

Dialogic Discourse in John Fowles's Fiction

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Abstract

Mikhail Bakhtin is one of the prominent literary theorists of speech genres and stylistics. He was mainly focused on the philosophy of language and the multi-voiced, multi-languated systems as a result of the oppressive regime he was under. His literary concepts reflect the autonomy of the characters, dialogue, and multi-voiced language systems. He advocated for unfinalizability, the idea of freedom of the characters, and the diversity of the languages within a novel. According to Bakhtin, language was not only a tool for communication and should be examined with its social context. His concerns for literature and groundbreaking concepts of dialogism, polyphony, and heteroglossia are the main methodologies for this study that aims to figure out the power dynamics between utterances of opposite genders and how female dialogics can be observed in John Fowles's *A Maggot* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. As a postmodern novelist, John Fowles's novels reflect the heterogeneous style which is compatible with Bakhtinian concepts. Therefore, this study will discover the dialogic relationships and how different languages and several viewpoints reflect the centrifugal forces of the literature.

Keywords: Bakhtin; dialogism; feminist dialogism; Fowles; heteroglossia.

INTRODUCTION

John Fowles is considered one of the most important and prominent postmodern writers of the 20th century. His fiction mostly consists of experimental elements as he also claims in many of his interviews. The experimental nature of his fiction, being a postmodern novelist and having postmodern elements, enables his fiction to be analyzed through different perspectives and Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism concept is one of these perspectives that can be applied to his novels. As a postmodern writer, he challenges the norms that encircle the novel genre. He questions the existential nature of the world and depicts them in an appealing way by implementing different speech types into his fiction. His fiction is fragmented, and unfinished which invites the reader to become an active participant. The inclusion of the reader into fiction is something Bakhtin also advocates in his approach to novel and dialogism concepts.

John Fowles claims that writing is a living process just like "eating or making love; a natural process, not an artificial one." (Fowles, *Wormholes*, p.12) The novel, on the other hand, is also a living organism. It is relatively a new genre and open to many possibilities and Fowles takes advance of this Notion and experiments with narrative while writing a novel. Bakhtin also claims that a "novel has just been born." (Bakhtin, DI) Fowles's fiction and Bakhtin's concepts regarding the novel and language are very compatible and this article aims to discover the languages that have been used in Fowles's selected novel; *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot*. In addition to Bakhtin's concept of dialogism and heteroglossia, it is important to include feminist dialogics into this narrative since the female characters and their languages and how they deconstruct the patriarchal norms in these novels are one of the most important elements of these novels, hence, the aim of this article.

The concepts that are the main methodology for this thesis article belong to the Russian literary critic and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin who lived under oppression and scrutiny throughout his life whether under the tsarist regime or the Soviet regime. The freedom of expression was restricted and the punishment was most of the time either exile or execution. The literary criticism enables Bakhtin to have a life and he found a refugee in criticism. He was against the dominant ideologies or languages. He was an advocate for multi-language systems and his main concern was the novel as he claimed that the novel genre has a heteroglot nature which allowed multiple voices

and languages without a single language trying to overpower the other. These ideas form his dialogism concept. Paul De Man, who is a literary critic, explains Bakhtin's dialogism with Bakhtin's oppressed life as a "double-talk" (1983,p.100) and he continues;

..the necessary obliqueness of any persecuted speech that cannot, at the risk of survival, openly say what it means to say: there is ample evidence, from what is known of Bakhtin's biography, that is meaning is entirely relevant in his case... Bakhtin is consistent in his assertion that the dialogical relationship is intra-linguistic, between what he calls two heterogeneous "voices," as in a musical score. (1983, p.100-102)

According to Michael Holquist, one of the Bakhtin scholars, Bakhtin's fascination with Dostoevsky's works and Dostoevsky's narrative is evident in his criticism therefore he introduced new literary concepts such as heteroglossia, polyphony, and dialogism. However, in this thesis article, the most important concept is dialogism and in a brief description, dialogism can be said an act of dialogue. Ken Hirschkop, another important literary critic, in *Cambridge Introduction to Mikhail Bakhtin* explains the notion as "a peculiar and interesting form of the author/hero relationship." (2005, p.175) Bakhtin explains the importance of dialogism and having multiple voices by saying "a single voice ends nothing and resolves nothing, two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence." (p.252) From his stance, it could be said that, the interaction of voices is a necessity and monologism which is a single-voiced system is not enough. The interaction between voices and languages enables the reader to participate in the fiction as well and creates a ground for interaction between the novel and the reader.

In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin claims that Dostoevsky's character's consciousnesses are always in relationship with other consciousness and they are not single entities. There's an interaction of ideas that forms in regard to others. He says that;

Every experience, every thought of a character is internally dialogic, adorned with polemic, filled with struggle, or is on the contrary open to inspiration from outside itself- but it is in any case concentrated simply on its own object; it is accompanied by a continual sideways glance at another person. (Bakhtin, 2021, p.95)

Bakhtin in *Poetics*, claims that Dostoevsky's Underground character's language, even though it might be considered as monologic, carries other's ideas and judgments within his monologue and this creates a dialogism in his language. Even a monologue, therefore, according to Bakhtin, is dialogic or can be dialogic. Underground man's judgments are not self-born but influenced by the environment he was subjected to, therefore in his language other languages can be observed as well.

The characters, intentionally or unintentionally, represent and utter ideas and Bakhtin claims that "the ideas are a live event, played out at the point of dialogic meeting between two or several consciousnesses." (2021, p.171) Dialogism is important to understand the character's motives and inner selves. The dialogue, thus, an important tool for this notion. Only through a dialogue with others, the consciousness of the other can be revealed. Bakhtin claims that ideas are wanted to be heard, understood, and answered by other voices from other positions.

Another concept that is important for this thesis article is heteroglossia. Heteroglossia is a speech type in which there are multiple voices and different viewpoints. Heteroglossia enables the reader to have a greater understanding of the narrative and enables the reader to have a glance at different perspectives. Heteroglossia enters the novel through different characters and their perception of the world in their own languages. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin explains the integration process of heteroglossia as;

Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, and the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel, each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships(always more or less dialogized). (2021, p.263)

Every utterance has a social context, a meaning, and a background, a Word is not a single entity for communication. In the most basic sense, a novel in which there are different chapters dedicated to different characters and narrated through their consciousnesses and with their languages are considered as heteroglot since they enable the reader to have a greater look and understanding regarding the narrative. The reader has the information and the social background of the characters. The heteroglot novel presents different utterances, different dialects, and characters. It enables

different speech types to create a harmonious whole. Speech types such as epistolary, newspapers or letters, etc. in a novel invite heteroglossia. Michael Holquist in *Dialogism*, explains the heteroglossia as follows;

Heteroglossia is a way of conceiving the world as made up of roiling mass of languages, each of which has its own distinct formal markers. These features are never purely formal, for each has associated with it a set of distinctive values and presuppositions. (Holquist, 2005, p.79)

The other concept that is a subject in this thesis article is feminist dialogics. Feminist dialogics Karen Hohné and Helen Wussow claim that the dialogism concept enables female voice inside the discourse through “the incorporation and interweaving of various voices to create a sum far greater and generative than the parts.” (p.viii). Another important feminist critic Dale M. Bauer claims that “feminist dialogics would disrupt patriarchal hierarchy” (1988) and the “female voice” disrupts the “surveillant” male gaze.” (1994, p.ix) When heteroglossia enters the novel through different voices, the female voice, enters, as well.

In the introduction section of *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin*, feminist critics touch upon Bakhtin’s ideas on “decentering in the language of literature”ⁱ According to Bakhtin, language is stripped from everything and open to examination purely from dialogic discourse and this enables a common ground for speeches. Languages exist side by side on a common ground and there will be simultaneity which means each of these voices and languages will be heard without stratification. Thus, a female voice and language can also enter this equation. Dialogic discourse enables female language to be heard, thanks to the loosening of the borders, borders of stratification, and female languages will be heard without limitations and the dialogues will be available to the discourse. Hohné and Wussow state that “... A state of “decentering” in which a number of voices, “social, national, semantic,” and gendered (we would emphasize), will speak simultaneously.” (1994, p.vii) The restrictive approach to female languages, therefore, will be lifted thanks to the decentration of the language.

RESULTS

This study which focuses on the dialogic relationship between the characters, between the reader and the text tries to establish a coherent analysis of Fowles’s fiction with Bakhtinian concepts of

dialogism, heteroglossia, and finally feminist dialogics. The postmodern qualities of Fowles's fiction enable the novels and characters to be examined through Bakhtinian lenses as the concept focuses on languages not only on grammatical structures but with its contextual analysis. By analyzing the background of the characters, especially the female characters, it is aimed to demonstrate the power dynamics between the languages and how female languages revolted against the male-dominated world and their languages with their unique voices. The female language in Fowles's fiction demolishes the barrier that separates and gives power to the men and both genders can have a common ground with dialogues. Bakhtin's views on language, as he claims that languages are not grammatical systems but ideological systems, each word that is uttered by a character gains a meaning. The unfinished nature of John Fowles's fiction and the freedom he gave to his characters make his novels unique and a study field for dialogism. As dialogism claims the autonomy of speech and multi-linguaged systems, characters engage with each other and form dialogic relationships. Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot* novels are the pure examples of dialogic interaction of the characters as well as the relationship between the reader and the text. The novels by having postmodern qualities, enable the reader to actively participate in the process of the fiction and the unfinished nature of them leaves room for interpretation which creates a ground for the reader to participate in the dialogic discourse, as well.

The diversity of languages, the variety of perspectives in the selected novels create a dialogic discourse within these works. The different perspectives that are portrayed by the author invites heteroglossia inside the novel and the reader once again takes a position as an active element in the fiction which creates the dialogic relationship between them.

DISCUSSION

Fowles's portrayal of female characters and how he voiced them enables the dialogic discourse inside the novel and through this dialogic discourse, the reader observes how women challengesociety and norms and how dialogic languages subvert gender roles and dynamics. In the thesis, the dialogic interaction of female characters in Fowles's fiction is examined and examples are given. Fowles's strong-willed and powerful female characters enabled this analysis. Fowles's fiction, having unique narrative elements, enables the dialogic discourse between the author and

the reader, and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is one of these examples. The novel sets in 19th-century England, in the Victorian Era. In this part of the article, the female protagonist Sarah Woodruff's language and her dialogic interaction with other people will be the focus. By bringing feminist dialogics into the focus, this part aims to demonstrate the gender roles that are attributed to women and how they have different languages according to their social positions and how they challenge the patriarchal society and how all these are reflected in their languages.

Fowles explains the motive behind the novel in his book *Wormholes* and says that "A woman stands at the end of a deserted quay and stares out to sea. That was all. This image rose in my mind one morning when I was still in bed half asleep." (1998, p.12) The novel gained great success all over the world and even adapted into a movie. What makes the novel unique is the narrative techniques and the unfinished nature of it. The novel is considered a metafiction which is described as self-conscious fictional writing in Patricia Waugh's book *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. She describes the concepts as self-conscious fictional writing which questions the fiction's nature of being fiction and reality. (2001, p.2)

As mentioned before, Fowles experimented with his narrative techniques throughout his fiction writing career, and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is considered as one of the most unique novels of Fowles. The author narrates the story from the 20th century and as if glancing back in the past, he narrates Victorian fiction, as if he intrudes on the past. He makes himself visible at times and makes sure that the reader is aware that the story is told from a future perspective. By implementing such a technique he gives the autonomy to his characters and does not intervene with the decision processes of the characters. He narrates the story as an outcast. The metafiction in this fiction, therefore, enforces the dialogic nature of his narrative.

James Acheson, a literary critic of John Fowles, in his *John Fowles: Modern Novelists*, suggests that Fowles allows his characters to be free and not some mere puppets he uses as he wishes and says that they are 'ostensibly autonomous beings' and claims that 'their lives are not shaped by his overall plan, but by a variety of factors.' (1998, p.35) and these factors are the character's social, cultural, and ideological roots and environments. In the novel, Sarah Woodruff is portrayed as an enigmatic woman who is powerful and mysterious, an independent figure. Her enigmatic power dominates Charles Smithson's, the male protagonist of the novel, rational and conventional mind

and causes his inner dilemmas and lots of problems to solve regarding Sarah. It can be said that the author gives power to Sarah, his female character and she challenges the patriarchy and demonstrates the dialogic discourse within it.

The story begins with the introduction of Charles Smithson, a self-claimed scientist. He sees a figure at the end of the dock of Cobb, in Lyme. The figure is Sarah Woodruff, who portrays a mysterious woman. Charles cannot get rid of his attraction to Sarah, as he perceives her as an enigmatic woman who has a mysterious power. However, having engaged to a prosperous Ernestina, he cannot decide between these two women, and throughout the story, he comes back and forth between the conventional, obedient Victorian lady Ernestina and the mysterious fallen woman Sarah. The aim of this article is to analyze the languages they use and how these languages deconstruct the social and cultural backbones of the epoch and how dialogic relationships can be observed.

Sarah Woodruff is considered a fallen woman in the novel in the context of Victorian society as she is considered to have a relationship with a French lieutenant out of wedlock. However, towards the end of the novel, the reader is made aware that it was all intentional and that Sarah had lied about her situation. The secrecy of Sarah's motives is an intentional narrative technique that is applied by Fowles. In the novel, apart from Sarah, all the character's inner voices are heard, and prone to examination. However, Sarah's motives and ideas are only observed through her dialogues with other people whether it is her employer Mrs. Poulteney or Charles. In this way, Fowles claims that he gives her autonomy and this also enables a dialogic discourse within the novel in which the reader is included in the fiction and a dialogic discourse is evident between the text and the reader.

Sarah is considered *the other*. Her ambiguous character makes it hard to decipher her feelings and ideas. It could be said that Sarah represents all the repressed female voices in fiction. In fiction, women, are often, portrayed as mad, unstable, or prone to melancholia and depression. Sarah represents multi-voicedness, as Diane Price Herndl's feminist dialogic suggests. The female voice is inherently multi-voiced even though oppressed. According to Herndl, the female voice cannot be considered a single voice because when a female speaks "she is aware of all the other silenced feminine voices." (1991, p.11) Sarah, thus, can be considered as a female character who is

inherently multi-voiced because of the oppressive patriarchal society that classifies her as the “other”. Her otherness includes all the silenced voices and throughout the novel, her languages differ even when she speaks with her own gender. By using different languages, she tries to overthrow the patriarchal hierarchies she was submitted to. The usage of different languages can be observed through her dialogues with other characters. As she was labeled as a fallen woman, she was in need of help and she gets help from a prosperous widow, Mrs. Poultney. She offers her a position in her mansion. However, Sarah is positioned as pitiable, an object of charity. (Fowles, p.33)

Her dialogue with Mrs. Poultney demonstrates how she uses different languages according to whom she is speaking. As mentioned before, she challenges society and revolts against the norms. She is free-willed and a strong woman in Victorian society and it was unacceptable for such an era. Mrs. Poultney accuses of her going to Ware Commons, a place where Sarah was prohibited to go since the place had a bad reputation and connotations, and Mrs. Poultney of having gone there. In the conversation following the accusation, Sarah defends herself and says; “I must insist on knowledge of what I am accused.” (p.91) Mrs. Poultney explains the bad reputation the place has and how it is not well received that a woman affiliated with her would go to such a place. It is important to have a piece of background information regarding Mrs. Poultney and the place she inhabits in society. She is a conservative and conventional Victorian woman who is tied to her tradition and abides by the norms. On the contrary, Sarah is a woman who does not care for the norms and traditions as she considers that she set herself free from those notions by being a fallen woman and claims the freedom she acquired by being who she is at the moment. The binary opposition between these two female characters can be observed, therefore and this creates the difference in their languages as well. While Mrs. Poultney belongs to a tradition in which women are inferior, Sarah claims autonomy and opposes Mrs. Poultney’s claims. Mrs. Poultney says; “Do not contradict me, Miss! Am I not to know what I speak of?” (p.92) Her language shows her social status as superior to Sarah’s inferior status in society.

These two women, coming from different backgrounds, different cultures, and social classes clash with different ideas. The tension in their dialogues is the representation of dialogic discourse their differences cause. Their values and views contradict each other and Fowles constructs the dialogue to reflect these conflicts in the narrative and demonstrates the dialogic interaction between them.

Sarah has several languages, as pointed out before. While Mrs. Poulteney, she had a rebellious language, she has a quite different language with Charles Smithson, who is her love interest. Similar to Dostoevsky's Underground character and how his language is constructed by merging different voices, Sarah also inherently has several voices in her language. Bakhtin, in *Discourse in the Novel*, claims that in the construction of language, there can be double speeches in which the characters carry other speeches in their languages. A similar notion can be observed in Sarah's language in Chapter 16. In this chapter, she has a conversation with Charles, while Charles tries to decipher his attraction to Sarah as her enigmatic power claims him and he cannot think of anything else and he follows her into the wood. He tries to speak with her and she says that; "No gentleman who care for his good name can be seen with the scarlet woman of Lyme." (p.122) Even though the quote is uttered by Sarah, it is clear that the language has indications of social norms and attitudes toward women like Sarah. Even though Sarah knows that is not a fallen woman and she does not deserve such a title, she utters these words as she wants to warn Charles. It could be said that a common view and idea resides in Sarah's language, which belongs to Victorian society and Victorian values. Dialogues are living organisms. They take shape according to responses, therefore it is important to hear Charles's response, as well. As Bakhtin claims; "Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; one is impossible without the other. Thus, an active understanding establishes a series of complex relationships, consonances, and dissonances with the Word and enriches it with new elements." (2021, P.282)

In response to Sarah's somehow ironic words, Charles says "I think the only truly scarlet things about you are your cheeks." (p.122) It can be said that Charles does not share the common view of his society regarding Sarah's situation. However, it does not mean that his judgments are pure, as he is under the influence of Sarah, and consider her as an object of desire, therefore it could be said that his language is shaped by his desires.

Dialogues between Sarah and Charles depict a dialogic discourse on a different level as Sarah's usage of words is more complex when she talks with Charles and this might be because she thinks herself as an equal to Charles, a man who is educated and sophisticated. Thus, it is obvious that she has different vocabularies and languages she speaks with each person she encounters with. When she first met Mrs. Poulteney, her language was rather obedient as she was in need for help and she mostly used such words as; "Yes ma'am," or "my dear Mrs. Poulteney", as she did not

want to contradict her and wanted to be perceived as obedient which was expected from her. However, her language has changed dramatically when her freedom was hindered.

While speaking with Charles, she becomes bolder, and level her language with him and at times, this even unsettles Charles, because even though he claims to be different from the others, he is a man in a patriarchal society and being challenged by a woman is not expected. Each speaking subject has its own discourses within their languages according to Bakhtin. As he would suggest a particular language in the novel is 'always a particular way of viewing the world'. (Bakhtin, 2021,p.333) Therefore, it could be said that Fowles's characters view the world through their own experiences, and the language is formed according to this understanding of their world. Each dialogic discourse creates a common ground for understanding, each word that is uttered waits for a response from others. Sarah and Charles's dialogues overall in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* represents two different stance points and two different ideologies. What Sarah says may not be what Charles perceives because his understanding and interpretations are based on his ideologies and in a close relationship with his social environment, his profession, and his background.

The other novel that is a subject for this article is Fowles's *A Maggot*. The novel sets back in 18th-century England. In this novel, Fowles integrates different speech types inside his fiction such as; epistolary, newspaper clippings, and interrogation. All these come together in his fiction and create a dialogic ground. The implementation of different speech types invites the heteroglossia inside the fiction as he brings several voices and languages together and enables the reader to have a glimpse of each character's point of view. *A Maggot* is a very unique novel in which there are multiple perspectives and languages evident. The novel is considered historical fiction and metafiction. However, in this analysis, the main focus is the nature of the narrative and its heteroglot structure by examining and outlining the historical and social aspects. The novel enables the reader and critics to analyze from different perspectives as the usage of different points of view contributes to this the most distinctive quality of this fiction is how the majority of the novel is narrated as an interrogation technique. The interrogation enables us to analyze different perspectives and the dialogic discourse of different utterances.

It is important to understand the centripetal and centrifugal forces in the narrative since *A Maggot* is such a complex novel in which several speech genres are integrated inside the narrative and multiple perspectives are introduced. Centripetal forces stand for unifying all the elements and gathering them into one single point in the narrative. Centrifugal forces, on the other hand, push all the elements from the center, from the unified position to a diverse position, and invite all the different perspectives and languages inside the narrative. While centripetal forces are considered the dominant forces, centrifugal challenges this dominance and enables different perspectives. In the introduction section of *The Dialogic Imagination*, Michael Holquist describes these forces as “forces that struggle at the heart of existence, a ceaseless battle between centrifugal forces that seek to keep things apart, and centripetal forces that strive to make things cohere.” (2021, p.xviii) As it is known that Bakhtin challenges the idea of unitary language, the dominance of one language over the other, and centrifugal forces reinforce the idea that there are multiple languages and perspectives that can be traced in the narrative. Bakhtin explains the centripetal forces as; “Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralization, an expression of the centripetal forces of language.” (p.270) According to Bakhtin, unitary languages contradict heteroglossia as they dominate the other languages, and centripetal forces are inherently opposed to the idea of heteroglossia. However, in *A Maggot*, the struggle over the narrative dominance between different perspectives invites the centrifugal forces inside the fiction, consequently a heteroglossia forms. Centripetal forces in fiction reinforce the dominant ideologies, values, and culture however centrifugal forces challenge dominant ideologies and unitary language and invite diversity and different perspectives.

In *A Maggot*, there’s a power dynamic and struggle between the authority and the other people. Fowles creates such a narrative that centripetal forces of dominant authority is overpowered by the different perspectives of other people. The decentralization takes place and the reader is made aware of the fact that the unitary language can be challenged by inviting the heteroglossia inside the novel. The ideas of the dominant authority and the others clash and the struggle over each other sets the tone throughout the narrative and the conflict between these forces is visible through the interrogation technique.

The novel begins with a journey of four characters, and they visit an inn near their destination. After their visit, one of them is found dead, and the other one who is an important figure Mr.

Bartholomew vanishes. Thus, an interrogation is carried out by Mr. Ayscough at the request of Mr. Bartholomew's father. The narrative style changes throughout the novel between interrogation, epistolary, and newspaper clippings. The story begins with a third-person narrative, the omniscient narrator narrates the arrival of the characters to the inn. From then on, the next thing the reader comes across is a newspaper page from *Historical Chronicle*, then another newspaper page is used in which the apparent suicide of the servant, Dick is depicted and how an investigation is under the way is also given as information. Fowles, by including different literary formats tries to convince the reader or make them question the reality of the incident, which also reinforces the idea of metafiction. As pointed out before, the narrative takes the form of interrogation at some point as interrogation is carried out. Each character who interacted with the missing person is interrogated one by one by Henry Ayscough. The interrogation parts in the narrative take place as pure dialogues and the narrator does not intervene with the narrative at these parts. The reader is only made aware of the character's words of choice. Each character tells the story from their perspective, inviting the heteroglossia into the fiction. The heteroglot nature of the narrative enables the reader to interact with the characters, thanks to the different perspectives and standpoints. Each character comes from a different background, they all have different cultures resulting in different interpretations, different languages, and dialects. The dialogic relationship between all these languages is established in the novel thanks to the narrative and how each character's words are important as the other ones, as there could not be a dialogic relationship without the other, or an opposite.

Interrogation is a process of question and answer format to get information regarding an incident; it could be a crime or anything.(Cambridge Dictionary) It is mostly used to gather information in court cases, by prosecutors. Lionel Russel, in his article titled "Interrogation: A Post-Exotic Device" explains the interrogation in fiction by saying;

Interrogation is clearly an effective device that definitively binds aesthetics to politics. It associates language and power, the act of speaking with the seizing of power. Fiction is born as a resistance to the interrogator's exacting demands for meaning. A conflict then arises in which two conceptions of language confront each other. Furthermore, interrogation offers a reflection on writing put to the question, on literature under constraint, from which fiction attempts to distance itself. (2003, p.79)

Interrogation in the narrative brings a power dynamic within. The interrogator tries to control the narrative while trying to get the necessary information. Meanwhile, the people who are interrogated are in an inferior position as the interrogator manipulates and controls the narrative by showcasing the power he holds over them. In the interrogation even though it can be considered that the interrogator has the upper hand, since the witnesses hold the knowledge and the information, they are also powerful, so it could be said that this technique is a reflection of the society as well. While one language demands control of the narrative, the others try to demonstrate their experiences; just as centripetal forces and centrifugal forces challenge each other. While the overall tone is Ayscough's judgments which are the result of his place in society and his ideology, with each testimony, different socio-cultural voices are heard and observed and challenge the dominant language. There's an undeniable power dynamic between utterances in the interrogation format which invites the dialogic discourse inside the fiction as well in which the reader is made aware of the dialogic relationships between the languages. The power dynamics between the centripetal and centrifugal forces make up most of *A Maggot*, as multiple characters, coming from different backgrounds shape the narrative and arises the suspense, and create ambiguity while the power figure, a prosecutor tries to overpower them by implementing and enforcing his language over them. Interrogation is not only a question and answer format but also has a semantic nature, in which, the utterance of one influences the other and enters a dialogic relationship, as Bakhtin also claims;

..every Word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that is anticipates. The Word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. (2021, p.280)

It could be said that, therefore, the semantics enforce a territory in which the meaning is shaped according to the other. Since the interrogation is a continuous action, the character or a person can form an idea while in the act of speech, by having been influenced and shaped by others. The character's perspectives are pointed out as the interrogation process continues with Ayscough's leadership. Throughout this process, the reader is made an active participant due to the nature of the narrative. Since the narrator does not interfere with the character's answer and the questions,

the reader is made the judge and with each testimony, the perspectives are changed and the impression of the reader changed as well.

Mr. Ayscough is an educated man who is a lawyer and he is a conventional man who stands for convention and science. However, it can be understood from the narrative and power dynamics, he is a product of patriarchal society. While he represents rationality, mind, science, and convention, the other main character of the novel, Rebecca Hocknell, who is a prostitute, represents religion, imagination and revolt against the social norms and throughout the interrogation, a conflict between these two opposite characters arises as a result of the difference in the stances. Kerry McSweeney, a literary critic, claims that one of the most important thematics of Fowles's fiction is his concern for "the relation of the individual to his cultural and historical situation and to his society: for these determining forces are what most threaten freedom and corrupt authenticity." (1983, p.107) She continues as how Fowles is concerned "to Show the necessity for an individual to understand the ways in which he has been shaped by his class background and to transcend the limitations imposed on his selfhood by class consciousness." (p.107) It could be understood from McSweeney's words about Fowles's main concerns that the social conflicts can be observed in his works with his distinctive narrative techniques he aims to portray characters that are shaped by their social background or how they are shaped in contrast to their social and cultural backgrounds as they are one of the main sources for shaping a person. Therefore, the obvious motives behind these characters' conflicts are depicted through the Question and Answer format.

As pointed out before, there's a conflict between Mr. Ayscough and Rebecca, it could be said a conflict between fantasy and reality as they stand for different ideologies and notions. Fowles through different testimonies and usage of different speech types want to portray this division between two different world and ideas. Dialogic discourse, thanks to this narrative technique, is very evident, as the conflict and clash between these languages and characters takes place. Ayscough can be considered as a mouthpiece for a reason, and in reason, there is no place for superstitious elements. The 18th century was the age of reason and enlightenment. Science and philosophy were prominent in that epoch and how people perceived the world and politics had changed. Individualism brought a change in society and politics and religion in contrast to science lost its importance. New ideologies emerged and were born out of reason and enlightenment.

Ayscough is one of those people who follow reason. Fowles by giving such a language to Ayscough, wants to demonstrate one of the ideologies of the 18th century and in contrast to reason, he creates another voice: Rebecca Hocknell, a prostitute, and reborn religious person who stands for superstitions and religion. Ayscough's skeptical approach towards Rebecca is, therefore, a result of his adamant personality that is based on reason and science.

Rebecca Hocknell, one of the travelers who accompanied Mr. Bartholomew on his journey, is one of the most important suspects and witnesses of the disappearance of Mr. Bartholomew and the interaction between Rebecca and Ayscough is the epitome of the power Dynamics in the story. Rebecca was a prostitute and Mr. Bartholomews bought her from a brothel to accompany him in his journey. After the journey, and the disappearance of Bartholomew, Rebecca turns to religion and repents of her sin and becomes a religious person. However, her repentance does not impress Ayscough since he is skeptical of whatever Rebecca says throughout the investigation and interrogation. His traditional values, judgment, and reasonings cause him to be hostile toward Rebecca as she tries to explain herself. Fowles, towards the end of the novel, intervenes and as an omniscient narrator in the fiction explains these two different, contradictory natures; Rebecca and Ayscough, and what they stand for:

These two were set apart from each other not only by countless barriers of age, sex, class, education, native province, and the rest but by something far deeper still: by belonging to two very different halves of the human spirit, perhaps at root those *left* and *right*, of the two hemispheres of the brain. In themselves, these are neither good nor evil. (Fowles, 2021, p.430)

These two characters, Rebecca and Ayscough, as the narrator says, are two different roots, they speak for opposite poles. Rebecca, according to the novel, is a person who uses the right lobe of her brain, and, according to the description people who use their right lobe lack logic and are more prone to mysticism, the information enables the reader to have an understanding regarding the nature of Rebecca and it can be observed through her language in the interrogation. She does not use logic, on the contrary, she is led by her senses rather than her logic. When she describes the creature she saw in the cave, Ayscough does not believe her and accuses of her lying and imagining things, as he cannot accept such a thing to be real with his reasoning. Rebecca, in response to Ayscough, says:

Thee can see I am a poor woman, and not well lettered; and a plain one besides, in my natural. I tell thee this came not in a dream, by apparitions, but more like to those prodigies I have seen on Show in London. Thee may say they are false, done by deceit and trickery; but not that they were not there to be seen.(p.363)

It is hard for Ayscough to understand such notions as he does not have a language for such an incident as he is a man of logic and reason and skeptic towards such depictions, there appears their conflict. The conflict arose because of their impairable differences. They both judge each other from the positions they inhabit in society. Rebecca belongs to a lower stratum of society while Ayscough belongs to a higher position. However, Rebecca does not only judged because of her social status. She was judged because Ayscough observed and listened to her through his ideological lenses and positioned her as a prostitute. Therefore, whatever she says, he would not believe or opposes in order to have control over her or dominance over her. The description of a maggot cannot be acceptable for Ayscough he only considers it some kind of machinery with his logic and the era they live in. However, for Rebecca, a maggot stands for something more spiritual, Ayscough's understanding of a maggot is rather mechanical as their character descriptions also suggest, they are two different roots who perceive things from different perspectives. The conflict then arises because of the difference in the outlooks of the events.

Female power and equality are one of the subjects of Rebecca's testimony. For women are born out of men's ribs, as the Bible points out and a fact for the 18th century, people like Ayscough cannot comprehend the idea that women and men can be equal and consider this notion as blasphemy. Yet, Rebecca with her experience and language challenges these ideological approaches and says that "Were thee not born also of a mother? Thee's nothing without her, master, thee are not born. Nor was Eden born, nor Adam nor Eve, *were Holy Mother Wisdom not there at the first with God the Father.*" (p.380) Rebecca stands out with her revolutionary vision and her claims give a place and importance to women. The religious community she is affiliated with also suggests that women are equal to men which is unacceptable for a society that is dominated by men and coded with male languages. Ayscough rejects Rebecca's language and tries to insert his language as a powerful tool and tries to overpower her with his language by demonstrating his superiority. At this point, it is important to touch upon the feminist dialogics as the power struggle between these is not only ideological and a matter of class but also an issue of gender. As feminist

dialogism analyzes the power dynamics between two characters regardless of their class, ideologies. Dale M. Bauer says: "At the point of contradiction between the alienated female voice and the interpretive community anxious to incorporate and domesticate that voice in order to silence its threat, we can trace out a feminist dialogics." (1988, p.6) This quote from the introduction chapter of *Feminist Dialogics: A Theory of Faiked Community*, helps us to understand the power dynamics that this study tries to demonstrate by focusing on the gender issue. While Ayscough's language, full of patriarchal connotations, tries to overpower Rebecca, a woman who is silenced in a society in which her gender is less valued and not taken into account, tries to challenge the dominant language and revolt against it. It can be said that the female voice in this context does not yield and controlled, rather it uprises against the hierarchies and male-dominated languages. In *A Maggot*, the reader comes across the power dynamics of knowledge and authoritative language that is connected with knowledge as it is a powerful tool. Female language in the novel disrupts the patriarchal language and the examples given above from the novel is a proof of this disruption. The introduction of Rebecca as a contrast between the patriarchal and traditional values, therefore, enforces female dialogics. Bauer claims that centripetal forces are interrupted by the centrifugal forces which carry feminist dialogics, the female voice enters the unity of language and challenges them; When the language of the text speaks centrifugally with the dialogue ("novelization") and when it departs in the centripetal or normative forces of ideology. The feminist critic, then, can allow her own "internally persuasive voice" (Bakhtin's term) formulated in difference to clash with the text. In reading, the feminist critic becomes double-voiced, engaging in dialogue with the text and reaffirming the debate of voices. (1988, p.xiv) The dominant ideology of the narrative, therefore, with the introduction of Rebecca, a female voice, is interrupted and the centripetal forces are challenged in a way that a female voice levels the dominant male language and a dialogic interaction between these voices can form. Rebecca's stance in life, with her sensibility which is reflected in her voice, clashes with the patriarchal voice of Ayscough, who is a representation of the hegemonic male voice. What Fowles creates with the clash of these voices enables the reader to interpret feminist dialogics, and how the female voice can also be a subject for the narrative. Rebecca thus becomes a mouthpiece for 18th-century women, who are socio-culturally diminished by a male voice. The gender issue, therefore, is evident in the text, the dialogic interaction between Ayscough and Rebecca does not only a power play but also a gender clash. Bauer claims that Bakhtin's dialogic community celebrates the

interaction, and engagement of different voices. A female voice, as it is many times portrayed in the novels as a representation of how women are indeed perceived in society, is one of the most marginalized, repressed voices. To have female language in a text challenges women's place in society, it interrupts other voices as it wants to be heard as an equal. Many times, a female voice is integrated into the narrative as an opposition, as is also evident in Fowles's fiction. However, thanks to having a female voice as a centrifugal force in the narrative, Fowles creates a place where genders come into interaction and forms dialogic relationship, which is the main subject for Bakhtin's dialogism, to have different voices to enter into a community and form an understanding between them as they do not form a complete understanding without the other.

CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to demonstrate and establish a connection between John Fowles's fiction and Bakhtinian understanding of dialogue and voices. Hence, the theoretical framework for this study was mainly Bakhtin's concept of Dialogism, Heteroglossia, and Feminist Dialogics. It is aimed to depict the languages the characters use and how their languages deconstruct the social and cultural backbones of the epoch and how dialogic relationships can be observed. The importance of the utterances and the language that belongs to the different strata of society has been pointed out and especially the female languages are observed in Fowles's fiction. Feminist dialogic, in this note, contributed an understanding for analyzing the female languages in Fowles's fiction. They are the ones that are discriminated against and marginalized many times and have a unique language as a result. By analyzing Sarah Woodruff in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the powerful female language which challenged patriarchal dominance is pointed out. The dialogic relationship between characters and how Sarah's language changed and took shape is observed. The ambiguity she has contributed her character to have several voices and languages and she revolted against the society which tried to entrap her. From a Victorian point of view, she, as an outcast, created a language for herself that freed her from the expectations and leveled her language with men and powerful figures.

In *A Maggot*, the power dynamics between genders are highlighted and the female language is once again analyzed through feminist dialogics, and the heteroglot nature of the novel is pointed

out by giving concrete examples. Fowles's unique narrative enabled the novels to be analyzed through Bakhtinian concepts as he challenged the centripetal forces by introducing different perspectives into the equation and creating conflict zones, he managed to invite the reader as an active participant. In conclusion, this study tried to Show the dialogic discourse in Fowles's fiction by examining the gender issues, female languages, and the nature of the heteroglossia in the selected novels.

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ⁱThis is an excerpt from Bakhtin’s essay “*Discourse in the Novel*” used by Karen Hohne and Helen Wussow in the Introduction chapter of *A Dialogue of Voices: Feminist Literary Theory and Bakhtin*.

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