” (**The FLW**, 20)

The reason Mrs. Poulteney employs Sarah, 'a fallen woman,' in her house is not that she feels sorrow for what befell Sarah but rather she tries to maintain her respectability and eminence in her circle as she has a reputation for helping people in need: "among her own class, a very limited circle, she was renowned for her charity." (**The FLW**, 22) In one of her speeches with the vicar, Mrs. Poulteney expresses that she is not like Lady Cotton, "who lived some miles behind Lyme" and "was famous for her fanatically eleemosynary life." (**The FLW**, 25) Lady Cotton has established a house for fallen women and tries to help them unconditionally. Therefore, unlike Lady Cotton, Mrs Poulteney is the voice of Victorian society and labels Sarah as the fallen woman because she is: "...the representative of the larger society. Sarah's painful relations with her ... mirror the heroine's sense of alienation from the dominant social environment. Mrs. Poulteney is an almost Dickensian caricature of those aspects of the motherland of Victorian England which Sarah must defeat." (Warburton, 172) From the perspectives of Dr. Grogan and Mrs. Poulteney who are the representatives of science and the social order in the text, Sarah does not fit any kind of category in society and thus is described as melancholic and mad.

Sarah, as a liberated New Woman, creates a threat to the structure of Victorian society by her existence in this society and for this reason, society cannot tolerate her presence. As she does not act according to what social conventions require her to do, she is labelled as the melancholic and mad woman who deserves to be punished. She is the fallen woman who, by sleeping with Lieutenant Varguennes, has behaved contrary to what Victorian society would expect her to do. As Dr. Grogan, a strict follower of reason, diagnoses her situation to be melancholia and Mrs. Poulteney sees her presence as a threat to the structure of the society, she should be alienated and confined not to damage the dignity of society. Michel Foucault states: "This particular form of sensibility traces the features proper to madness in the world of unreason. It is primarily concerned with scandal. In its most general form, confinement is explained or at least justified, by the desire to avoid scandal." (**Madness and Civilization** 62) Likewise, Sarah's affair with Lieutenant Varguennes has been regarded as a scandal and she is pushed out of the social structure by being labelled as a melancholic and mad woman. To explain Sarah's situation, Dr. Grogan

tells a couple of other stories besides Emile de La Ranciere's in which women are identified with madness "in order to attain a desired end, to conflict pain upon herself." (**The FLW** 259)

Like Mrs. Poulteney, Dr Grogan is unable to interpret Sarah's situation because he is blinded by science and sees nothing as reality rather than reason. Likewise, Charles Smithson, calls himself a scientist and Darwinist due to his interest in paleontology. As a matter of fact, they are not able to see the polymorphous nature of truth as they have a short-sighted interpretation of reality. In order to prevent Charles from becoming a prey for Sarah, Dr. Grogan says: "... are we not both believers in science? Do we not both hold that truth is the one great principle? What did Socrates die for? ... Know thyself, Smithson, *know* thyself!" (**The FLW** 247) Yet, what he is not able to understand is that: "Unformed and unready, Charles needs training – but not as a scientist or collector. Only art can make him whole, – by showing him the sacred of life by teaching him about human relationships, and by discouraging him from shaping life to a logical system or Formula." (Wolfe, 139)

According to John Jowles, it is through art rather than science that Charles can be educated to have a real existential self and thus lead an authentic life. In the text, it is through Sarah Woodruff, who has created a freedom for herself, that a process of learning is to be initiated in Charles who "nurtures an inbred attitude of possessiveness toward women; he at first refuses to recognize Sarah as capable of autonomous selfhood outside of any reference or relation to men." (Palmer, 75) Like Nicholas, Charles spends his time on hobbies without any moral action and is a collector rather than leading an authentic life. Charles's grandfather was also a collector just like Charles who is a collector of fossils: "his grandfather the baronet had fallen into the second of the two great categories of English country squires: claret-swilling fox-hunters and scholarly collectors of everything under the sun. He had collected books principally." (**The FLW** 13) However, Charles needs to become aware of the fact that he should understand his inner self and take responsibility for his actions instead of being a mere collector because collecting means: "the act of seizing or destroying in order to possess." (McDaniel, 33)

After Sarah enters into Charles's life, his life is shattered. He is led by Sarah who is constructed by Fowles, the novelist, into a psychological journey to achieve self-identity and authenticity: "Charles, the fossil collecting scientist takes part in a rational and optimistic quest for the buried existential secrets of the past unfolding life as an endless becoming, time as an eternal now." (Fawkner, 71) In his relation with Sarah, Charles comes to question his life and see how he is torn apart by society, and thus, his existence is shaped by external circumstances rather than emanating from his inner self. Fawkner states:

In *The FLW*, the individual's personal search for an authentic private integrity and sense of true selfhood is seen throughout as something that takes place in relation to society, in the face of society, in spite of society. The process of inner quest is to a very high degree a confrontation with a fixed social order, a taken-for-granted set of values. In his longing for a higher place of existence, the individual becomes increasingly aware of the extent to which his beliefs and ideas are products of his social heritage and milieu rather than of his own critical thinking and freedom to experience the new and unknown. In *The FLW* the Victorian Age becomes an ideal temporal setting for a confrontation between an individual seeking freedom and a social order doing all it can to prevent this. (68-69)

Charles is attracted to Sarah when he meets her in Ware Commons and he is slowly moving away from Ernestia who "represents the 'dead' past and Sarah represent(s) the future that is 'impossible to be born.'" (Palmer, 29) Therefore, Sarah, who has refused Victorian convention and created her own life, becomes the magus of the novel to "lead Charles out of the collector – consciousness of the Victorian Age and into a timeless world of selfhood." (Palmer, 51) However, unlike Conchis who is a mature, educated and experienced man, Sarah, as a young 'outcast' woman, does not possess the power Conchis had to plan ahead to draw Charles into the 'godgame.' Rather, it can be argued that Sarah can be compared to Alison and just as Conchis used Alison to draw Nicholas into the godgame to shatter his perception of life, this time Fowles uses Sarah to lead Charles out of his collector-consciousness and prompt him to start an inner journey to self-awareness. Just like Alison, who has attained her freedom before she meets Nicholas, Sarah has achieved a new identity in her world of selfhood before she meets Charles. In his relation with Sarah, Charles

comes across another form of reality. Yet, to be able to achieve a true existential identity, Charles is required to confront his former self and then create his own authentic identity and live in line with this self.

As Charles wishes to marry Ernestia out of social responsibility he needs to wear a mask in his relationship with his fiancée to pretend to be loving her. As he does not have an authentic real self, he has assumed different artificial identities in his relationships with different people. In order for Charles to come to realize that: “he’s the seducer, the seduced, abandoner and abandoned, hero, heroine, victim and villain all in one,” (Tarbox, 98) Sarah tells him the story of Lieutenant Varguennes. Just as Varguennes has deserted Sarah after sleeping with her, Charles keeps his relationship with Ernestia although he does not have any emotional affiliation to her, which means he may desert her like Varguennes or just keep the marriage owing to social responsibility. That is why, just like Conchis in **The Magus**, Sarah tries to shatter Charles’s former self and ideas, and thus, turns him “into positions of complete powerlessness.” (McDaniel, 36) Sarah’s identity of a fallen woman is created by her own to reject to be a submissive member of Victorian convention and she tries to draw Charles into it, that is, to choose freedom and create his own existence:

Mr Smithson, what I beg you to understand is not that I did this shameful thing, but why I did it. Why I sacrificed a woman’s most precious possession for the transient gratification of a man I did not love. ... I did it so that I *should* never be the same again, I did it so that people *should* point at me, should say, there walks the French Lieutenant’s Whore – oh yes, let the word be said. So that they should know I have suffered, and suffer, as others suffer in every town and village in this land. I could not marry that man. So I married shame. (**The FLW** 191)

Through Sarah, Fowles tries to prompt Charles “to rebel against the classifying and fossilizing impulse of the Victorian Age” and see women according to their constructs since “human relationships cannot always be neatly classified and then filed away for future reference like the fossils in his collection.” (Palmer, 51) Thus, Sarah acknowledges her role as a fallen woman and “deliberately contradicts the established social and moral attitudes of her time as a Victorian heroine.” (Tibor,

76) It is clear that Sarah has intentionally constructed her identity as the fallen woman to rebel against the oppressive attitudes of Victorian society to women and to create her own existence which is not bound to the dictates of society. As she does not conform to the constraints that society imposes on women, her plight is defined to be melancholia or hysteria. This enables society to marginalize such women by attributing their situation to unreason and thus achieving the right to silence them. However, in the text, she is “represented as a superior type of self-consciousness, the magus figure who comes to teach Charles the knowledge she already commands.” (Jackson, 227) As Fowles constructs Sarah to transcend time and have a higher sense of reality, she does not restrict herself to the norms and conventions of society but rather becomes the liberated New Woman:

Deliberately sacrificing her respectability and her acceptable but restrictive social identity, Sarah embraces this role with a specific aim of provocation; she wants her community to contemplate the conditions that could prompt a woman in her position to take such a radical step. In fact, she does not actually engage in intercourse with Varguennes – a decision in keeping with her self-protective and insightful character – but allows her community to believe that she has. In so doing, Sarah liberates herself from conventional narratives through which her society defines and constrains women. (Lenz, 121)

Sarah, who has achieved her own identity, tries to awaken in Charles a search for self-realization because “Sarah is to a higher degree than Charles, aware of her own situation, conscious of her own struggle, of its purpose and meaning.” (Fawcner, 87) Sarah is seen as an outcast in society, yet we know that she deliberately creates the myth of fallen woman to free herself from social norms. As Tibor Toth states: “Sarah also challenges the myth of the prostitute as she has an authentic status both as a pure woman and as a fallen woman. The image of the fallen woman is created by her and this means that she ‘enacts’ free authorial will.” (77) However, Charles is not able to see her as a whole human being and she is represented through a masculine perspective and thus is treated like an object with no point of view of her own. Just like Nicholas who is not able to see Alison as whole, Charles is unable to interpret what Sarah represents in the novel. Therefore, like Nicholas in **The Magus**, he is unable to realize the fact that:

the mythic figure of Eve is just as much a helpmate as a temptress, ... and likewise Sarah illustrates both roles. In opposition to her negative role as seductress, Sarah also embodies a potential redemption for Charles... Sarah thus functions as a symbol of the freedom for which Charles is questing; and Charles's obsession is directed toward the ideal that Sarah represents rather than toward the concrete woman. (Michael, 232)

In order to draw Charles into a process of learning in order for him to attain a new sense of responsible freedom, Sarah tries to captivate Charles. In their meeting when Nicholas approaches the Undercliff where Sarah is sleeping, he realizes that she is lying in a very tempting way: "The girl lay in complete abandonment of deep sleep, on her back. Her coat had fallen open over her indigo dress... The sleeper's face was turned away from him, her right arm thrown back, bent in a childlike way... There was something intensely tender and yet sexual in the way she lay; it awakened a dim echo in Charles of a moment from his time in Paris." (**The FLW** 76) It is clear that Sarah is lying tenderly and sexually like a model in a painting in order to tempt Charles, and thus, as Brooke Lenz says: "Coming upon her unexpectedly as she sleeps on a ledge in the Undercliff, Charles experiences an irresistible urge to surreptitiously observe and reflect on her as an object on display." (107) Likewise, when Charles is walking towards Ware Commons where he hopes to see Sarah, he sees the perfect harmony in nature and likens it to a painting by Pisanello in the National Gallery. Only then does he realize the fact that everything, though of minute significance, is of great importance as a part of the whole: "It seemed to announce a far deeper and stronger reality ... perhaps nothing more original than a priority of existence over death, of the individual over the species, of ecology over classification." (**The FLW** 264) While coming across or thinking of art objects like paintings, Charles catches a glimpse of a higher order of reality, that is, transcendence because as Fowles states in **The Aristos**: "art is the attempt to transcend time." (189)

After Charles learns that Mrs.Poulteney fired Sarah from her home and he reads a note from Sarah to meet her, he suddenly comes to realize the importance of existence and that all that matters is 'Now':

In a vivid insight, a flash of black lightning, he saw that all life was parallel: that evolution was not vertical, ascending to a perfection, but horizontal. Time was the great fallacy; existence was without history, was always now, was always this being caught in the same fiendish machine. All those painted screens erected by man to shut out reality – history, religion, duty, social position, all were illusions, mere opium fantasies. (**The FLW** 226)

Just like Nicholas's experience on Mt. Parnassus, Charles, all of a sudden, realizes the importance of his individualism, that is, his existence which is free from social roles, stereotypes and categories that are the constructions of external circumstances such as history, religion or duty. Moreover, he comes to see that his existence is dependent on 'now,' that is, he can only live in the present time if he is to have a new self: "It is now or nothing. A better state, a better design, a better self, a better world; but always these things beginning now." (**The Aristos**, 176)

Likewise, Charles catches sight of a higher order of reality after his encounter with prostitute Sarah. When he meets the prostitute Sarah, he realizes the similarities between the two Sarahs. Like Sarah Woodruff, the prostitute Sarah has also been deserted by a 'sojjer' that is a soldier. When Charles dangles his watch to Sarah's child, when he is about to leave there, he suddenly comes to realize the existential importance of Time:

Earlier that evening ... he had had a false sense of living in the present: his rejection then of his past and future had been a mere vicious plunge into irresponsible oblivion. Now he had a far more profound and genuine intuition of the great human illusion about time, which is that its reality is like that of a road – on which one can constantly see where one was and where one probably will be – instead of the truth: that time is a room, a now so close to us that we regularly fail to see it. (**The FLW** 354)

Charles does not have sex with the prostitute Sarah and Fowles draws parallels between his affair with this Sarah and Rossetti's Jenny as William J. Palmer states: "The events of Charles's evening with Sarah the prostitute directly parallel the events described in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem "Jenny." Like Rossetti with his Jenny, Charles cannot exploit this Sarah, cannot make her suffer." (53) In Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem "Jenny" the narrator, like Charles, does not sleep with the

young girl and becomes aware of the innocence of the young girl. Rossetti stresses that it is circumstances rather than the young girl's nature that has forced her into prostitution and thus one cannot condemn prostitutes but needs to understand the circumstances. Society pretends that they do not exist but Rossetti looks at the situation realistically. He strongly emphasizes that those circumstances exist within society and so it is society to be blamed for their plight. Hence, like Rossetti's "Jenny," after his encounter with prostitute Sarah, Charles does not sleep with her because he comes to realize a higher order of reality.

Then, after meeting and sleeping with Sarah at the hotel in Exeter, he realizes that what he has been told about Varguennes has been made up by Sarah as he sees that she was a virgin: "She had not given herself to Varguennes. She had lied. All her conduct, all her motives in Lyme Regis had been based on a lie. But for what purpose. Why? Why? Why?" (**The FLW**, 393) Feeling guilty, he compares himself to Varguennes and wants to marry Sarah for he feels responsible for taking her virginity. At that point, he understands that it is his sex that reduces women to mere sex objects and fails to see them as whole. He says: "The injustice Grogan and he had done her! She was a nobler being than either of them. Charles was flooded with contempt for his sex: their triviality, their credulity, their selfishness. But he was of that sex, and there came to him some of its old devious cowardice." (**The FLW** 392) Yet, he is still yet to see a new sense of freedom because the reason he wants to marry Sarah is not that it emanates from his inner self but rather he regards it as a way of redemption from his sin because "Charles was like many Victorian men. He could not really believe that any woman of refined sensibilities could enjoy being a receptacle for male lust. He had already abused her love for him intolerably; it must not happen again." (**The FLW**, 393)

Since Charles still thinks like a Victorian man, he is unable to learn enough from Sarah's conduct and so goes to church because he feels guilty for what he has done to Sarah. As a Victorian man, who has had intercourse with a woman he is not married to, Charles comes to an existential understanding in the church where he goes to plead forgiveness for what he has done. In the church, he suddenly sees Sarah's face on the crucifix rather than Christ's and then he starts crying. His

experience in the church becomes the start for his inner journey. William J. Palmer claims: "Having committed himself to Sarah, Charles can finally look himself in the eye and he is ready to begin the journey through the looking glass into the inner self ... Having committed a major Victorian crime, a sexual sin, Charles stands on the threshold of the journey into the inner self...Charles's journey is into the abstract loneliness of selfhood." (102-3) In the church, in his dialogue with his better and worse self, he comes to understand the existential importance of rejecting 'Duty' to be free of all social burdens which result from external circumstances. When he sees himself on the cross and then crucified on Sarah, and then Sarah appears besides him just like in a marriage ceremony, he suddenly sees the right purpose of Christianity in a sudden flash of illumination which is: "to bring about a world in which the hanging man could be descended, could be seen not with the rictus of agony on his face, but the smiling peace of a victory brought about by, and in, living men and women." (**The FLW** 404) As Charles goes through his existential realization in the church he comes to see that "the true freedom implies a kind of ongoing self-crucifixion, an ongoing requirement to make the choice to be authentically free." (Jackson, 235) In the church, he sees not only the meaninglessness of his former notion of reality but also sees a new kind of reality and thus "Charles moves from complacency to doubt, from the known to the undiscovered, and from the safety to the danger." (Wolfe, 137) In the church, his short-sighted interpretation of reality comes into his sight: "What he saw was now like a glimpse of another world: a new reality, a new causality, a new creation." (**The FLW**, 406) The church scene, where Charles comes to have the opportunity to view his notion of self and the world differently, becomes a kind of awakening for him, just like Nicholas's experience during the hypnosis and on Mt. Parnassus.

Yet after the church scene, like Nicholas, Charles, who has not undergone the process of suffering to internalize the new sense of reality yet, cannot free himself from the burden of 'duty' and 'propriety' and he also cannot comprehend what the purpose of Sarah is in lying to him about Varguennes and thus he blames her for manipulating him: "He began to understand Sarah's deceit. She knew he loved her; and she knew he had been blind to the true depth of that love. The false

version of her betrayal by Varguennes, her other devices, were but stratagems to unblind him.” (**The FLW** 409) He wants to cleanse himself from his past obligations and only then he thinks he can ‘possess’ Sarah. Hence, in order to acquit himself of what he has done as he thinks he has forced a virgin, he talks about ending his engagement with Ernestia. But, Sarah rejects being a proper woman to be his wife: “Today I have thought of my own happiness. If we were to meet again I could think only of yours. There can be no happiness for you with me. You cannot marry me, Mr. Smithson.” (**The FLW** 396) Sarah is already aware that she can only become a medium through whom Charles can initiate an inner journey towards his selfhood: “If Sarah ... seems for Charles to stand between himself and his happiness, since it is only with her that he can imagine any living future, she can on a less personal and myopic plane become for him the way to emancipation – one achieved not with her but through her.” (Fawcner, 85) Therefore, it can be argued that just like Alison, who disappears from Nicholas’s life (Nicholas is told that she has committed suicide), Sarah vanishes, after the sexual intercourse with Charles, to prompt him to “withdraw into inner space to define himself.” (Palmer, 84)

In order to exterminate his old artificially constructed self and come to realize that he should create his own existence and give meaning to his life, Charles needs to go through a process of solitude and isolation because according to John Fowles: “the existential journey to selfhood is a travelling out of the enclosures of isolation, a passage through the thick walls of loneliness.” (Palmer, 80) That’s why, after he sleeps with Sarah and goes through the existential enlightenment in the church in Exeter, Sarah disappears and Charles enters “the exiled world/nomadic journey.” (Wu, 113) In the absence of Sarah, he feels alienated and he suffers, yet he has strong faith in finding Sarah and consummating his relationship with her. During that process, he becomes interested in reading “Maud” a poem by Tennyson. He decides to travel to America in pursuit of Sarah and like “Maud” he “celebrates his timelessness alienation and loneliness,” and as a result he “expresses his truest self a maverick like Maud, in depth.” (Wu, 113) In order not to be fossilized like the fossils he collects, he gives up paleontology and collecting fossils, and so he is taking a step towards not being a possessor as he had been so far. Then, he becomes fond of

reading “Maud” as he comes to realize that instead of being a collector of fossils, the way he could express his inner self is by verse, another form of art.

In “Maud” a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson, the narrator comes to experience nothingness and thus needs to create a new beginning after his father’s death. After his father’s funeral, the narrator falls in love with Maud. Yet, Maud’s brother poses a problem and the narrator kills him. As a result, the narrator has to leave France to go in exile and he later learns that Maud has died too. Maud’s death affects the psychology of the narrator and turns him insane. The narrator imagines that he himself is dead. Like Charles, the narrator needs to exterminate his old self and instead, reconstruct his personality. Just like Sarah, who after sleeping with Charles, refuses to unite with him: “You know you cannot marry me” despite Charles’s objection: “I wish to. I could never look myself in the face again if I did not,” (**The FLW**, 391) because Charles needs to start an internal journey and experience his solitude in exile, in “Maud” the narrator loses Maud to be re-born and achieve a new self. As Dorothy M. Mermin states: “Maud has to die because what she stands for can be achieved only internally, never as an external, objective reality.” (267)

Just like Charles who seeks to find a meaning and thinks that his happiness depends on his reunion with Sarah, the narrator in “Maud” also seeks a meaningful existence through Maud. Yet, since both the narrator in “Maud” and Charles in **The FLW** can only attain a meaningful life in their world of selfhood, Maud dies and Sarah disappears, leaving them alone because “all lonelinesses are a part of our growing up ... of our freedom.” (**The Aristos** 40) Besides “Maud,” Charles immerses himself in Matthew Arnold’s “To Marguerite” which is also about isolation. In the poem, the narrator compares humans with islands to emphasize how far away people are from each other: “We mortal millions live alone.” (“To Marguerite”) The poem emphasizes the existential loneliness of man in a depersonalized era. However, the narrator expresses his wish for connection and so wishes that the water between the islands would recede for islands to unite once again: “For surely once, they feel, we were / Parts of a single continent. / Now round us spreads the watery / - plain / Oh might our merges meet again!” (“To Marguerite”)

In the poem, there is a definite longing for a possibility for wholeness and union. We know that in Victorian England, a strict patriarchal society, human-beings, in general, were isolated from each other and women who did not abide by the dictates of society were regarded as outcasts. As Fowles states in **The Aristos**: “Adam societies are ones in which the man and the father, male gods, exact strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behaviour ... The Victorian is a typical such period.” (116) However, as the narrator of “To Marguerite” stresses, looking behind patriarchal values we can unite and reach a wholeness again, which is what Charles needs to understand in the text.

After having been left by Sarah, he dreams that Sarah is beside him in an art gallery or a church, the places where he realizes the true nature of reality and there he comes to understand his wrong notion of categorizing women as pure and fallen women since he is unable to see them whole: “... he became increasingly unsure of the frontier between the real Sarah and the Sarah he had created in so many such dreams: the one Eve personified, all mystery and love and profundity, and the other a half-scheming, half-crazed governess from an obscure seaside town.” (**The FLW** 476)

Just as Nicholas was awakened to a real existential selfhood by Conchis through the godgame in which there have been various references to art forms, in **The French Lieutenant’s Woman** “the abstract theme of art unfolds simultaneously with the existential theme of the quest for selfhood.” (Palmer, 30) For Fowles, life imitates art and thus people can define themselves by creating a new authentic identity. In **The Magus** and **The FLW** “art becomes the primal stimulus to self definition, moral action and finally existential life... Life must learn to imitate great art’s powers for truth – telling and beauty – creating.” (Palmer, 31) That’s why, Charles catches a glimpse of a higher order of reality when he is in an art gallery and Fowles places Sarah in Rossetti’s studio for Charles to reach his true self through art.

When Nicholas hears about Sarah and comes back to England in search of her, he sees Sarah “placed in an appropriate center of the art world, the Rossetti household.”(Mansfield, 281) When he goes to Rossetti’s house, he sees that the

place is like an art gallery furnished with a variety of paintings and drawings just like Conchis's realm, Bourani. The thing that strikes him most, when he comes across Sarah in Rossetti's house furnished with many art forms, is her dress:

And her dress! It was so different that he thought for a moment she was someone else. He had always seen her in his mind in the former clothes ... But this was someone in the full uniform of the New Woman, flagrantly rejecting all formal contemporary notions of female fashion. Her skirt was of a rich dark blue and held at the waist by a crimson belt with a gilt star clasp; which also enclosed the pink-and-white striped silk blouse, long-sleeved, flowing, with a delicate small collar of white lace, to which a small cameo acted as tie. (**The FLW** 491-92)

To emphasize Sarah's position as the liberated New Woman through whom Charles will initiate an inner journey to his world of selfhood, Sarah's new dress, in Rossetti's house, is pointed out because:

The text especially utilizes clothing to define and explain Sarah's character toward the end of the novel when she is presented as an emancipated New Woman. Sarah's colourful and less restrictive clothing ... indicate a Pre-Raphaelite aesthetic as was represented in fine art toward the end of the Victorian era. This colourful fashion aesthetic was associated with sensuality and free love in newly liberated New Women. (Scott, 419-20)

After Charles finds Sarah in Rossetti's house, his marriage proposal is again rejected by her:

I do not wish to marry because ... first, because of my past which habituated me to loneliness ... I now live in a world where loneliness is most easy to avoid. And I have found that I treasure it. I do not want to share my life. I wish to be what I am, not what a husband, however kind, however indulgent, must expect me to become in marriage ... My second reason is my present. I never expected to be happy in life. Yet I find myself happy where I am situated now. (**The FLW** 500)

Then, Charles starts to see Sarah more like a woman that exists for herself. "Her bright clothes had misled him at first. But he began to perceive they were no more than a factor of her new self-knowledge and self-possession; she no longer needed an outward uniform." (**The FLW** 501) However, we can understand that, up to this point, the change in Charles is only limited because he still cannot

comprehend that his happiness is not dependent on Sarah but instead it should come from his inner self: “I too have changed, I have learnt much of myself, of what was previously false in me. I make no conditions. All that Miss Sarah Woodruff is, Mrs Charles Smithson may continue to be. I would not ban you your new world or your continuing pleasure in it. I offer no more than an enlargement of your present happiness.” (**The FLW 501**) Charles is yet to understand that Sarah tries to open his eyes to go towards an inner journey and find happiness there rather than looking for his happiness in external factors. Yet, when Sarah tells him that she knew he did not marry Ernestia, Charles becomes frustrated and blames her for taking pleasure in destroying Charles’ happiness.

While climbing the stairs to encounter Sarah at Rossetti’s studio, Charles has the chance to look around and see a great deal of paintings and drawings. He is already familiar with those paintings and drawings: “He was sufficiently knowledgeable about modern art to recognize the school to which most of them belonged ... The gentleman with the pen was a collector of art; of somewhat suspect art.” (**The FLW 490**) Although Charles is knowledgeable about art and he recognizes Rossetti because he and Ernestia had once listened to him for more than an hour, he, all the time, separates art and life. Just like Conchis, who told Nicholas that he burnt all his novels to write his own novel, Sarah tells Charles: “I have since seen artists destroy work that might to the amateur seem perfectly good. I remonstrated once. I was told that if an artist is not his own sternest judge he is not fit to be an artist. I believe that I was right to destroy what has begun between us. There was a falsehood in it.” (**The FLW 497**) Sarah regards her relation with Charles or the education of Charles as a work of art. Yet, Charles is unable to understand that life and art cannot be separated and he protests to be given an explanation in terms of art after so many years of looking for Sarah: “I was four thousand miles from here when the news that you had been found came to me ... I had not past an hour since then without thinking of this conversation. You ... you cannot answer me with observations however apposite, on art.” (**The FLW 498**) Then, Sarah needs to explain that what he has been told about art is also applicable to life: “they were intended to apply to life as well.” (**The FLW 498**) Yet, without comprehending the

inseparability of life and art, Charles reacts: “Then what you are saying is that you never loved me.” (**The FLW** 498)

Placing Sarah, a fallen woman by Victorian convention, in Rossetti’s house which is furnished with various art forms, Fowles tries to prompt Charles to realize that he needs a higher sense of reality in order not to judge women according to social conventions. Like Pre-Raphaelite artists, John Fowles endeavours to create an awareness in Charles to shatter his short-sighted interpretation of reality.

Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a reaction against what they conceived to be the unimaginative and artificial historical paintings of The Royal Academy. They sought to express a new moral seriousness and sincerity in their art. In their art, they depict a certain kind of feminine beauty; thick flowing hair, a pursed rosebud mouth and dreamy eyes. In **The FLW**, in Rossetti’s house, Sarah is depicted according to this Pre-Raphaelite concept of feminine beauty: “Her hair was now to be seen in all its richness, reaching almost down to her waist,” (**The FLW** 494) quite unlike Victorian’s ‘Angels in the House’ who were expected to tie up their hair because, for Victorians, hair had a sexual symbolic meaning.

Like Rossetti, Fowles has also a different interpretation of male-female relationship which is completely contrary to Victorian society’s norms and conventions. In Victorian society, a woman was expected to be ‘The Angel in the House,’ that is, women were to be submissive and subordinate to men. The Orthodox reading of female was that women had to accept given moral values and live accordingly. Yet, Rossetti, who rebelled against the beliefs of Victorian society in terms of social and gender issues, presents another perspective for women in his art. He emphasizes that one cannot judge women according to his limited perspective which is shaped by social conventions. In this regard, Rossetti’s “Found” can be said to have similarities with **The FLW**. In “Found,” a man loses the woman he loves and then finds her on a street in London as a prostitute but is rejected by her just like Charles is rejected by Sarah in the final ending of **The FLW**. For Victorians, prostitutes were ignored, were thought to be lower than animals and to have a lack of humanity. However, for Rossetti, women exist for themselves and prostitutes are

strong, independent women because it is social circumstances that force them on the street and thus prostitution becomes a kind of necessity, for them, to be able to maintain their lives. In Rossetti's famous painting, also entitled "Found" the woman's face and posture clearly indicate that she rejects the man out of shame. Rossetti wants to emphasize that there is a problem in terms of society's hypocritical attitudes towards women; separating them as pure and fallen woman.

It should be noted that in his art, Rossetti has a political criticism towards Victorian society. On the one hand, Victorian idea of women is that they are valuable, beautiful, the queen of home and special in God's creation, on the other hand, Rossetti is aware that society reduces women to nothing, because according to him, the reality is to diffuse women, make them passive, contain them within the house and by marriage turn them into wives and mothers. If a woman fails to comply with all those conventions, society pretends that they do not exist. Yet, Rossetti looks at the situation from a different angle and becomes aware of the fact that within society those women (prostitutes) exist because social circumstances rather than their nature force them into prostitution. Therefore, in his art, Rossetti tries to re-place those women into society. He emphasizes that one can condemn them but he has to understand the circumstances and needs to realize that it is society to be blamed for their plight. Just like in **The Magus** and **The FLW**, in which Lily de Seitas and Sarah try to re-awaken Nicholas and Charles not to judge women according to their patriarchal values, Rossetti emphasizes the freedom of women as they exist for themselves and thus rejects the constraints that society imposes on them.

Likewise, Charles needs to come to the awareness that women exist for themselves. Yet, when Sarah, in the final ending of the text, tells Charles that she does not want to marry either Rossetti or him, Charles is unable to interpret what Sarah means and thus he "can only revolt against art and the New Woman." (Tibor, 75) Sarah Woodruff, who has been able to attain her own freedom and has been trying to make Nicholas become aware of what real freedom is, rejects marriage because "objecting not to Charles but the institution of marriage, Sarah reports a commitment to self-determination that forbids any assumption of familiar roles for women." (Lenz, 450)

Marriage and family play an important role in the happiness of women according to Victorian society. According to Victorians, women's happiness was mostly related to the institution of marriage which was seen as a medium to rehabilitate them. Yet, for John Fowles: "Happiness is essentially anti-social ... It is therefore in the nature of happiness to create an unequal world ... happiness goes with privilege, privilege is evil, therefore happiness is evil." (**The Aristos** 64) Fowles emphasizes that socially constructed happiness, which does not emanate from inner self, does not create a fair world and so should be avoided. That's why, by wishing loneliness instead of marrying Charles, Sarah rejects the social concept of happiness which comes from marriage, and thus, as a woman who has created her identity to have a free life of her own, she tries to bring Charles to an understanding of truth.

In order to re-define his notion of self and the world, Charles must initiate an inner journey to realize a higher order of reality and create his own existence. Only then can he reach a new sense of freedom which is "bitter, fragmentary ... equally frightening and unshared." (Fawcner 121) Charles is required to have 'lived experience' of active suffering to reach this new sense of freedom. John Fowles states: "What we call suffering, death, disaster, misfortune, tragedy, we should call the price of freedom. The only alternative to this suffering in an unsuffering freedom." (**The Aristos** 18)

For John Fowles, "there is only one good definition of God: the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist." (**The FLW** 105) It is important to note that what he means by freedom is not only the freedom of characters like Nicholas and Charles but also the freedom of the novel as an art form; the novel, itself, can be free from the control of its writer. In Victorian Age in which the story is set, the place of the novelist was to be next to God. In the realistic novel, the author, despite all the complexity and difference of voices, imposes his or her own vision of right stronger than in the postmodern novel. Yet, poststructuralist theory emphasizes 'the death of the author' and instead stresses the importance of intertextuality in creating a text:

"... a text is constructed out of already existent discourse. Authors do not create their texts from their own original minds but rather compile them from pre-existent texts, so that, as Kristeva writes, a text is 'a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the

space of a given text', in which several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another.' Texts are made up of what is at times styled 'the cultural (or social) texts', all the different discourses, ways of speaking and saying, institutionally sanctioned structures and systems which make up what we call culture. In this sense, the text is not an individual, isolated object but, rather, a compilation of cultural textuality. (Allen, 36-37)

In the text, Fowles emphasizes that in the age of Roland Barthes and Alain Robbe-Grillet, the writer-character relationship has changed. Unlike the traditional/realist novels in which the author is given central position, Roland Barthes argues that the text stands on its own and thus destroys the authority and intentions of its author: "the idea of the author as the individual solely responsible for the meanings in the text is no longer tenable. The author is not the creator of his text but only a mediator – that is, someone who selects and organizes various discourses available in 'the general text,' (in other words, language and literary convention) rather than producing anything 'original'" (Nicol, 44)

John Fowles, in the form of the narrator interrupting the narrative in Chapter Thirteen, emphasizes that unlike Victorian omniscient narrators, the writers "are no longer the gods of Victorian image, omniscient and decreeing; but in the new theological image, with freedom ... not authority." (**The FLW** 105) In **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, John Fowles probes into the novel genre's past and comments on the changing role of the writer one hundred years later, in 1967. For Fowles, just like the characters who must get away from their former inauthentic identities in order to lead a life in line with their real selves, the novel as an art form, should also "rebel ... against the tyranny of the past and find identity in new experimental forms." (Palmer, 65)

Just like Charles, who needs to undergo a process of education to redefine his notion of self, the novel, as an art form, should also gain its freedom from the authority of its writer. Hence, in chapter Forty-Four when Fowles ends the novel traditionally, he rebels against this traditional ending by parodying it because: "postmodernism rests on the assumption that fiction- no matter how realist or

experimental – is always, to use Robbe-Grillet's terms, a matter of 'constructing rather than transcribing'" (Nicol, 23) In the traditional ending, Charles returns to Ernestia, marries her and they have seven children. Yet, they are unable to live happily from then on. Charles who is unable to inherit his uncle's property goes into business as his uncle, Sir Robert has two children. However, in the next chapter, Fowles addresses the reader: "the last few pages you have read are not what happened, but when he spent the hours between London and Exeter imagining what happened." (**The FLW** 376) Fowles rebels against the traditional/realist ideology which argues that "art and literature should reflect life and the world soberly, in precise detail, so that we can learn from or analyze it rather than becoming swept up by idealistic and escapist flights of fancy." (Nicol, 18) Unlike the traditional omniscient narrator, Fowles rejects full autonomy or control on his characters: "Fowles's characters ... refuse to be Victorianized (victimized, tyrannized), and the novel continues in order to fulfil itself as a lifelike work of art. In order to accomplish this fulfilment of the life art relationship, Fowles actually becomes a character in his own novel." (Palmer, 73-74)

The Victorian novelists provided no possible alternative endings and the traditional Victorian romance novel usually ended in marriage. However, John Fowles subverts traditional endings as he allows his characters to make their own decisions. Thus, he enables his characters the freedom to act unlike conventional Victorian God-like omniscient narrators. Fowles states: "If there had been a creator, his second act would have been to disappear." (**The Aristos** 19) Postmodern fiction rejects authority and autonomy of the writer on characters and thus it "has often explored ... the issues of freedom and responsibility ... It has problematized these issues by showing how narrational (and authorial) freedom is in terms of characters." (Hutcheon, 206-7)

Having rejected the traditional ending of the novel, John Fowles presents two different endings. As he does not have a preference for either of the endings, he tosses a coin. In the first ending, Charles manages to persuade Sarah to marry him since he proves himself to be "not only ... a worthy suitor for her hand, but also an accepting and loving father, ... he assigns a new role to her – 'Mrs. Charles

Smithson' - and she acquiesces." (Warburton 181) However, this ending "conforms to the conventions of the realist form he parodies by tying up loose ends and reuniting Charles, Sarah and Lalaga, the daughter born of their brief sexual encounter." (Nicol, 110)

Yet, in the final ending, Charles thinks of being manipulated by Sarah and leaves Rossetti's house. He is unable to comprehend what Sarah stands for, that is, to come to the realization of truth, and fails to see her as a whole human being:

When Charles Smithson finds his beloved after years of searching, their reunion is crippled by his double-vision, his inability to see whole. This is dramatically emphasized in the celebrated 'double ending' to *The FLW*. In this final test Charles is given the opportunity to behave as Cinderella's prince behaves and return the token of the heroine's identity, her freedom to determine her future relationship to him. Charles, however, is unable to see her as a whole being and only succeeds in re-imposing the destructive, fragmenting dualism that Sarah has long outgrown. (Warburton, 181)

In order to create his own existence and acquire a new sense of freedom, Charles, like Nicholas needs to realize that he is not watched and controlled by a watching God or external circumstances but by a force that originated from his inner self. Hence, just like in **The Magus**, "the trial is held into the depths of his own unconscious." (Lewis, 24) Sarah, as the liberated and emancipated New Woman, has created her own existence and thus in the final ending, she "employs her insistence on independence and mystery not as a force of connection but as a force of emancipation, both from Charles and from conventional resolutions to the romantic mystery plot." (Lenz, 464) As a liberated and emancipated woman, Sarah who has achieved her personal authenticity prompts Charles to start an individual journey to the core of his self to exterminate his collector consciousness and redefine his notion of self. Therefore, she rejects uniting with him in the last ending because as Charles Scruggs states: "In the second ending ... Sarah looks forward from the present and sees no future for Charles in her life. She rejects him as a husband for the same reason that she has rejected a Victorian society that has classified her as a governess; either role, be it wife or governess, is a betrayal of self." (108-109) That's why, after

Charles, having been rejected by Sarah, leaves Rossetti's house, he finds "himself reborn." (**The FLW** 517) He can only destroy his old inauthentic self and create a new identity in solitude because he has to go through individual experience, so Sarah disappears. Like Nicholas, Charles is required to realize that "there is no intervening god beyond whatever can be seen." (**The FLW** 517) Only then can he initiate an inner journey in order to be able to acquire a higher sense of reality. That is why, at the very end of the novel, he looks "out again, upon the unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea," (**The FLW**, 518) In the text, the second reference to Mathew Arnold's "To Marguerite" at the very end of the novel, refers to a change in Charles between the time he first read the poem and at the end of the novel. In that, he comes to the point where he first saw Sarah, who was looking at the empty sea in Lyme Regis, just like him who looks at 'the unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea,' at the end of the novel. Therefore, it requires to be noted that: "in the second ending, Sarah's quest is over, but Charles's has just begun." (Scruggs, 110) In this process, we, as readers, realize that Charles's life moves "from a frustrated complacency to a dark uncertainty; from bourgeois drawing room to bohemian studio, from complacent Cobb to 'unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.'" (Evarts, 68) And only then does his inner quest start.

What is clear is that, in **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, John Fowles tries not only to free Charles Smithson from external circumstances that have shaped his life but also to free the novel genre from the autonomy of its writer. As Palmer states: "Fowles the novelist is learning about art what Charles the character is learning about life: Real art and real life cannot be easily classified, cannot always be defined in terms of existing conventions." (75) In chapter thirteen, Fowles interrupts the story and defines it as a product of imagination and thus:

tries to free both himself and his characters from the tyrannizing roles of the traditional novelist-god/character relationship; and then he attempts to free the reader from the traditional role of passive, uninvolved observer of the action that takes place in an unreal, fictional world ... the traditional novelist's godgame is being abandoned and that what follows will be an existential work of life – art. (Palmer, 70)

As a postmodern text, in **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, John Fowles both questions and subverts the traditional novel genre and rejects the central position that the author holds:

a postmodern artist or a writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done.” (Lyotard, 81)

In the text, like Conchis's, Sarah's masque to initiate an inner journey into Charles in order to reach a new sense of freedom through various art forms is closely interrelated with the evolution of the novel genre from a traditional Victorian novel to that of Postmodern fiction. Just as Charles needs to get away from his artificial self which is shaped by external circumstances to obtain an authentic identity, the novel, as an art form, should free itself from the autonomy of its author: “Sarah Woodruff's metamorphosis from a fallen woman into the free woman is written into the metamorphosis of the Victorian novel into postmodern fiction which has the ambition to present both life and art in fiction, in a form of art.” (Toth, 80)

CONCLUSION

Despite being set in different centuries, both **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, are narrated from a postmodern perspective. As postmodernism stresses heterogeneity and multiplicity of meanings rather than absolute truth, the autonomy of the text and the writer are undermined in both novels. Since authors are no longer regarded as omniscient, God-like writers, the uniqueness and originality of the authors are rejected and instead the production of the text has started to be seen as intertext, which means that in a single text there are a great deal of references to other texts. According to postmodern theory, readers are no longer regarded as the passive consumers of novels, but are required to actively take part in the creation of the text in collaboration with the author. As Palmer states: "**The FLW** is a committee novel, written by Fowles and Charles and Sarah and the others in collaboration, and near the end Fowles asks the reader ..." (71) As co-creators of the texts, readers are required to take part in the production of meanings because according to postmodern fiction, no text has independent meaning of its own, and in a single text, there are multiple meanings rather than an absolute one. Hence, in both novels, Fowles presents multiple endings for readers to actively participate in the process of writing as co-creators of the text.

The novel genre has evolved from the traditional/realist one to postmodern fiction which rejects the autonomy of the text and the writer. Likewise, in both **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, John Fowles tries to free his male characters, Nicholas and Charles, from external circumstances to redefine their notions of self and the world according to 20th century existential terminology. Being shaped by external circumstances, Nicholas and Charles have artificial identities, and thus, they are unable to lead authentic lives. According to existentialism, humans should define their own meanings as they are free in their acts and they should create their own existence and live accordingly. Hence, Nicholas and Charles are made to initiate a psychological journey toward self-identity and authenticity: "Fowles is aware of his fiction of what can be called the existential imperative; modern man's attempt to establish a personal identity in a world hostile to the individual self." (Palmer, 3) As existentialism puts emphasis on individual existence, freedom and

choice, Nicholas and Charles, both of whom have full faith in reason and science, need to start an inner journey towards the core of their selves. In this process, they are required to confront their inauthentic lives and to be disconnected from their previous selves in order to come to be aware of self-realization, the freedom to choose and accept responsibility for their own acts.

In this process of psychological journey into self, Fowles emphasizes that it is art rather than science that will orient Nicholas and Charles into attaining personal authentic freedom: “Art has a very limited respect for any absolutes besides those of beauty and moral truth. It laughs at clocks and chronicles; so also I believe, would an intelligent human society.” (Fawcner, “Foreword by John Fowles,” 16) That’s why, in **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant’s Woman**, there are a great deal of references to other art forms. In **The Magus**, Conchis tries to make Nicholas achieve a new sense of freedom to create his own existence by always drawing parallels between art forms or stories he tells and Nicholas’s own life. Similarly, in **The French Lieutenant’s Woman**, Sarah’s being placed in Rossetti’s house, a tabernacle of art forms like Conchis realm, as the New Woman, clearly demonstrates the relationship between life and art. And only after his encounter with Sarah in Rossetti’s studio furnished with various art forms does Charles’s inner journey begin because he feels himself reborn. Both Conchis, in **The Magus**, and Sarah, in **The French Lieutenant’s Woman**, try to teach Nicholas and Charles the inseparability of life and art and therefore, they make use of various art forms to prompt them into the world of selfhood to look for a meaningful life.

Both Nicholas and Charles are not able to discern the difference between the real and fantasy and they assume to be observed by a God-like figure, so they have difficulty in coming to terms with the results of their actions. In order to free them from their self-constructed artificial identities, Conchis and Sarah try to enlarge their visions to have a higher order of reality. That’s why, in their educational process through art, Nicholas and Charles are required to give up their collector-consciousness and come to realize that they are not being watched by any external forces. But rather they need to confront their inauthenticity in isolation for the sake of attaining a true existential self because, for Fowles, individual experience is

required to initiate the existential journey into self which comes through suffering. At the end of this existential journey into self, Fowles stresses that one will arrive where he has started: "We build towards nothing; we build." (**The Aristos** 19) That's why, in both **The Magus** and **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, Nicholas and Charles come to a new beginning; to where they have started: "Both **The Magus** and **The FLW** end with the same image: a man alienated from a 'new woman,' standing isolated in the loneliness of selfhood. Both novels end with the finding of a lost love. Both novels are circular. Just as Sisyphus always ends where he begins and yet finds value in his existence, so do Nicholas Urfe and Charles Smithson." (Palmer, 104-5)

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