

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Amar Thelidji Laghouat
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



*Fantasy vs. Reality: the Creation of Parallel
Worlds in Fiction*

Case Study: The Magus 1977 by John Fowles

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Supervised by:

Mr. Salah Bakhouché

Submitted by:

Khatoui Nouredine

Remmache Sarah

Panel of Examiners

Ahmed Mihoubi
Raouf Nebeg
Salah Bakhouché

Examiner
Chairman
Supervisor

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Dedications

Sarah's Dedication:

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this work to my parents for their permanent support and patience. I must acknowledge that without them I wouldn't be able to reach this level. Special thanks go as well for my husband Amine and my big brother Mohamed who has been the source of encouragement and inspiration. Secondly, this thesis is dedicated to all the members of my family who overwhelmed me with their love and support and were a great aid for the achievement of this work, not forget to mention my dear daughter Zineb the long-lasting friend and the sole of my heart.

Noureddine's Dedication

First of all I would like to thank my beloved parents for their unconditional love and support during my life. I ask Allah to grant them health, long happy life and paradise.

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.

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Abstract

This dissertation studies how humans created parallel worlds to escape the hardships of their existence. It describes the writer's implementation of these worlds and the interplay between reality and fantasy seeking to shed light on the relationship between the fictional worlds and the actual world. Therefore, it hypothesises that fictional worlds are imaginative constructs which are necessary to ground for alternative realities. Thus, the current research undertakes a descriptive analytical approach to study the analogy between fantasy and reality and how the created parallel worlds in fiction resulted in complicating the concept of reality. It employed the possible worlds' theory to analyse JohnFowles' novel *The Magus* as it presents the multi-faceted reality which characterises the contemporary world. From this study, we conclude that *the Magus* is effectively one of the stories that indicated through mystery the complexities of the external world which remains hard for the individual to understand since it makes the essence of life itself always shrouded in vagueness.

ملخص البحث

تدرس هذه المذكرة كيف أن البشر أوجدوا عوالم موازية بغية الهروب من مصاعب وجوديتهم . كما تصف نسق استخدام الكاتب لهذه العوالم والتفاعل القائم بين الواقع والخيال بهدف تسليط الضوء على العلاقة بين العوالم الخيالية و العالم الفعلي. ومن هنا تفترض الدراسة أن العوالم الخيالية هي بنيات تخيلية ضرورية لتشكيل حقائق بديلة وعلى هذا الأساس فإن البحث الحالي يتبنى مقاربة وصفية تحليلية لدراسة أوجه التشابه بين الخيال والواقع وكيف أن العوالم الموازية التخيلية أدت إلى تعقيد مفهوم الواقع. لقد استخدمت نظرية العوالم المحتملة لتحليل رواية جون فاولز "الساحر" من حيث تبنيها للواقع المتعدد الجوانب الذي يطبع العالم المعاصر. وقد أفضى التحليل إلى فكرة أنّ رواية "الساحر" من القصص التي أشارت في صورة غامضة إلى التعقيدات التي يتسم بها العالم الخارجي والتي تجعل فهمه مستعصيا على الفرد الذي يظلّ دوما عاجزا عن فهم جوهر الحياة.

List of Figures

Figure -1- : The relation of speaker to described world in factual and world-creating discourse.....	36
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Table of Contents

Dedications.....	i
Acknowledgments	ii
Abstracts.....	iii
List of Figures.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
General Introduction	1
Chapter One : The Interplay Between Reality and Fantasy	7
I.1. Introduction	8
I.2. The Concept of Reality	9
I.3. Philosophical Notions of Reality.....	10
I.4. Reality in Postmodern Philosophy	15
I.5. Fantasy as a Gate to Another Dimension.....	19
I.5.1. A Brief History of Fantasy	20
I.5.2. Low and High Fantasy	21
I.6. Conclusion	22
Chapter Two: Creating Parallel Worlds in Fiction	24
II.1. Introduction	25
II.2. A Historical Background about the Parallel Worlds	26
II.2.1. Parallel Worlds in Ancient Philosophy.....	26
II.2.2. Thematic Usage of Parallel Worlds in Literature.....	28

II.2.3 The Concept of the Parallel Worlds According to Modern Science	29
II.3. Theoretical Framework of the Parallel Worlds.....	31
II.3.1. Definition of Possible Worlds' Theory	31
II.3.2. The Possible Worlds' Interpretations	33
II.3.1. The Possible Worlds' Framework of Fiction	35
II.4. The Practices of Parallel Worlds in Metafiction.....	37
II.4.1. The Multiversity of Worlds in Metafiction	37
II.4.2. Play and Theatre as Alternative Realities in Fiction	40
II.5. Conclusion	41
Chapter Three : John Fowles' Parallel Worlds in <i>The Magus</i> and Their Experimentation With Reality	43
III.1. Introduction	44
III.2. General Overview of John Fowles' Narrative Style.....	44
III.3. <i>The Magus</i> as an Autobiographical Novel	47
III.4. Fantasy vs. Reality in <i>The Magus</i>	48
III.5. <i>The Magus</i> as a Hypodiegetic World.....	51
III.6. Conclusion	60
General Conclusion.....	61
Works Cited	64

General Introduction

Reality as a definable concept to current issues lost its values with the development of considerable theories in philosophy and psychology that made up the postmodern trend. This trend came up to describe the confusions that lay in the attempts of human beings to find truth since every claimed truth turned out to be only versions where the original one was being distorted in the aim of achieving subjective matters. It is described, however, as a theory that rejected all theories because it raised questions rather than providing complete answers to problems related to different fields such as history and religion. These confusions resulted in making the world an unbearable place to live that made individuals choose fantasy as an alternative world. Similarly, writers reflected this world by using fantasy as a genre that transcended the real and constructed their art as an escape realm from the doomed reality. Indeed, fantasy literature can be therapeutic because it gave readers the opportunity to experience different modes which are exciting and enjoyable as in the case of high fantasy. In addition, it can help readers establish an understanding of the problems related to the actual world. Such literature falls in the category of low fantasy in which the work of fiction waves between the real and the unreal by giving readers the chance to experience the two modes in parallel.

Low fantasy literature overloads readers with much confusion underlying the relationship between reality and fiction. It does so, by using realistic elements which made readers engage with the character's life through the lens of normality. And in a sudden moment, it transforms the real by using fantastical elements such as myths, legends, and imaginative creatures. Such implications resulted in creating questions on the level of fiction whether it is related to the real or only a matter of imaginative constructs. Thus, the reader will inquire the ontology of events within the fictional realm and subsequently look for its references in the actual world. Some of

the works of fiction blurred the line between reality and fantasy by making the narrative consistently interrupted with its fantastical elements. *The Magus* by John Fowles which was written in 1965 (revised 1977) is one of those novels which question reality without giving answers and engage its readers in a labyrinth of this inquiry.

The Magus is considered as a mystery by itself because it sets the game without the final reward. John Fowles spent ten years working on the novel since it articulated his love of nature and Greece and significantly was the story that marked the beginning of his life as an artist. Reviewers of the novel agreed upon the complex style and the variety of frames that made the plot prolific and thrilling. In fact, its significance relies on getting the reader involved into questioning the mysteries of the Godgame and its purposes, however by leaving the door open for him/her to draw on the final conclusion. The novel is highly addressing some of the main problems described by Postmodernism such as the unreliability of history and related concepts of reality. Therefore, John Fowles used the philosophy of existentialism to describe the struggle of human beings to find meaning of their existence in a world that frequently contradicted itself.

John Fowles' open-ended novel motivated many critics to analyze the story according to different approaches. The emphasis was drawn on deconstructing the Godgames' implications and its effects on Nicholas Urfe the protagonist of the novel. Although dealing with the same subject which is the Godgame, interpretations vary in their analysis and assumptions. From an objective point of view, Thomas Dochery, in his article *A Constant Reality: the Presentation of Character in the Fiction of John Fowles* (1981), attempted to analyze the writer's intended meaning by conceiving the protagonist's quest as a model that reflected individuals' complex experiences. Therefore, he strongly denounced that John Fowles' aim in using mythology in his novel is to enrich his narrative style by puzzling the reader. However, he claimed that his aim

was to show the “tragedy” of the human situation in acceptance of his “suffering freedom”. On the other hand, Docherty’s study didn’t further investigate the writer’s narrative styles and the multi-framed plotline. In this sense, Katherine Tarbox in her dissertation *A Critical Study of the Novels of John Fowles* (1986) appeared as a reaction to the first claim by paraphrasing the story’s events and commenting on some of the significant instances in the novel. Nevertheless, her analysis was established from a feministic approach by interpreting the main character’s quest as subsequent to the absence of motherhood. Indeed the novel does give some female characters the significance of the controller; hence, the main character’s existential problems appeared because he felt a social exile from the rigid English society. From an artistic and narrative point of view, Von Jens Polheide, in his dissertation *Postmodernist Narrative Strategies in the Novels of John Fowles* (2003), investigated the novel according to the lens of Postmodernism. He focused his study on examining the use of representation in story telling which covered the original twists of the events. He then analyzed the writer’s usage of intertextuality in which it implicitly settled the story’s scenes. Jens Polheide answered some of the questions that were related to the writer’s complex style by conceiving the politics of representation as the reason behind the novel’s mystery. His interpretation lacked the writer’s intended meaning into which he didn’t further his study to discuss the interplay between reality and fiction. Similarly, Mitchala Navratilova in 2016 took considerations of this inquiry by examining the author’s thematic concerns. She interpreted the novel according to three themes, namely reality, freedom and deception, by relying on the main character’s assumptions on the Godgame. Her analysis is mainly related to the concept of subjective reality and how individual’s perceptions of the world affected the course of events. On the contrary, her

interpretation didn't study the Godgame as a make-believe artifice that transcended the real and resulted in creating confusions in the main character's perceptions.

All the Previous critics considered the Godgame into which John Fowles introduced his fantastical world as the core element in their analysis. They conceived Greece which settled the beginning of the mystery as an alluring wonderland. It is true that the main character frequently leaned toward Greece over London in several instances in the novel; however, John Fowles used parallelism to induce that the protagonist's self quest is the game itself. Indeed, the main character's involvement in the game made him communicate internally the fantasy that he created of himself. John Fowles reflected the inner self struggle by invoking that individuals created fantasies about themselves and believed them. Therefore, his novel will be better understood by studying the Godgame as a set of parallel worlds and how Nicholas involvement in it made him realize his own self fictionalization.

Therefore the present research will study John Fowles' novel by analyzing the parallel worlds used in the Godgame and how it complicated the concept of reality. It will focus, however, on examining the interplay between fantasy and reality. Since *The Magus* is considered as low fantasy literature, the research will investigate John Fowles' purposes behind fantasy and its relationship with the actual world. On that account, the study will analyze the Godgame as a make-believe artifice in which John Fowles engage his readers in metaphors of the so-called reality.

On a larger scale, it will examine some of the theories that set forth the concepts of fantasy and reality and the relationship in between. By doing so, the academic community will establish an understanding on how fantasy, which is occluded with the unreal, has significant role in shaping the reality of the social world. By taking writers as an example of that, the present

paper will examine the created parallel world in fiction and its theoretical frame work in the aim of describing the diversity of literary works.

In order to achieve these aims and objectives, the research attempted to analyze John Fowles' complex artifice through deconstructing the Godgame and its motifs. Since *The Magus* is a postmodern novel, the study will investigate the concept of reality as an illusion used in the story to express the problem of the postmodern thought to give concrete definitions to it. Therefore, it revolved around this question, "How do the created parallel worlds in fiction result in complicating the concept of reality? By tacking *The Magus* as a case study for this inquiry, the research intended to answer these sub-questions. Firstly, on what bases reality and fantasy were philosophically approached? Secondly, what is the relationship between the actual world and the created parallel worlds in fiction? Thirdly, how did John Fowles' parallel worlds in *The Magus* create difficulties in the main character's quest toward individuation? And On what bases the novel set forth the problems underlying the relationship between fact and fiction?

The research hypothesized that the concept of reality has gone through many changes which made postmodernist intellectuals reject concrete definitions of it. Secondly, if reality becomes of no validity, fantasy can help in giving an exciting realm for its seekers; however, living in a parallel world more than living in the external world may cause psychic problems. On the other hand, fictional writing can help in understanding these problems if writers make use of the genre of fantasy to express the hardships of existence. A proposition has been made to study whether fantastical worlds particularly in low fantasy literature are related to the real or only imaginative products for the sake of entertainment.

To give answers to these questions, the research adopted a descriptive analytical approach; descriptive in the sense that it provided explanations related to the novel's diverse

worlds, and analytical because it attempted to examine the writer's motifs behind this complex organisation. Therefore, this paper depended on establishing theoretical framework of the parallel worlds by using the possible worlds' theory of fiction.

This research is divided into three chapters. Firstly, the research provides a theoretical background of the paper by explaining the interplay between fantasy and reality. The reader will get an understanding on the problems related to the nature of reality and its significant role in shaping the fantastical world. Thereafter, he/she will be addressed to get an insight look behind the created parallel worlds in fiction. It is through the possible worlds' theory that the reader will establish a relationship between the actual world and the fictional modes. Practically speaking, the third chapter is going to be a backup that generated all the mentioned theories in chapter one and two. The reader will be guided to make a relationship between the theories and their practices. *The Magus* as a story that questioned the concept of reality on many levels succeeded in reflecting the mysteries of the external world. Likewise, the reader will see on what bases the novel gives instances of this sort.

Chapter One

The Interplay Between Reality and Fantasy

I. 1.Introduction

The quest of finding the nature of reality was a main concern within the world of thoughts and ideas. Philosophers and intellectuals provided their views of understanding the way this world is taking shape. Philosophers like Plato, Descartes, John Locke and Berkeley along with postmodernist intellectuals did their best to reach the truth in this mysterious world full of questions with no answers but doors of other questions within and from an endless journey. As a gate to understand this reality using another side, fantasy gave both audience and researchers a version of this reality through the use of its elements along with its unusual rules presented in literary works such as *The Magus* (1965, revised 1977) by John Fowles. In this point, it must be mentioned that it is true the mind needs imagination, but living in this imagination more than living in the real world can turn to be a weapon against the mind instead of a tool to develop it. This novel is an example for cases like this. Therefore, this chapter gives the reader a glance about the word reality as a concept. Secondly; it discusses the concept of reality in details to insure a smooth transition toward fantasy. In doing so, the reader will be provided with considerable philosophical notions of the term starting by Plato's conceptions and reaching toward how the postmodernist intellectuals defined reality and truth then how reality can be escaped through fantasy in a specific form. At last, this chapter suggests a definition of fantasy with a brief history about the development of this concept in order to give the reader an idea about how this concept is old as the concept of reality, and to notice how individuals make use of low and high fantasy in their writings over time.

I.2. The Concept of Reality

A historical debate about the development of the “Concept of Reality” has been made by many philosophers such as Plato, and reaching Postmodernism. By this concept the determination of many objects are included and set through many “empirical sciences” and their “supplementary metaphysics”, this resolution has been classified as an “independent” of the “cognizing subject”, for example natural science explains how the magnet attracts certain metals by its magnetism, or of the biological development of the leaf of tree. When “natural science” speaks of animals, plants and minerals, it focuses on objects which are as “similar” to the common concept in the mind about them and as they are in the general content for the “sense of perception”; the psychological side has such objects too when the debate is about “sensation and ideas, of attention and feelings, thoughts and will”. Furthermore, “humanistic sciences” which recently turned into the “fashion” to be characterized as the “science of fact” are aiming to treat language and art, law and religion, events and historical persons as “self-dependent objects” with their own unrestrained determination (Kuelpe 1).

The process of presuming and defining objects is called “realization” and the objects themselves are called “real or realities”, these are not tests and “experiences of the consciousness” although they are acquired this through “experiential data”, also they are not “exemplary objects” such as being the product of an “abstraction” for an existing reality or even by mixture of ideas. Realities are themes that are produced by individuals as “ideal objects” and they are given simply in a form of experiences as “data of consciousness” in the mind. A huge need is required for “criteria of reality” i.e. a need for special platform for the “postulation of reality”, the thing that leads to detach some “elements” from the instant reality and study them in this criteria (2).

Postmodernism as the dominated movement of this age did not create its basics out of nothing, it was a result of ages and ages of thinking only to reach the nature of reality. To do so, postmodernists reviewed the philosophical background concerning this concept starting from the very beginning philosophies such as Plato's philosophy.

I.3.Philosophical Notions of Reality

Humans are unable to experience the true nature of things in this world by senses, so the brain can only give details by processing and analyzing small pieces of information about this world. Human beings trust their senses to have the truth in different situations by seeing, smelling, touching, hearing and tasting but there is a possibility that those senses can lie and they can be manipulated. Then here a question must be raised about relying on them leading to another question which is how can humans know the truth and the reality of things?

The individual's perception is unique and the way to perceive information can be completely different from one to another. In 427 B.C. Plato¹ was born in an aristocratic family and after having a typical education, he became the student of Socrates nearly for seven years before his master was executed. After this Plato started his journey to become one of the best known philosophers in history. Around 24 thousand years ago Plato wrote his famous book *The Republic* in which he described the "nature of reality". He started telling a story of men in a "dark cave". The cave here represents the physical world as a way to say that humans are restricted from the moment they were born in a way that any individual is "stationary" and cannot turn around. These chained men are facing a blank wall and they can see only before them, every kind of objects pass between their backs and the bright fire behind them in roadway causes a shadow. The shadows of all those things on the wall in front of the

¹ The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms.2nd ed, Chris Baldik, 2001, p.194.

prisoners make them believe that the shadows and sounds are real i.e. representing reality (Wright 131).

One day, one of them escapes from his chains and travels to the entrance of the cave. The man was blinded by the light of the sun after spending his entire life in the dark. The light here represents the “realm of ideas” to see that the things outside the cave are more real than the shadows. Also it represents the “education and Enlightenment” that people needs (132).

Once the individual shaped his way of thinking, he will never look at the world around him in the same manner again. His whole experience becomes a passion. For Plato, the “whole” is just a shadow for higher truth and reality. Plato started defining what might be wrong and focuses on what it needed to make the world slightly better. So he did not ask about what is the ideal of all things but rather he asked what the form of those things is? Plato believed that there is in this world more than what the eye or any sense can perceive.

The famous philosopher Renee Descartes (1596-1650) started his study by doubting his senses because in his way of thinking senses can be just an allusion and all the beliefs human have cannot be certain. Descartes believed that all the wrong things that are happening in this world were caused by the “misuse” of the minds by the “unconscious illogicality”² in which it cannot be changed (Garber 2).

In his methods of doubts, he attempted to bring about a new way of thinking and seeing things around. His method of doubts can be described as a large barrel of apples. In this barrel there is good ones and bad ones, the job here is to separate the good ones from the bad ones by inspecting each apple individually and at the end only those apples with good quality will remain. Descartes intended to answer the question of how can I know that I am

² Some irrational beliefs in the sub mind

real; Descartes made a statement to answer this question by saying “*ego Cogito, Ergo sum*” i.e.”I think therefore I am” (11). He believed that he exists because he thinks.

For Descartes to reach reality one must disbelieve everything starting by his senses. For the fact that they were not a reliable source of information so he stated in his *First Meditation*, “raze everything to the ground” (qtd.in Shokry 2) in order to test them. In this quotation Descartes tried to say that in order to understand reality you must give up all the knowledge temporarily.

Descartes distinguished the “mind from the body”, yet it must be mentioned that he is not the first thinker to do so; this idea was one of the basic beliefs of “Platonism”³(Garber 15). Descartes gave it another form; here some suggested that this distinction is a result of the “Cogito argument”. For Descartes the mind, as a thinking thing can exists apart from its “extended body” and therefore, the mind is a “substance” distinct from the body, a “substance” whose essence is thoughts (16).

Descartes was quite sure that regardless of the fact that having bodies can be doubtable, thinking exists, that what proves his existing state, doubting this idea is “itself” another proof to confirm it. Descartes descended into a “radical skepticism” from the basics of his *cogito argument*. To build his belief Descartes focuses on the “immaterial world” i.e. he accepted that he exists as a thinking thing only (Shokry 5).

A split between two groups about understanding the nature of reality, as a response to skepticism in one hand there is rationalism and its belief that the reason is the most reliable source of knowledge, on the other there is empiricism in which it believes that sense –

³ “the doctrines of the Greek philosopher Plato (Platon, 427-347 BCE), especially the idealist belief that the perceptible world is an illusory shadow of some higher realm of transcendent Ideas or Forms. Despite Plato's hostility to poets as misleading imitators of worldly illusions.” The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms 2nd ed, 2001, p. 194.

experience is the most relatable source of knowledge, one of those main philosophers is John Locke with his view of reality.

John Locke (1632-1704) was a British philosopher and an Oxford academic, his essay *Concerning Human Understanding* (1689) was one of the first defense lines of “empiricism” and a base to determine the boundaries of “human understanding”; it speaks in some of its parts about what “legitimately” can be regarded to be known and what it cannot. Locke believed that all humans born as “*tabula rasa*” (blank slate). For Locke all the knowledge that exists was obtained through experience and the experience is the only way to reach the nature of reality. He also rejected the “innate idea” in which it argued that all humans are born “pre-loaded” with some information. John Locke agreed with Descartes in the idea that when the senses are telling something, it doesn’t mean to be trusted simply (Kaijo 49).

Unlike Descartes who just pushed away all sense experience as “unreliable” source of information, Locke instead tried to figure out if the “senses reflect” the outside world, so he argued that reality can be divided into two categories “primary and secondary quality”. For primary quality, Locke said that physical objects themselves have those qualities, which are not in the mind but in the stuff itself. He named them to be “bulk, number, figure, and motion” and no matter how many times these objects are divided they will keep the same qualities. Locke made an experiment to support this argument by giving the example of “wheat’s grain”; this grain is going to be divided into two parts each time. Locke noticed that all parts kept the same primary qualities namely solidity, figure extension, and mobility. Dividing this grain of wheat over and over can only make more distinct separate masses of matter (49).

For secondary qualities Locke argued that they are “created” by the primary qualities in the mind. Secondary qualities are not real; they are just in the mind, i.e. they do not actually exist within the object. Locke supported his argument by saying that the primary qualities are “objective” in contrast to the secondary qualities which are dependent on the mind and its perception (50). Locke again explained this point by giving another example. He imagined a person putting one hand in a “cold water” and the other hand in “warm water”, after a while he is going to put both his hands in a boil of water with a room-temperature, this person will feel that the water is hot through his cold hand and he will feel the opposite from the other hand although it is the same boil of water and for Locke it is impossible to have cold and warm water at the same time so he concluded his idea of secondary qualities and how it cannot be real (50). Locke’s argument was refused by another philosopher called Berkeley to open this debate again.

The Irish philosopher Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753), opposed strongly Locke’s view. For him there is no distinction between “primary and secondary qualities”. He actually used Locke’s arguments “against” him. Berkeley wondered how to imagine an object with its Primary qualities only. For him it was impossible to do that, and it will end up with no object at all. He stated that “Great and small, swift and slow, are allowed to exist nowhere without the mind, being entirely relative, and changing as the frame or position of the organs of sense varies” (qtd.in Kaijo 51). In this quotation Berkeley is saying that the primary qualities and the secondary qualities are strongly related to each other i.e. there is no way to have one without the other, so both they cannot be real and they are just made up by the mind. Also they can be perceived in different ways from one perceiver to another.

Primary qualities can be “subject to change” for example when seeing a house from close distance it seems big for the eye, but when standing far away from this house it will look like it is small, so what size of the house is correct then. For Berkeley there are no objects,

only perceivers in a world of thoughts. The “perception of those things can change under certain conditions, change in position being an example” (53). The way to perceive things can be changed according to some conditions such as the distance between the object and the perceiver.

I.4. Reality in Postmodern Philosophy

Postmodernism is a literary term that is used in order to refer to the different changes and developments, in addition to the “tendencies” which have taken and are taking place in literature, art, music, architecture, and philosophy since 1940’s or 1950’s. This movement is not like Modernism and it can be regarded as a “reaction” against it. It is not easy to set a clear definition for it unlike the other-isms, yet it is unorganized just like the other isms by its nature (Cuddon 552).

The term Postmodernism was first “coined in the 1950’s” yet it became well-known as philosophical term in France in the 1970’s. Postmodernism is still “unknown” in universities outside of art, history, philosophy, humanities and cultural theory classes but its theories have indeed influenced the way how to understand the “self” along with the “society” and its interactions with other societies nowadays. The term Postmodernism is very close to the study of the “known philosophies”, its studies were “closely associated” with many philosophers⁴, French philosophers like Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Derrida in addition to German philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger chipped in this to make the Postmodernism of today and from that time the other post terms came to the light and became more common in classrooms such as post colonialism (Graham and Rachel 29).

⁴ Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. A group of some philosophers who contributed in shaping Postmodernism.

In a brief article in the *Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology* (1996), Rayan Bishop defines postmodernism as the varied movement in which it was produced by “aesthetic architecture and philosophy”, on the theoretical perspectives it embraces a “systematic” skepticism (qtd.in Shanjendu 26). Bishop also stated that “postmodernists are suspicious of authoritative definitions and singular narratives of any trajectory of events” (26). In this quotation he meant to say that according to the belief of postmodernists there is no objective truth at all in the level of transmitting the events and interpreting them, there are only doubt and suspicious.

Postmodernism holds the idea that there is no way to have a “single and correct” description of reality because it has this “skeptical view” about all the knowledge that exists. This view was a basic belief for “extreme skeptics” such as F.Nietzsche, L.Wittgenstein, Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn. According to the point of view of philosophy the main aim of postmodernists is to “interpret” the questions about the knowledge, for example what is knowledge and where to say it is knowledge or not. They believe too that there is no “objective” existence of reality, truth, value and reason (27).

In Postmodernism, the common realities are just “social constructs”, in this way these are not “statics” i.e. they are just subject to be change. It confirms that in order to “form ideas and beliefs” the role of “power, language, relations and motivation” is needed by all means and it is huge to be taken in a simple matter. This “approach of thoughts” believes that there is no sharp line when having two similar things such as black and white, tall and short, big and small. That means that there is no absolute truth about the things around. However, it supposes that reality is “collective proportional” and “dependent”. Reality is dependent according to the individuals and their nature in which it will be described by them in a unique way. In addition, the world’s description is relying on persons who “perceive” it and that means this description is “subjective”. Postmodernism is different from Modernism in many

aspects such as literature, drama, architecture and design. “Culture and religion” were influenced by Postmodernism as well, that is to say that although Postmodernism is just an academic movement, yet it has huge influence in so many aspects of civilization (shanjendu 27). Modernism’s “primary concern” is the main principles of the “identity and certainty” usually, but in Postmodernism things are bigger than this, it is associated with the notion of “skepticism” i.e. uncertainty about everything. Fredric Jamson a literary critic declared that Postmodernism is “a dominant cultural logic” to draw the attention of its huge influence. He added that it is the “ruling cultural logic within what is known as the period of globalization” (27). In this quotation he meant to say that the logic is being guided by this movement in all sides of the world of globalization. “Epistemology” as a branch for studying the knowledge put different methods within the field of modern philosophy, yet Postmodernism came to be a revolution in the knowledge’s field. It was raised with different perspective for viewing this world like its view of reality; this view refused to take any “definite description” about anything that means it is a must to believe that the reality as the philosophers and the critics used to define is no more valid (28).

Modern philosophy has a specific world view about the peoples’ perception. It believes in the possibility of being able to know about the view of “unified world”, on the other side Postmodernism believes on the reality of “multiple views” of the world. Modern philosophy believes on a “single and correct” world view unlike Postmodernism. In this way Postmodernism rejected the “modern world view” and replaced it with beliefs of “multiplicity” of views about worlds, in other word; it believes in interpretation rather than taking the knowledge (Shanjendu 28). Modern philosophy believes that “laws of nature” exist in so many forms and ways, and humans are capable to “understand, see and recognize” them. Furthermore, modern philosophers believe that through knowing and using these laws in a correct manner, people will be able to “fulfill their needs”, they are in real need of these laws

for their benefits. As a result the “modern outlook” became to be known as the “enlightenment project” within the realistic atmosphere (28).

This realistic “attitude of knowledge and truth” was rejected by Postmodernism. In contrast of it, Postmodernism accepted “non-realist” attitude about the world. It also refused the notion of “objective world” by all means. In this sense it moved from “objectivist outlook” to a “constructionist outlook” on doing so Postmodernism relied on interpretations. The common people have an objectivist understanding because of their day to day activities in which makes them in contact with the “objective world”. This world according to the common sense of the people’s view is “real and self-evident” i.e. there is no need to prove its existence. Inherent laws of this “objective world” can be understood by the human beings accurately, language from their perspectives is the “product of the human mind” and by using the language, humans are able to “narrate the nature of the world”, yet Postmodernism again refused to accept this view because it believes that there is “variety of languages” in this world along with the idea of different “cultures”, the thing that will lead to different interpretations (Shanjendu 29). Postmodernism rejected too the equality of concepts like “scientific truth” and “absolute truth”, because both of them can be doubtable, which makes defining reality from those two notions impossible. Postmodernists believed in the reality of “many worlds” from individual perspectives and they completely rejected the idea of “valid thoughts”. They even questioned themselves and their “principles” in order to find truth behind everything (30).

It is true that Postmodernism refused all the knowledge that exist before, yet it gave a space where some sort of truth may exist. With no clear definition of reality, it can be regarded as the actual living situation, this reality can be so hard to deal with in a certain time of this life, and as a way to escape this situation some people run to the world of fantasy

where they can create their own world; with their own rules, doing so can cause a serious problems if it is used extensively in a wrong manner.

The aim of “Escapism⁵” in some cases is to bring “destruction to the self”, thence fantasy can play the role of the plug in order to separate the “self” from the external world only to live in an imaginary world, this means refusing to deal with the society around. In addition, this can lead to push a way “the self” and replacing it with another version of it “the actual-ideal-self”, through a psychological journey. This path can take the self into infinity of a world based on thoughts rather than the “real world”, regardless of its mysterious nature (Mikey 2014). Fantasy can provide a room where anyone can find a sort of freedom, but at the same time it can bring destruction if it is extremely misused.

I.5 Fantasy as a Gate to another Dimension

Fantasy believed to be written with the language of dreams and as long as the dreams are alive it will never disappear. It can be more real than reality itself. “A fantasy text is a self-coherent narrative. When set in this world, it tells a story which is impossible in the world as we perceive it; when set in another world, that otherworld will be impossible, though stories set there may be possible in its terms” (Clute and grant 338). Some terms in this definition must be clarified; “text” here means any kind in which these stories are being told like written forms, songs and opera. This text is “self-coherent narrative” which means special forms of “narrative presentation of the unreal” such as dreams and tales, this form of narrative takes the shape of story in a complex manner to “challenge” the reader’s sense about the idea of presenting a “coherent world” in the text. “Modernist and postmodernist’s literature” make use of fantasy elements in their texts in an extraordinary way to break the traditional rules

⁵ “habitual diversion of the mind to purely imaginative activity or entertainment as an [escape](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/escape) from reality or routine”. *Collegiate Dictionary. Merriam-Webster*, 2019, unabridged. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/escapism.

(338). This fantasy is presented in so many works like James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and John Fowles' novel *The Magus*.

The “perception” of these stories depends on the author and the readers. This process of perception can be different from one to another and from time to another according to the mentality of the age. Clute and Grant mentioned in their definition the “other world” and to explain it they refer to Georg MacDonald definition in which he stated that “the normal world” exists with its “laws”, those laws can propose other laws for “other kinds”, and man can create a little world for himself if he wanted to (qtd.in 338). This means that anyone can create a fantastical world for himself if he or she wishes to do so.

I.5.1. A Brief History of Fantasy

The “origin of fantasy” is related to the “ancient mythology” in which it was highly connected to the “nature” where people live in and as a way to interpret the nature's phenomena such as the story of the legendary giant “Prometheus” and how he felt petty for the people so he granted them with fire. “Zeus” as a one of the old Gods bounded him to the “Mount Caucasus” in Athens and sent an eagle that would eat his liver for 30.000 years as way of punishment (Allan 5). So many stories of the ancient mythology take a similar form by using supernatural elements to create this world of fantasy.

“Epics⁶ and legends⁷” were the next step in the development of fantasy. A very old surviving English epic poem called *Beowulf* (c.700) contains fantasy elements like dragons, monsters and witches. Around the same time the tale of *King Arthur* took place too in fantasy area, this tale has been told and retold over the years, the earliest clear version of it was found

⁶ “a long narrative poem in elevated style recounting the deeds of a legendary or historical hero”. provided by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019.

⁷ “a story coming down from the past *especially* : one popularly regarded as historical although not verifiable”. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019.

in (C.1485) in addition to William Shakespeare's imaginary world of fairies in his work *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595). Egoff stated that "children were, after all, familiar with dwarves and giants" (qtd.in Allan 5). She meant to say here that fantasy is no more for adults only, children are aware of it too, and now it is common for everybody.

1800's marks the first works of 'fantasy literature' for children and adults with stories by many writers such as Hares Christian Anderson, through their stories used the present time and place but in an atmosphere of magic. This new way of introducing stories distinguished fantasy literature from the classical fairy tales. Pamela S.Crales explained that literary fantasy turned into a ground where audience can have heroes with a strong belief in the good over the evil without any need to focus on morals behind the story unlike the earliest tales (qtd.in 5).

The fantasy tradition was refreshed in the twentieth century by Edith Nesbit with books such *A Book of Dragons* (1900). Nesbit drew the rules of using "magic in fantasy literature", in addition to that she wrote about the effect of using this kind of fantasy on the child's everyday life (6). After that, in 1937 fantasy reached its high point with famous work of J.R.R Tolkien *The Hobbit* and the (1954) trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. In addition to Tolkien's stories, works like *Chronicles of Narnia* by C.S Lewis helped to shape the identity of fantasy genre. Fantasy becomes more sophisticated during that time due to the development of science and technology and their theories about the origins of the universe in which it gives a new way to see the world and a door for what fantasy can offer such as supernatural proceedings and other worlds (6).

I.5.2 Low and High Fantasy

In the world of fantasy there are a lot of sub-genres. "Low" and "High" fantasies are sub-genres to represent the place in which the story takes place. Low fantasy through the definition that is given in the *Historical Dictionary of Fantasy Literature* by Boyer and

Zehorski means “the set of stories featuring non-rational happenings that are without causality or rationality because they occur in rational world where such things are not supposed to occur” (qtd.in Stableford 256). Through this definition low fantasy means keeping most of the elements of the real world (the traditional world) such as the setting of the story, yet using elements of fantasy (non-rational happenings). The word low refers to amount of fantastical elements occurred in the story within the real world and not to the quality of the work itself. There are lot of examples concerning low fantasy’s works such as *The Magus* (1977) by John Fowles and *Harry Potter* (1997) by J.K.Rowling. High Fantasy is defined in the same dictionary as an “[. . .] entirely of fiction set in secondary world” (198). Rather than putting the story in a setting from the real world just like low fantasy, works of high fantasy take a setting in an imaginative world with its own rules unlike the primary world (the real world). High fantasy can be seen clearly in works like *The Lord of the Rings* (1937) by J.R.R Tolkien.

I.6 Conclusion

The question of reality caused a lot of debates among the elites of the society on time and always remained as something ambiguous. Each of those elites tried to solve this problem using their ideas which they can convey to the others. Plato gives the cave’s story to show how humans are living in a world of shadows yet they see it as reality but for Plato this world is just a shadow of a higher world, a world that cannot be seen though the use of sensation but through the use of the mind in what he called the realm of ideas. Descartes started his journey to reach the nature of reality by doubting everything then examining each part alone in order to select and keep the true ones. John Locke agreed with Descartes in the point of not trusting senses yet he gives a new way to see reality by dividing it into primary and secondary qualities. This view was highly opposed by Berkeley by saying it is impossible to distinguish these two qualities from each other. Finally in this point there was the view of Postmodernism

and how it rejected everything. In this context, fantasy here played the role of the aid to solve this problem of understanding reality, yet to help doesn't mean to do the job for sure especially when the mind creates a marriage between this fantastical world and reality and misuse it to be stuck in a point where it is hard to distinguish the real from the unreal.

Chapter Two

Creating Parallel Worlds in Fiction

II.1. Introduction

Nowadays, reality becomes a desperate reach as humans are unable to find meaning of their existence in a world that undergoes a constant change. Indeed, the progress in science and technology helps in making people aware of the dark side behind traditions and social conventions. In fact, history and religion which were the core elements in the making of communities appeared to be tools in the hands of the powerful and no more than names used in order to fulfill human greed. However, individuals found themselves caught between achieving their self-freedom or accepting the rules of the conventions and granting a lifelong inner-struggle which results in creating psychic problems. Therefore, individuals choose the activity of daydreaming¹ to experience exciting parallel worlds that provide an escape realm from the hardships of their lives. Similarly, writers took their pens to describe their parallel worlds, in the aim of reflecting the inner self- struggle and in giving an alternative mode that discards social restrictions, and the unified conceptions of reality (history and religion). John Fowles is one of the writers who used low fantasy literature that described individual's fantastical life and its effects on achieving self-authenticity. He, however, asserted that in order for the author to write creatively, he/she must live in two worlds the real and the unreal (Baker). Thus, his writings succeeded in getting the interest of the reading community because it deals with contemporary issues underlying meaning and existence as well as giving fantastical elements that transcend the real and alternatively help in understanding the external world.

Therefore this chapter will investigate the conceptual use of the parallel world in fiction by defining its theoretical framework. It will, however, analyze the diversity of worlds in fiction and the relationship in between. The academic community will establish a link between the

¹ Day dreaming is a pleasant visionary usually wishful creation of the imagination (Merriam Webster).

actual world and the realistic elements used in the imaginative mode. In doing so, an explanation will be provided to examine the possible worlds' theory and its interdisciplinary relationship with literature.

II.2.A Historical Background about the Parallel World

The concept of the parallel world or alternative reality was being discussed in several fields mainly philosophy, science, and literature. Although it was just a thought that was prevailing in metaphysics by a number of ancient philosophers such as Nicolas of Cusa, it became widely known in social practices and is nowadays considered as the freedom that people have in virtual realities including games and social media's realms. The same as, contemporary literature, which can be considered as the core element that made these realities most welcomed to the common individual; on the contrary, one may not exclude the fact that it was influenced by previous literary works adding to that philosophy and science which helped in the characterization of these worlds.

II.2.1. Parallel Worlds in Ancient Philosophy

In ancient philosophy the concept of the parallel world or the multiverse has a long history even before the Galileo's theory about the place of earth in the cosmos. Philosophers predicted the infinity of the space and the earth as a planet in a constant motion which existed along with other planets.

Centuries ago humans used to believe in the Ptolemaic's ²(200 AD) assumption that the earth is in the center of the cosmos and all the planets including the sun were orbit around it (History of Cosmology). However, The philosopher and the German cardinal of the Roman

² relating to the second century geographer and astronomer [Ptolemy](#) of Alexandria and especially to his belief that the earth is at the center of the universe with the sun, moon, and planets revolving around it (Merriam Webster).

Church Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) was the first one who implemented a metaphysical vision of the universe rejecting the first belief in which he stated, “it always appears to every observer, whether on the earth, or the sun, or another star, that one is, as if, at immovable center of things and that all is being moved, one will always select different poles in relation to oneself” (Macfarlane par.8). According to this belief, Cusa conceived the cosmos as an infinite where each planet revolves according to oneself; thus, the earth is not centered and is in constant motion just like other stars. He, however, extended his philosophy to describe the incapability of humans to reach this infinity of which he defined as God (Macfarlane par.8). Therefore the Italian priest Giordano Bruno (1548 - 1600) developed a philosophy that described the infinity of the universe and the earth as in motion not in the center of the cosmos:

And this space is what we call the infinite, because there is no reason, capacity, possibility sense or nature that must limit it. There are infinite worlds similar to this one no different from it in its types, because there is no reason or defect of natural (I am referring to passive and active power) by which, Just as they exist in this outer space that surrounds us, they should not equally exist in the outer space that by its nature is no different or diverse from this. (qtd .in Navascué par.1)

Bruno believed in the infinity of worlds since there is no argument that said otherwise. He hypothesized his belief according to the metaphysics logic and went even farther to show that these worlds exist in parallel to each other. However, his ideas were harshly rejected by the

Christian belief and he was condemned to death because he challenged the established dogma of religion.

II.2.2. Thematic Usage of Parallel Worlds in Literature

The parallel universe was popularized by the theme of time travel in the genre of science fiction which appeared as a reaction or more significantly an escape realm from the dystopian industrial society. One of the novels that characterized this theme is *Men Like God* by H.G Wells which was written in 1923. In this novel³, the depressed Englishman Mr. Barnstable decided to take on a holiday leaving everything including his family and his job. Suddenly on the road he and the other cars were driven to another world in which they termed utopia. The “Earthlings” were surprised to see themselves in a planet where it was exactly like the earth with humans, animals and plants, but on the contrary, this parallel universe was perfect and ideal comparing to the earth. There was no wars, no diseases and most importantly no class distinctions. H.G Wells used the method of parallelism to illustrate his vision of utopian society. His time travel novel wasn’t in the past or to hell or the paradise like the Greek and the Chinese mythologies but rather it was to the future and he used the automobiles as a transitional mode between the two realms.

William Olaf Stabedon was greatly influenced by H.G wells’ ideas concerning the concepts of alternate reality, parallelism and the multivers. His novel *The Star Maker* which was published in 1937, illustrated the themes of time-travel to another earth with a different mode which is the mind. The main character’s mind⁴ was driven out of his body and it was able to travel to the outer space where it exists planets, civilizations, and infinite universes. However, Stabedon’s novel dealt with theological questions in terms of expressing God’s processes of

³ see: Men like Gods by H.G wells. *Steevithak of the Internet* ,28 February, 2015 www.steevithak.com/

⁴ see: Dooley, Mike. *Star Maker-Olaf Stabedon*. *Dooley Noted*, September, 2013 dooleyblog.wordpress.com/2013/09/26/star-maker-olaf-stabedon/

creation. Thereafter a long path of transporting into several planets, the main character encounters the Star Maker which is God and he was granted a dream where he was able to see the Star Maker's levels of creation. The traveler saw that his cosmos is only one of the infinite cosmoses and the Star Maker went through several stages until he creates the multi –complex universe. Stabeledon's novel characterized the idea of parallelism and infinity in details by leaving space for the reader to decide what to accept and what to discard. Although the novel was hard to relate to as it dealt with religion, the reader is expected to enter an adventure to explore the multiverse in the vision of the creature. Stabeledon wanted to assure that infinity of the cosmos could exist if humans go farther out of the present universe.

II.2.3. The Concept of the Parallel Worlds According to Modern Science

The concept of the parallel world was first coined by Hugh Mark Everett in 1956 in his doctoral thesis *the theory of the universal wave function*. He stated that,“ a new universe is created every time we make an observation and the wave function⁵ corresponding to each event doesn't collapse but gives rise to each independent reality”(Mathew 19). Following this sense, the present universe is a part of a multiverse where it exist duplicates of human beings with some slight differences. This assumption challenged the established dogma of the big bang's theory which claimed that the universe is a one unity which is expanding in an accelerated rate. However, scientists rejected the young man's theory because it is far beyond human observation and it cannot be measured or tested. Thus, Everett Hugh abandoned physics and died in an age of 51 (Byrne 98) without being able to see the seeds that his theory has planted.

Nowadays the concept of the parallel world or alternate reality succeeded to gain much acceptance in the scientific community. Scientists like Alan Guth and Andrei Linde who

⁵ In quantum mechanics. The wave function is a mathematical expression involving the coordinates of a particle in space (Martine and Daintith 865).

followed the inflation principal⁶ proved that there must be another universe which is pushing the earth to expand in this speed. The idea of inflation was theorized by Alan Guth in 1979 to explain the bang in the big bang. He claimed that the explosion happened because gravity can act in a repulsive way (Guth 3) i.e. instead of pulling things together it acts in the opposite way of shattering objects away. Furthermore, Andrei Linde continued Guth's theory to explain that the inflation ones it occurred can never stopped in which he termed *The Eternal Inflation Model* (Guth 10). To put it more simply, the inflation caused the bang which led to the formation of the current universe and at the same rate it caused other bangs in other spots in the cosmos that led to the formation of other universes as well.

Although the concept of the parallel world found its supporters in science and was extended by three theories, The Bubble Universe, the String theory, and the inflation theory; however, it cannot be proved experimentally as humans are unable to go farther beyond the Milky Way. Literature on the other hand, opened the path for this concept to be expressed differently to fulfill the needs of the reading community. Writers in their characterization can be divided into three types according to the themes that they are expressing. Firstly, some writers focused on the actual traveling to other spaces by using technical modes such as the novels of science fiction where characters explore the outer space and other civilizations. Secondly, some writers focused on recreating the past, the characters here may travel to the past and experience their alter ego⁷ in a different time where there will be more chances for them to change their history such as the novels of historiographic metafiction including *Atonement* by Ian McEwan (2001). The third kind of authors illustrated the concept of parallelism psychologically by focusing on the hidden alter ego that each individual has. Characters here may go through a

⁶ Inflation is the idea that the nature of the vacuum state gave rise ,after the big bang to an exponential expansion of the universe (Martine and Daintith 262).

⁷ a second self or different version of oneself (Merriam Webster)

complex adventure to explore their existential authenticity or in simple terms their real self which was spoiled by their psychic self. Indeed, this psychological adventure is multilayered in each literary work since characterization is the act of imagination and writers are implicitly expressing their alter egos by using a variety of aesthetic words to attract the reader. Thus, by examining the conceptual use of the parallel world in fiction the academic community will have the chance in getting an insight look to the complex – mode of narrative and the writer’s difficult task of expressing thematically and stylistically the complexities of life as a whole.

II.3. Theoretical Framework of the Parallel World

The ideas concerning parallelism and the multiversity of worlds were flourished in contemporary philosophy by a number of theories each of which held its autonomy of explanation. However, literary theorists adopted these terms in order to solve some of the main problems related to fictionality such as the truth behind fiction and whether fictional worlds are separate entities or subjects related to the actual world. Therefore, a detailed discussion will be provided in the following sections to examine the possible worlds’ theories in order to better understand the diversity of literary works and their alternate modes.

II.3.1. Definition of possible worlds’ theory:

The Possible Worlds’ theory emerged in the philosophical discussion to explain the concepts of plurality and existence by advocating the sense of diversity in meaning and of possibility in particular. This possibility entails that there are possible worlds and each of these worlds hold certain degrees of actuality. However, this concept has two theoretical standpoints which vary in their explanation of reality and multiplicity. Firstly, the Modal Realists’

assumption was established by David Lewis⁸ in 1973 in which he stated that, “our world is only one world among others. We call it alone actual not because it differs in kind from all the rest but because it is the world we inhabit.”(qtd.in Ryan 18). In this sense, all the inhabitants of these Possible Worlds think of their world as the only one which is real. In fact, the Modal Realists’ belief can be better understood by referring it to the relationship between the fictional worlds and the actual world. It denotes that the fictional worlds hold a separate entity and is part of the Possible Worlds in which it can be considered as a parallel subversion of the actual one. On the contrary, this explanation devours the centeredness and the uniqueness of the present world as it considered that all PWs⁹ are equal in their ontology of existence. Hence, the Moderate Realists’ belief appeared as a reaction to Lewis’ claim which was influenced by a number of philosophers including Plantinga, Van Inwagen and Kripke who claimed that the PWs are abstract entities, hypothetical situations, not real “parallel worlds”(Ronan 23). Significantly, the fictional texts as described by Ryan, “create possible worlds into which readers can be immersed or transported, but these worlds only exist as abstract mental construct of linguistic reference in the actual world”(Whitley 20). What Ryan proposes is to ground for the mental constructs of the reader while decoding the messages of the writer by means of making sense of the text. Here, “making sense” occurs when a relationship between fiction and reality is established in which the latter is comprehended as a referent¹⁰.

⁸ David Lewis (1941–2001) was one of the most important philosophers of the 20th Century. He made considerable contributions in metaphysics by developing the possible worlds theory and Humean supervenience theory.(Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy)

⁹ PW : an abbreviation of possible world

¹⁰ A referent : that to which a linguistic expression refers. Usually this means something, process, or state of affairs the world outside language (Baldik 241).

II.3.2.The Possible worlds' interpretations

When reading fictional texts, readers emerge in these discourses with the belief that what is proposed by the author is only an act of imaginative constructs. Nevertheless, what may confuse the reader are certain types of texts such as postmodernist literature which provoke many problems concerning the ontology of events and characters due to its diversity of styles. In fact readers found themselves active operators in the text to unravel the mysteries and to investigate the writer's intentions behind these complex organisations. Referencing in this sense becomes very difficult as there is no clear link between the objects in the imaginative mode and the ones in the real world. On the other hand, The PW's theory gave a new interpretation to this problem by considering the imaginative worlds as PW to the actual one which denounces the segregationist belief of conceiving fictional texts as discourses devoid of truth (Ronan 31). Ruth Ronan in 1994 analyzes the interdisciplinary relations between philosophy and literature and how literary theorists took the terms of truth, reference and possibility in order to solve the problems procreated by fiction concerning meaning and existence. Therefore, she spoke of the inter-relations of the two disciplines and how the PW related concepts help in giving a better explanation to fiction:

Possible Worlds aid our understanding of fiction since within its framework the autonomy of world systems is secured. In possible worlds semantics each world is considered to be closed under implication; that is, subjecting a proposition to a modal operator (of necessity or possibility), changes the structure of the proposition. (Ronan 28)

The Possible Worlds' framework to fiction as explained by Ronan shows the uniqueness and the autonomy of the literary text. Significantly, the created fictional entities are considered to be versions of the real world that are necessary and possible to ground for alternate realities. For instance, the tragic ending of the *A Dog of Flanders* by the English writer Marie Louis De La Ramee (1872), can be constructed differently by the reader's mind. The main character Nelly could have been survived to enjoy the success of his painting and he could have lived a normal happy life with his dog. Here, the propositions of such scenarios resulted by means of taking the events from their textual property, and twisted them to be a lived experience. The same thing occurs when an individual faced a bad experience he/she opens the door for "what if" in which possibility takes place.

Eco Umberto¹¹ in his influential collection of essays, *The Role of the Reader: Exploration in the Semiotics of Texts*, gave a new look to the PW's assumption. He asserted the concept of "fabula"¹² to explain the multiversity of literary works and their counterparts in the reader's mind. Umberto defined the fabula as narrative structures - in- process which function as an engine of producing PW (Umberto 234). In order to understand the functions of a given literary text, Umberto suggests three elements of the fabula:

- 1) The Possible World W_x : imagined and asserted by the author
- 2) The Possible Sub worlds W_{nc} (where c any of the characters of W_x): that are imagined, believed, wished and so on.

¹¹ Eco Umberto (1932-2016) : was an Italian novelist , literary critic , and a philosopher . and semiotician (student of signs and symbols) best known for his novel *Il nome della rosa* (1980; *The Name of Roses*) (Britannica).

¹² the term used in Russian Formalism for the 'raw material' of story events as opposed to the finished arrangement of the plot (Baldik 94)

- 3) The Possible Sub worlds W_r: that are displayed by the *the fabula*. The model reader imagines, believes, and wishes and so on and that further states of *the fabula* in W_x must either approve or disprove. (235)

What Umberto accounts for is a model of PWs that developed a multileveled fabula. This organisation of the multiversity can be extended to the parallel worlds (possible worlds) in which they are constructed as strings of alternate realities. By starting with the author's W_x until it reaches the reader's display of it, the novel as a product that linked the author and the reader, it is conceived as a set of parallel worlds that subsequently provoked a set of alternative versions to the previous entities. However, these subversions of reality are within an on-going process as readers differ in their conceptions of the W_x and its counterparts. In broad terms, the fabula gave another view to transfictionality¹³ of the literary work by examining character's plot experience adding to that the plurality of stories and the transition between one tale to another which grants one of the stories the significance of actuality.

II.3.2.1.The Possible Worlds' Framework of Fiction

From what have been discussed above about the conceptual definition of PWs and their analogy with literature, a graphic is shown below to describe a given structure of a fictional text and its followings of an on-going process of world-creating from the character to the reader:

¹³ Transfictionality is defined as the migration of characters ,plots ,and structures from one fictional text to another (Ryan 11)

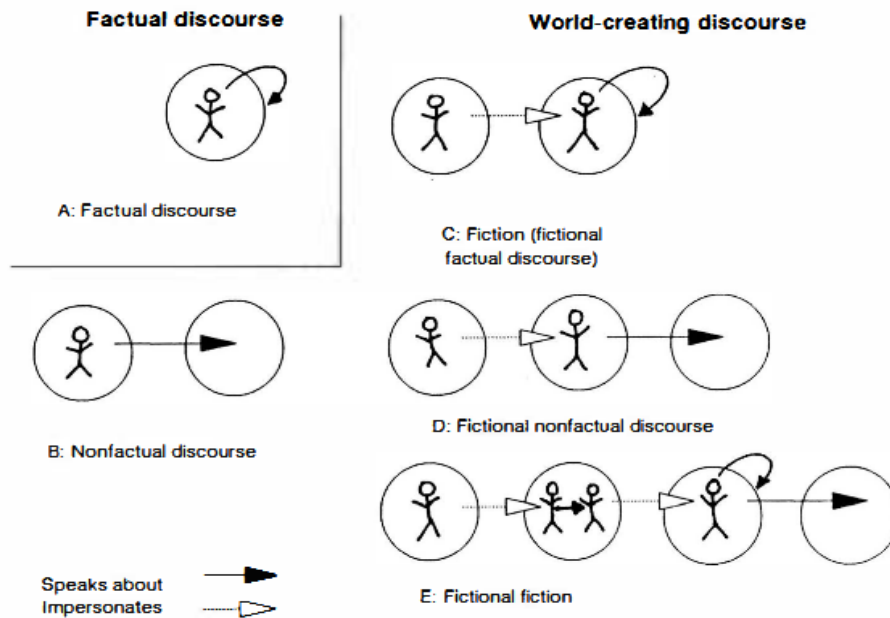


Figure 1: The relation of speaker to described world in factual and world-creating discourse (Ryan 30).

In the graphic above, the first level submits a distinction between factual discourse A and fictional factual discourse C. C is a type of discourse within the text that is similar with the real world in terms of its structure adding to that the way of characterization. For instance, Mrs. Dalloway in Virginia Woolf's novel (1925) is most likely to happen in the real world due to the normality and causality of her life albeit the fact that she comes from the author's imagination. On the second level, B is a non-factual discourse like lies which is distinct from D by means of nature and it can be any discourse from the real world; however, D is the discourse within the literary realm. Here the characters within fiction speak about a non-actual discourse in which their impersonation leads to the creation of parallel sub-version of C. The third level E, accounts for Eco Umberto's classification of fabula by taking the characters –readers relationship within fictional non-factual discourse. It describes the state of the literary texts as being counter-factual

(PW) versions of the real world. Consequently, readers are producing alternate worlds from the text in the process of making-sense of it.

II.4. The practices of the parallel worlds in metafiction

In contemporary fiction writers are fully aware of the complexities of the everyday life and engaged their writings to express the struggle of human beings to find meaning of their existence. Postmodern literature challenged the very merit of reality by giving a variety of frames that shifted readers' position from being spectators into being active operators in the text. It is characterized by the themes of representation, deconstruction, playfulness that dismantle the traditions and the established systems of reality (history, religion). Especially in metafiction, readers are exposed to a set of interrelated stories where truth is shattered by versions of falsified realities. These versions exist in fictional realms in a fragmented and non-linear story line that is projected by a constant break of frames resulted in chaos and discontinuity. Indeed the epilogue is no longer moderated by the author; however, it is subjective, relative according to the reader's interpretation. Similarly metafiction accepts the PW's definition in the sense of giving fiction its own autonomy apart from actuality. Thus, it can be considered as a multiverse of parallel stories in the quest of characters (readers) to find meaning.

II.4.2.The Multiversity of worlds in metafiction

Metafiction stands for, "a kind of fiction that openly comments on its own fictional status" (Baldick 151). Readers are exposed to a play of a set of multiple organisations created indeed by the author however denounces his/her existence in the plot line. By breaking through the Godlike narrative (traditional writings), characters (readers) enjoy a sense of freedom of representing the events from their point of view to express reality in their terms albeit the fact that this liberty deconstructs unification and is only defined from the first page to the last page of

the book. Writers such as Ian McEwan , Italo Calvino, John Fowles , used the structure of story- within -story to give fiction its autonomy and alternatively to show that fiction is an act of imagination and is authored by the writer, on the contrary the plurality of meanings foreground the picture of the novel as a bricolage of shattered objects. Brian McHale in his book *the Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), defined the fictional (parallel) worlds as Chinese boxes”¹⁴ where each box is fitting inside a larger one. He coined the term “recursive structure” to describe the confusion of readers while they are exposed to a variety of frames. This operation happened when readers attempted to reopen metaphorically the Chinese boxes to understand the writer’s intentions or to know the novel’s epilogue. Recursive in the sense that it is an ongoing process of reading and rereading; however, this process results only in laying bare other problems (units) in the bricolage .

The novel’s Chinese Boxes as described by McHale is a “hypodiegetic” world where “diegesis” corresponds to the primary world and *hypo* is the projected worlds of narrative frames which are recursive structures in nature (McHale 113). McHale gave five strategies that are used by postmodernist writers in the organisation of the hypodiegetic world, only three will be explained which have a direct relationship with the parallel worlds’ interpretation. Firstly recursive structure can occur when readers experience a constant shift of the narrative as the story moves from one character to another such as, Italo Calvino’s novel *If on a Winter’s Night traveler* (1979), the reader acts as a main character in the plot by reading a book of *If on Winter’s Night traveler* only to discover that there are other pages which are not complete. Hereafter, The reader went to the book shop and reported the problem, he found out that he had a falsified version of the book and Italo Calvino was not its writer; however, the seller gave the narrator

¹⁴ Brian McHale adopted the term to describe the structure of story- within -a story .The given definition was provided by Merriam Webster.

another book. The main character encountered the same problem with the second book and he/she started an exploratory mission to find the original version of the story. Calvino wanted to illustrate the problem of ontology in fiction by foregrounding the character's search of the author. "Frequency" here, "occurs in the constant break of the primary world by its hypodiegetic worlds" (McHale 113). Secondly, "Tromp L'oeil"¹⁵ is when the second hypodiegetic world is considered as the primary one by means of representation (115). Readers can be misled by duplicates of the real when the novel indicates in terms the so-called original picture. A great example of that would be the novel of *Atonement* by Ian McEwan in 2001, *Brainy* the main character revealed the original twists of the events in the end to express to the reader that what was narrated is her process of atonement to her sister Cecilia and Roby tanner. Significantly, from the first page until the last chapter, *Brainy* only presented a possible parallel world of the real one. Lastly, the strategy of "mise -en Abyme"¹⁶ is defined as the creation of parallel versions of the primary world where characters are exposed to duplicates of the first representation (125). This technique denotes the complexity of the narrative organisation in the sense that truth is far beyond the characters reach in the novel and outside the novel. Alternatively, this technique is witnessed again in the novel of *If on a winter's Night traveler*, where the reader (the main character) was driven back and forth following the traits of the original author; however, each place he/she came across resulted only in giving uncompleted versions of the story with different titles. These stories as described by the reader are similar in organisation (characters contacts, names, destiny) but on the contrary different in the course of events. Calvino's duplicated worlds indicates that stories cannot be ended by means of a unified

¹⁵ A style of painting in which objects are depicted with photographic realistic detail (Merriam Webster).

¹⁶ A term coined by the French writer Andre Gide, supposedly from the language of heraldry, to refer to an internal reduplication of a literary work or part of a work (Baldik 158).

interpretation since the reader only gets involved in the Chinese boxes where each parallel world is incomplete and can only lead to another alternative mode.

II.4.2.Play and theatre as alternative realities in fiction

The parallel worlds are practiced in some of metafictional novels by implying play and theatre as organizing principles. Here the story is displayed by a play - within- play where characters can be considered as actors (players) within an open stage (Wough 119). However, this type of narration can be divided into two categories which are concerned with the terminological use of the word play in fiction. Firstly, the narrative as a play falls back to Shakespearian's expression of "all the world is a stage" in "as you like it" (116). Writers who employ this definition are most likely to accept that every individual in the actual world is only performing roles that are authored upon them through the so-called cultural conventions. In this context, authors are keen in letting the narrative slips out of their hands in the aim of expressing themes that are related to initiation, freedom, and self authenticity. The literary text is considered as a play ground between the author and the reader (Iser 327) in which the reader is confronted with a playful plot of twisted stories where characters are unconsciously imprisoned by their alter egos (Wough 118). This type of characterization is excessively used in John Fowles' novels including *The Magus* and *The Collector*. Therefore, in *The Collector* Frederick Clegg's (the main character) self - belief that he is not responsible for Miranda's death resulted in forming a bad disguise for the dead girl in order to free himself from conviction. Frederick throughout the story was trapped several times by his alter ego. Firstly by plotting his love for Miranda and second by kidnapping her and thinking that keeping her safe and sound would result in winning her trust. The reader in this stage is fully aware that Frederick is swallowed up by his hallucinations that kidnapping which is considered as a social crime will end up in establishing a relationship. And

lastly, after reading her diary, he blamed Miranda of betrayal against his goodness which resulted in her own death.¹⁷ Irish Murdoch analyses the same problem by referring it to the individual's psychic self-fictionalization in which she stated that, “ people create myths about themselves, are then dominated by the myths. They feel trapped and they elect other peoples to play roles in their lives” (qtd.in Wough 180). Secondly, the theatre as a construct, deals with the thematic use of stage narratives including the script, actors, collaborators and spectators. These novels may embed a verbal theatre which can be considered as the interplay between traditions and change, history and aesthetics (Edwards 130). This style of narrative practices the themes of truth and reality by inviting the readers to take part in a¹⁸ metatheater (play-within-play) following character's path toward individuation. Such writers may hand over their authority to characters which possess the role of theatrical directors or playwrights (Wough 117) as in *the Magus* by John Fowles, in which it includes a set of interrelated plays where Nicholas Urfe the first main character is controlled by Conchis the second main character(it will be analyzed further in the last chapter). Thus, alternative reality is seen as the affirmation of the stage on its participants because it forces characters to possess roles apart from their real self to fit in the script. However the nature of postmodernist's literature made these plays heterogeneous and incomplete as it transcends the real and call for a total break from the traditions which make up universal truth.

II.5.Conclusion

Through creating Parallel Worlds, readers experience the writer's internal feelings, desires, and social attitudes that are multilayered in the fictional mode. They get involved in a world that articulates the vision of the writer of making the world a better place however by

¹⁷Irish Murdoch,(1919-1999): British novelist and philosopher noted for her psychological novels that contain philosophical and comic elements(Britannica).

¹⁸ Metatheater is a drama about drama, or any moment of self-consciousness by which a play draws attention to its own fictional status as a theatrical pretence (Baldick 151).

criticizing the current social systems. Historically speaking, parallelism and the multiversity of worlds were being discussed in different aspects including philosophy and science. It is through literature that individuals experience the diversity of worlds and the play between reality and fantasy. However, postmodernist literature usage of prolific style resulted in complicating the plot to the model reader who used to depend on his/her life experiences in the process of making –sense of the text. It caused many problems concerning the truth behind fiction and its relationship to reality. Thus, the possible worlds theory gave a new interpretation to this problem by considering fictional worlds as parallel subversions of the actual world that are necessary to ground for alternate realities. Similarly, John Fowles' existential concerns resulted in giving possible dimensions that reflected the individual's quest toward achieving self-authenticity. He used parallelism to describe the bluffing of social systems that succeeded in controlling and imposing roles on its civilians.

Chapter Three

John Fowles' Parallel Worlds in *The Magus* and their
Experimentation with Reality

III.1.Introduction

The world has so many confusions that one may not find the meaning of his/her own existence. John Fowles as a writer who lived with such problems engaged his readers in fantastical yet educational parallel worlds under the power of the Magus (Conchis the main character). *The Magus* as a postmodern novel is a story about the self quest and an unreliable protagonist who gets involved in a journey toward existential authenticity. John Fowles used fantasy as to question the reality of being in the mystery of the Godgame. Readers are welcomed to enter a set of parallel worlds where the so-called reality is only an illusion. Therefore, in this chapter the research will undertake a descriptive analytical approach to study John Fowles' multiverse. The reader first will be provided with a general overview of the author's narrative style and a glance at the relationship between the writer and the novel. Secondly, the study will investigate the confusions underlying fantasy and reality in the aim of giving an introduction to the writer's parallel worlds and levels of confusion with reality. Thus, the chapter will analyze these dimensions by employing the possible worlds' theory and Umberto Eco's concept of the fabula in order to give a full description of the novel's multi-facets reality.

III.2. General Overview of John Fowles's narrative style

John Fowles is an English novelist and short story writer who was considered as one of the 50 best English writers in New York Times. His complex styles and thematic concerns thrill the bulk of readers who seek a relief from contemporary problems and an escape from ordinaries toward exiting fantasies. Fowles used mysteries, games, detective stories that challenge reality and truth which call upon active readers to take part in his possible worlds. Although his narratives rejected to a great extent the traditions and cultural conventions and unified conceptions of authority and power, he still believed in the traditional English novel's purposes

of entertaining, describing new possibilities of life in order to perform the functions of “didactic teaching”(McSweeney 104). As such, he engaged his characters in a process toward individuation and authenticity and repeatedly in his fiction hints to the reader that inauthenticity is seen through questioning life in general but there are questions which are remained unanswered. These questions resulted in making the mystery of his narratives attractive and baffling as it experiments the reader’s logic. Most of Fowles’ central narrators such as Nicholas Urfe in *The Magus* and Frederick Clegg in *The Collector* are characterized as unreliable and inauthentic which are forced to enter an ordeal of events in the aim of getting self-knowledge. His influence drawn from Sartre and Albert Camus’ philosophies is frequently seen in his fiction by emphasizing upon themes of existence, freedom and the most prominent question of existentialism which is whether human beings have free will in their lives or not (105). Therefore, He chooses to represent his characters realistically as to express the possibility of their worlds and the situations that surround them (104) even if they only exist within the fictional realm. In fact, what makes his writings interesting is that he advocated a humanistic approach in dealing with contemporary problems and taking the human side as the core element of his fiction rather than the artistic one. On an interview with Daniel Halpern in 1971, he stated that he dismissed artists who are high on craft and low on humanity (Vipond16). In this sense, the novel’s variety of styles and aesthetic techniques is important; however, readers should focus on the value and the content as well as the themes that are embedded in these organisations.

Reality and fantasy and their analogy with freedom and prison are recurrent themes in John Fowles’ fiction. Readers experience a dull journey between reality and fantasy only to discover that the answer itself is an illusion which opens the path for other confusions. In *The*

French Lieutenant's Woman (1969), Fowles used Sarah Woodruff as a Victorian pastiche¹ in the context that she was rejected by the rigid English society only to reveal at the end that all what she was condemned about is only a fantastical image that she created upon herself. Fowles used character's quest of authenticity and the confusions that underlie fantasy, reality, and illusion to communicate another central theme which is authority. He frequently used the opposition that lies between the "few" which corresponds to the elite, authentic, wise characters and their power over the "many" the inauthentic, ordinary characters who mis-understood life and existence and accept the control of traditions and cultural conventions (1). Frederick Clegg is conceived as a member of the many compared to Miranda. The same thing is portrayed in *The Magus* where Conchis is the elite that impose authorial power over Nicholas. On a larger scale, he foregrounds the past into the present and confirms the incredulities of history as subject to human modification as it is an act of recalling memories. His experiences of world wars and their psychological impact are alternatively seen through the plotline of his stories where characters are engaged directly or indirectly within the periods of wartime. In addition, Fowles used irony², pastiche, metafiction as to criticize the conservative English society and the Victorian values. In particular terms, he disliked the fact to be labeled as British because Britain for him resembles the traditional authorial power with all its hegemonic practices toward minorities. Alternatively he chooses the English as it described the landscape and the language which are the context based of his writings (Vipond 17). Psychologically speaking most of his characters are alienated by mental acts from social conventions that undergo everydayness and commitments to relationships including parenthood. For instance, he leaned toward adjectives that described

¹ A literary work composed from elements borrowed either from various other writers or from a particular earlier author. The term can be used in a derogatory sense to indicate lack of originality, or more neutrally to refer to works that involve a deliberate and playfully imitative tribute to other writers (Baldick 185).

² a subtly humorous perception of inconsistency, in which an apparently straightforward statement or event is undermined by its CONTEXT so as to give it a very different significance (Baldick 129).

loneliness, boredom and exile in most of his main characters, greatly because he faced the same emotional traits in his life through which he conceived as a positive aspect in the novelist's career (Bragg 15).

John Fowles' career of writing started in his thirties by publishing *The Collector* in 1963 though *The Magus* was his first written novel that communicates to a great deal his personal experiences. However, Fowles' passion for art and fictionality began in his childhood where he experienced an exile and alternatively progressed the love for greens and nature in which he considered as his only friends (2). Symbols of nature take an essential part of his writings such as Frederick Clegg's collection of butterflies which resembles his imprisonment of Miranda. For Fowles, nature was his inspiration that marked the flow of artistic thinking. In addition, he writes a self-conscious fiction i.e. a fiction that is aware of its status as being only an artifice. In an interview with Maclean David North (1977), John Fowles recalls that art is a metaphor of reality and all writers are only expressing metaphors of it. Following the parallel world logic, Fowles is pretty much aware of the artifice and how it resembles another vision of the world. Thus; he initiated an artistic path with *The Magus* where he took his pen to describe parallel worlds, alternative realities that are filled with his philosophies of life.

III.3. *The Magus* as an Autobiographical novel

The Magus, "a secret world, whose penetration involved ordeal and whose final reward was self- knowledge" (McSweeney 106).

John Fowles reveals the significance of *The Magus* and its capacity of changing one's life. It speaks of his most prominent experiences and is conceived as the story that articulates his love for Greece which draws his inspiration toward an artistic life (Bragg 7). It is considered as the author's autobiographical story since it deals with significant instances of his life including

Oxford and the influences that he established for the French existentialists and Greece with all its beauty and the agony that hunted him throughout his life (Vipond 15). The story revolves around a middle class Englishman named Nicholas Urfe and the complex journey that he undertook in Greece to understand life and most importantly himself. Nicholas is an Oxford graduate who accepted an English teaching job in Phraxos to escape the sense of the boring everyday life in London. Fowles went through the same psychological exile and he runs to Greece not for tourism but because he wanted to stay abroad (Bragg 7). However, Greece was a turning point to both the author and the main character. Fowles found his motivations for novelty and it was the place where he encountered Elizabeth the woman that will become his wife and Nicholas got a compromise with his internal and external worlds through which he learnt to accept the mysteries of life.

John Fowles took a great deal of work in *The Magus* because it was his first novel and he had to make it right. He started drafting the novel in 1953 however leaving it for 10 years because it didn't serve the purposes that he intended (Vipond 15). *The Magus* was a big challenge to the writer on the basis that it resembles a young man's ambition toward narrative and he wanted to include everything about life which made the plot too complicated and prolific (Capmpell 458). The novel was published in 1965 and it took the interest of large academic readers who were modeled by the variety of styles and its uncertainties that made the story a sort of a labyrinth where everything is contradicting its own self. Fowles' dissatisfaction about the novel led him to publish a second revised version in 1977 by which he claimed to be the best one (Tarbox 10). Therefore, the analysis will deal with the second version where it will focus on investigating the confusions that lay between fantasy and reality and the embedded hypodiegetic worlds.

III.4.Fantasy and Reality in *the Magus*

John Fowles intended to give his readers a literary work where they can be engaged in special experiment. This experiment provided a psychological journey where both the protagonist and reader come across a blurred line between reality as an actual situation and fantasy as a living one. John Fowles provided the reality as a dubious concept and fantasy as a key to reveal the truth about everything starting from the self, in a form of dilemma, that has plagued intellectuals throughout ages with no clear way-out. *The Magus* as a postmodern novel highlighted this problem to reveal the “abiding preoccupation” situation along with the complicated relationship between fiction and truth (Holmes 45). This combination was introduced through Fowles’ characters such as Nicholas Urfe and Maurice Conchis within an atmosphere of low fantasy.

John Fowles gave his readers a glance about Urfe’s life in the first chapter and how he knew that he wanted to be someone else. In this foggy situation, Urfe said “I went to Oxford; and there began to discover I was not the person I wanted to be” (Fowles 1). This quotation reveals the first attempts for Urfe to cross the line of his traditional life, in addition to the way he started questioning his own reality; this reality went to another level to be more complicated when he had to live in a binary personality between someone who is “aesthete³ and cynic”⁴ and military member as the “son of a General”. Urfe stated that “[he] went on leading a double life in the army”. For a while he had to deal with this until the death of his parents. This shock unusually remarked the first sign for him to be free from a part of reality which is family traditions (3).

Urfe started a rebellion against this reality just to find a meaning behind all the things around him. When he started teaching he felt so bored and lost. He saw the school as a “toy

³ One having or affecting sensitivity to the beautiful especially art (Merriam Webster) .

⁴ A person who has negative opinions about other people and about the things people do (Merriam Webster).

model of the entire country” so he just resigned. In this moment our character saw England as harsh and suspicious reality to deal with and as a solution he started looking for his own way out (Fowles 5).

One day Urfe found a job offer in “The Lord Byron School, Phraxcos, Greece”. In this point the writer did not choose Greece incidentally. It was the first writer’s step towards the world of fantasy and for that there is no better place than the place where fantasy is born (7).

The choice of travelling to Greece marks the journey from reality to fantasy. After spending some time in Phraxos, Urfe started exploring this mysterious place until one day he found a book on a rock. This book was just like the book he had in his room. There were four lines in red ink about the freedom of exploring in which he started thinking deeply about their purpose. Later on, the main character knew the owner of the book. It was the book of a man called Conchis, this character was represented later in the novel as the “God game” (Holms 46).

Urfe was so curious to know more about this person, he went to describe him as being more than “senile fantasies and quirks⁵” (80) because he had a weird influence on him through his words and the way he acted. The mysterious character Mr. Conchis in his conversation with Urfe stated that “Greece is like mirror; it makes you suffer. Then you learn” (Fowles 92). Conchis tried to push Urfe to the journey between reality and fantasy in order to make him gain a sort of truth even with risk of being lost in this danger game.

Little by little Urfe found himself going through the “God game”, he started believing in old gods like the god “Apollo” from a very old Greek mythology, Urfe started having faith on the stories of ghosts in the moment when he saw two persons “Robert Foulkes and the white faced girl” a killer and one of his victims from the 17th century in front of him in dramatic way (138). Urfe declared “I had somehow landed myself in the center of an extraordinary old man’s

⁵ Something strange that happens by chance (Merriam Webster).

fantasies” (Fowles 140). His basics of understanding and believing was tested then collapsed, in this stage he was open to believe what he strongly regarded it as the impossible. Urfe through the events of this story accepted even Conchis’ ideas of having other world far beyond what can a normal person sees, a world in which its language is “emotions” and not words, a world of “telepathy” where you can communicate with others with no sound (194).

Urfe entered the world of fantasy within a form of psychological journey. He was aiming to reveal the reality behind all mystery, yet he did not know that he was in the middle of a psychological experiment where he lost his sense of distinguishing the real from the unreal in his parallel world.

III.4. *The Magus* as a Hypodiegetic World :

John Fowles in *The Magus* presents to the reader a hypodiegetic world of interrelated stories that blurred the line between truth and fiction. Readers question Conchis’ complex artifice in what is termed The Godgame and its effects on Nicholas. Therefore, a detailed analysis will be provided in the following sections to describe five hypodiegetic worlds in the Godgame, in the aim of shedding light on Conchis’ autobiographical stories and its parallelism with Nicholas’ life adding to that the implication of the metatheater with all its ordeals.

The Magus is one of the stories that keep floating in the mind where truth is not revealed and the game is still processing in the actual world with a different disguise. John Fowles is one of the rare writers who knew how to muse readers and letting them going through hundreds of pages without weariness (McLean 6). Conchis who is the Magus of the novel is taking the task of his writer to practice the same thrilling upon Nicholas by introducing possible worlds intrigued with hunting mysteries. From the first pages of the book, Nicholas is describing himself within the realistic frame as being, “the only child of middle class parents”(Fowles 1) by marking the

beginning of the diegetic world that grants the casualty of Nicholas's life and a tone of smooth linear plotline. The reader in the stage, establish a quasi-relationship with Nicholas following the story from his point of view and getting a familiar sequence of events which are most likely to happen in reality. However, after accepting the English job in Greece and leaving his girl- friend Alison, Nicholas started to feel the inauthenticity of himself and the fiction that he created. Significantly in this level, the first hypodiegetic world appeared to denounce some of the important instances in Nicholas' life such as his dream of being a poet and imagining letters of fans and reviewers which were faded by the effects of Greece. And indeed, the conformation of his social exile i.e. England with all its values, "it was Greece. It made conventional English notions of what was moral and immoral ridiculous" (Fowles 49). Thus, Fowles is breaking the narrative by showing the unreliability of his character and triggers a sense of confusion in the reader whether he/she will count on Nicholas's assumptions or not. The reader started to merge within the author's game of assessing Nicholas's claims throughout the story.

Secondly, after having the first contact with Mr. Conchis, from the first glance Nicholas realized that his meeting was expected (71). In this stage, the reader started to get instances of the multilayered emerging worlds in the story. The novel here is introducing Conchis' Godgame implicitly without giving any clear references to it. One of the remarkable instances was Nicholas' description of Conchis , "I looked sideways at him. He was obviously a man who rarely smiled. There was something masklike, emotion purged, about his face." (72). Nicholas sensed the weirdness of Conchis' resemblance as if he is hiding his real image behind a masque, hence at the same time feeling affected by the artistic life that he has, starting with his possession of original famous paintings including the Modigliani adding to that the ability to play music in

the harpsichord (Fowles 88). Fowles here shows the distinction between the few and the many in the sense that Conchis resembles the longing for art that Nicholas couldn't achieve:

From this skull-rock strange golden roots
Ikons and incidents; the man in the mask
Manipulates, I am the fool that falls
And never learns to wait and watch. (89)

Nicholas here had the inspiration to write the verse that described the unfamiliarities with Conchis' world. He is pretty much aware of his status comparing to Conchis. In fact throughout the story, Conchis plays the role of authentic, mysterious godlike character who introduces Nicholas with a set of theatrical stages that challenge his beliefs and principles in the aim of guiding him to himself, the reality that he is unaware of. The second hypodiegetic world is about a scene from England's history. Conchis in his second meeting with Nicholas begins a conversation where he included his past. He however started with his first impression with Greece which was very much like Nicholas' one, "I had immediately the sensation that I was expected. Something had been waiting there all my life. I stood there, and I knew who waited, who expected. It was myself." (104). The reader in this level gets the sense of parallelism in both autobiographies. Since the novel is about Nicholas writing his personal experiences in Greece and Conchis is telling his own life experiences; thus, both stories emerged in parallel to each other which gave Conchis a godlike character that knows everything about Nicholas and sets Greece as a metatheater prepared for him. Therefore, he gave Nicholas a pamphlet of Robert Foulkes' last words. After he read it he felt asleep for 45 minutes and suddenly when he awoke,

he saw, “ a heavy, solemn man with a reddish face. Robert Foulkes.”(Fowles 139). The figure was standing in front of him besides the palms trees with a whitefaced girl near him. Nicholas attempted to call them using Greece; however, they didn’t respond and as he moved toward them they suddenly disappeared. The main character started to feel paranoid because he is a man who didn’t believe in ghosts but Conchis’ game started to challenge his own belief, “For a few moments I had let my mind plunge into darkness, into a world where the experience of all my life was disproved and ghosts existed.”(141).The hypodiegetic world here emerged from the textual reading of Robert Foulkes’ pamphlet where the original story projects another parallel version of it. Nicholas gets the clear sight of his position as being the solitary audience in Conchis’ stage (141). Indeed, the reader as well as Nicholas are intrigued and in confusion in revealing the reasons behind the Magus’ mystery.

The third hypodiegetic world is more intense as it brings the dead to life and foregrounds the past into the present. Lily who is the third character in Greece is described from the beginning of the novel in Conchis terms as being his dead fiancée. However, during a mysterious night in his house, Nicholas saw Lily as he recognized her from a picture walking inside the house. Thereafter another meeting was arranged by Conchis and Lily as a third guest in the table, The Magus, revealed to Nicholas that she is not the real one (Fowles 172) and she is only pretending to be the original version. He then told him that she is an amnesiac and she doesn’t like to be questioned about her past. At this point, Nicholas’ role in the Godgame changed from being a spectator into being a character, “ At once I had the impression that we were two actors with the same doubts about the director.”(172), significantly, the game here gets more intensely by taking off the cover of freedom of its participants. Meanwhile, Conchis recalls his memories

in France where he met Alphons De Deukans another artistic figure who has the longings for art and music. His house is a museum which contained collections of old pieces.

Conchis description of his relationship of De Deukans denotes implicitly another parallel version of his bound with Nicholas, “ In fact de Deukans, by being as he was — certainly not by arguing — raised profound doubts in my philosophy.”(182). Likewise, throughout the story Nicholas’ philosophy about life was challenged by Conchis. However, during the talk, Conchis words were suddenly interrupted by a scene from the Greek mythology. Nicholas in confusion heard the sound of a horn which was played by Apollo. Hence, a man appeared chasing a girl and in a brilliant *coup de theater* Artemise showed up with her arrow, cold and outraged. The man stood in arrest and Artemise stretched her bow and threw the arrow towards his heart (186). Nicholas realized that Artemise was lily in pretence, he felt furious because it was just next to him and at a sudden appeared perfectly as Artemise. After the scene Conchis acts as if nothing has happened and Nicholas is in an illusion of not understanding the meaning behind all the myth. The Magus confirmed to Nicolas the problem of existence in terms that all who questioned life and meaning past the centuries couldn’t arrive at any answer (189). Thus, the third hypodiegetic world emerged as parallel to Conchis’ talk about his experience in France. His amusement about the museum with all its collections was displayed perfectly in the sense that Nicholas was the guest of the Magus. In this world Nicholas is called to learn the problem of existence and how humans along the course didn’t understand life; thus, how he can understand the myth that the Magus employed. However, he couldn’t even distinguish between reality and fiction and the relationships in between.

The fourth hypodiegetic world is one of the ordeals that Nicholas couldn’t get through. The Magus practiced a life experience where Nicholas takes an active role. He thus, welcomed

the reader to experience one of the remarkable instances of Greece during the German conquest in the war. Thereafter a long struggle in Bourani⁶, The main character (Nicholas) lost the sense of reality in Conchis' game. However, he started to be very passive and instead of relying on his own perceptions, he started to believe whatever is proposed in front him. Lily, whom Conchis lately said that she was schizophrenic and her real name was July, appeared to Nicholas without her Masque in the course of revealing everything about the Godgame and how she was only an actor and she wanted to be free from this job. Nicholas believed her and started to act as if he is aware of the game and its practices. Hence, he arranged a meeting with her to make an agreement on how to flip the game on its master. When he arrived in the island, he found himself in the middle of the war, and German soldiers shielded him and abused him (Fowles 365). The game turned itself to act as reality and Nicholas handicapped didn't know how to get out of it, "It looked real; not a stage property. He looked really German; not Greek." (365). He realized that he was back in history in 1943 (368). After a while two other Greece prisoners arrived and were bloodily abused in front him. Nicholas at last conceived the presented scene as being only a stage act; however, it was very perfect that it blurred the line between fact and fiction. In fact throughout the novel until this point, everything was a sort of a labyrinth in which the maze has no center and an ending is only a point of sequence (650). Every story he came across was incomplete and leads to other strings of events. The Magus throughout the story tried to teach Nicholas not to arrive at conclusions. On the contrary, by practicing the make-believe narrative everything was ambiguous that Nicholas didn't know what to believe, "Every truth at Bourani was a sort of lie; and every lie there, a sort of truth." (292). Finally, The fifth hypodiegetic world is the mode that transcends the previous levels and its ordeals made the main character loose every sense of reality in his previous life i.e. the life before Greece.

⁶An island near phraxos , Where Conchis house is situated

In the fifth hypodiegetic world, the Magus plays the game not of the make-believe kind but rather of reality that spoke in the name of all its previous parallel versions. In the last theatre or which the Magus termed as such, Nicholas after a mysterious game found himself in a boat. There was a large room where he was guided by two men to sit in a chair however hanging him from his neck. In front him was a big table where all the masked characters started to take place. Lily in her Artemise disguise, Appolo, the Germans, Conchis and so on. The Magus started to speak of the mystery of Greece. He said that all the characters whom Nicholas came across with were Doctors and he was in the middle of a psychological experiment, “ Well, so, Mr. Urfe, you will have guessed our secret by now. We are an international group of psychologists, which I have the honor, by reason of seniority simply” (Fowles 495). Moreover, he was presented by an analysis of his behaviors and social problems. The psychologists classed him as a subject who rebelled against his own life however without having the certain materials to perform the rebel. The psychologist went on saying that Nicholas (as one of the rebels in such kind) ,“ adopt a mask of cynicism that cannot hide their more or less paranoiac sense of having been betrayed by life.”(500). On the contrary, Nicholas denied everything of the analysis and conceived the scene as another kind of Conchis’ game (501). Indeed, throughout the story, readers get the instances that nothing is complete even if words linguistically denote the contrary. Although the Magus revealed the so-called last theater, the effects of the game were intense that they plant the sense of continuity in Nicholas and the reader as well.

John Fowles is one of the writers that preferred a whole seeing approach in dealing with his novels (Tarbox 3). Whole sight in terms of taking the narrative as a bricolage and attempting to find relations in its embedded structures. Therefore, the presented parallel worlds in *The Magus* have three core relationships according to the strategy of recursive structure. Firstly, in

the Godgame, the narrative was frequently interrupted by its fantastical stories. Each presumed story splits into parallel version without any previous instances. By taking the example of Conchis' tale about De Deukans, the main character in his listening was shocked about the voice of the horn and the emerging Apollo scene; similarly in the island, where he experienced the horrors of the war in his attempt to reach the expected meeting with Lily. Secondly, Tromp L'oeil, is conceived in the fifth level of the hypodiegetic world. The main character in accordance with the reader was presented with a version that falsified all other stories in terms of their nature. Generally the myths and plays turned out to be of meaning rather than rejecting the real. If the reader accepts this image, he/she most likely initiate another reading in the aim of finding clues to Conchis' psychological experiment. However, Fowles complicates this assumption by making the plot open to interpretation. In the story and after the so-called last scene, the main character returned to London and started a detective mission to trace Conchis and his team. He, however, found out that Conchis is a dead figure and there are no traces of the Greece's mystery, only rumors. Fowles made his character's life without any conclusion, the reader couldn't know whether Conchis' game was real in the fictional realm or if it did fulfill its aims on Nicholas. Finally, the strategy of *mise-en-Abyme* is seen from taking a whole picture of the novel. Fowles used the structure of story -within- story in parallel to complicate meaning and assumptions. Thus, the novel is projecting a multilayered fabula of possible worlds and its counterparts. In this context, readers travel through different levels in the search of the original story. Firstly, John Fowles presented a possible world that includes a double -shift narrative. Nicholas is writing his own story which includes Conchis' autobiographical representations. Likewise, the latter introduced a set of parallel versions which led Nicholas to form other different versions as well. As a result, readers form other Possible Worlds in the process of

making-sense of the text and in investigating the writer's intended meaning. For instance, the novel can be interpreted according to a feministic approach such as Cristiane De Oliveira Busato's thesis *the Magus as a postmodern Romance*, where the author focused on analyzing the female characters and their power over Nicholas. In addition, some readers conceived the novel from a stylistic perspective as in the case of Von Jens Pollheide's dissertation *Postmodern Narrative strategies in the Novels of John Fowles*. Here, the novel is viewed from the lens of postmodernism in which the author analyzed intertextual usage and the play of representation.

The Magus is deductive as well as mysterious; it denotes that individuals should accept the mysteries in their lives and rely on their interpretations in dealing with the world. Although, Fowles constructed a self-conscious fiction including the title which stands for a person who possesses power and is manipulative adding to that Conchis' rejection of novels as it includes only fabrications of the real (90). He, however, teaches the model reader through Nicholas to be aware of peoples' masks that hide their true selves. Moreover, he occluded that reality has multiple facets and according to the Magus (Conchis) it is the self that must not be betrayed (130). One of the reviewers sent Fowles a letter asking about the reality of the game. He replied, "The Magus is trying to suggest to Nicholas that reality, human existence, is infinitely baffling. One gets one explanation –The Christian, the psychological, the scientific ... but always it gets burnt off like summer mist and a new landscape." (John Fowles). He indicates that readers should rely on their assumptions in approaching the novel and similarly in the external world and not be blinded by social conventions.

III.6. Conclusion

John Fowles in the *Magus* reflected the ordeals that the common person in the cotemporary world will most likely to experience. He implemented fantasy as a realm that can help in understanding the real world. But on the contrary, he expressed the dark side of it by showing the individual's self fictionalization and the internal game of fact and fiction. Although he didn't give any conclusions to his game, he succeeded to a great extent in reflecting the problems of existence and the humans' everlasting journey of finding meaning behind their lives. As a postmodern novel, John Fowles addressed the themes of representation to express the masked character that each individual has. The novel indicated that people should be aware of the implications of the mask and never trust but themselves in dealing with social relationships. On a larger scale, it reflected the bluffing behind social systems, traditions, and religion and the use of power and authority to cover the so-called reality.

General Conclusion

The world that we know it today has gone through multiple changes which made humans question along the course, the reality of things and the status of being. Pre-modern philosophers such as Plato believed in the shortcoming of human perceptions and gave the story of the cave to explain the rigidity of societies in the sense that knowledge which meant to enlighten people was conceived as an enemy to religion. Modernism with its empiricism emerged to question theologian perspective and clung on reason and logic to make sense of the world. John Locke as a supporter of this assumption conceived reality as a descendant from experience in which the mind can process information, build relations and formulate ideas that establish an understanding of the external world. In this sense, Modernism believed in the reality that is perceived in which humans are the center that defined the external world. However, Postmodernism as a theory that rejected previous schools of thoughts, believed in the reality of “many worlds” in the sense that reality cannot be definable because it has multiple facets and each claimed truth is only a non-real version of it. Such skepticism resulted in creating confusions rather than providing answers that complicated the social life and made humans search for the other dimension to escape the doomed reality.

Individuals created parallel worlds in the aim of escaping the complexities of their lives. Such complexities occurred by means of social restrictions. On the one hand, fantasy can articulate the freedom into which the external world banned. Especially if every claimed truth was rejected by the postmodern thought which makes people cling on fiction to make use of the world. On the other hand, it may result in causing a split between the internal and the external world in which individuals will be imprisoned by the illusion of their fantasies. John Fowles in *The Magus* addressed particularly this idea by involving realistic elements in the novel. His main

character reflects the struggle of every human being whose life was being controlled and moderated by social practices. In fact, the novel speaks of psychic problems as well by forcing the protagonist to unravel the hidden fantastical world and projected it against the external world. John Fowles' novel is highly philosophical as it deals with concepts related to life in general and the human perception of it in particular. It revolved around accepting the mysteries of life as it didn't give any conclusions to it.

John Fowles' artifice can be considered as a life mirror. Although it implemented fantastical elements, it is however a story that expressed a model reader who uses imagination as an escape realm. Fowles' used a set of hypodiegetic worlds to experiment the concept of reality on different levels. It is through parallelism that the model reader experience multiple facets of the so-called truth into which the novel indicated that there is no original picture of the story. Therefore the research gave a full description on how the created parallel worlds in fiction resulted in complicating the concept of reality by analyzing *The Magus* as a case study to this question. However, the area of research is still open for further investigation concerning the complexity of meaning in the novel by focusing on the language used. The prospected research can analyze the writer's choice of words and expressions and the motifs behind them. Future studies may be based upon using the *Text World* theory which was initiated by Paul Werth in the late 1980s. The theory can provide prolific knowledge to the area as it conceived every word a separate world that linked the producer and the receiver.

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