French Lieutenant's Woman

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Perhaps the most beloved of John Fowles's internationally bestselling works. The French Lieutenant's Woman is a feat of seductive storytelling that effectively invents anew the Victorian novel. "Filled with enchanting mysteries and magically erotic possibilities" (New York Times), the novel inspired the hugely successful 1981 film starring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons and is today universally regarded as a modern classic.

John Fowles (1926-2005) was educated at Oxford and subsequently lectured in English at universities in Greece and the UK. The success of his first novel, The Collector, published in 1963, allowed him to devote all his time to writing. His books include the internationally acclaimed and bestselling novels The Magus, The French Lieutenant's Woman, and Daniel Martin. Fowles spent the last decades of his life on the southern coast of England in the small harbor town of Lyme Regis.In this contemporary, Victorian-style novel Charles Smithson, a nineteenth-century gentleman with glimmerings of twentieth-century perceptions, falls in love with enigmatic Sarah Woodruff, who has been jilted by a French lover. Paul Shelley's subtle presentation does full justice to Fowles' artful, mysterious tale, whether he's reading an exposition on Darwinian theory or narration of romantic assignations and broken promises. Never once does he lose the listener as the author moves between the past and present, commenting on Victorian customs, politics and morays. And never once does he give away the novel's surprise ending. Enthusiastically recommended. R.B.F. An AUDIOFILE Earphones Award winner (c) AudioFile, Portland, Maine Other Books

John Fowles's Fiction and the Poetics of Postmodernism, This book presents a deconstructive reading of the novels and short stories of John Fowles. As a contemporary novelist, Fowles began as a modernist self-consciously aware of the various narratological problems that he encountered throughout his writings. In his most recent novel, A Maggot, however, he assumes the role of the postmodernist who not only subverts the tradition of narratology, but also poses a series of problems concerning history and politics. Throughout this study, Mahmoud Salami attempts to locate Fowles's fiction in the context of modern critical theory and narrative poetics. He provides a lively analysis of the ways in which Fowles deliberately deployed realistic historical narrative in order to subvert them from within the very conventions they seek to transgress, and he examines these subversive techniques and the challenges they pose to the tradition of narratology. Salami presents, for instance, a critique of the self-conscious narrative of the diary form in The Collector, the intertextual relations of the multiplicity of voices, the problems of subjectivity, the reader's position, the politics of seduction, ideology, and history in The Magus and The French Lieutenant's Woman. The book also analyzes the ways in which Fowles uses and abuses the short-story genre, in which enigmas remain enigmatic and the author disappears to leave the characters free to construct their own texts. Salami centers, for example, on A Maggot, which embodies the postmodernist technique of dialogical narrative, the problem of narrativization of history, and the explicitly political critique of both past and present in terms of social and religious dissent. These political questions are also echoed in Fowles's nonfictional book The Aristos, in which he strongly rejects the totalization of narratives and the materialization of society. Indeed, Fowles emerges as a postmodernist novelist committed to the underprivileged, to social democracy, and to literary pluralism. This study clearly illustrates the fact that Fowles is a poststructuralist--let alone a postmodernist--in many ways: in his treatment of narratives, in mixing history with

narrative fiction and philosophy, and in his appeal for freedom and for social and literary pluralism. It significantly contributes to a better understanding of Fowles's problematical narratives, which can only be properly understood if treated within the fields of modern critical theory, narratology, and the poetics of postmodernism.

2 2 2 2 . The French Lieutenant's Woman challenges the im-position of a monologic meaning by actually postulating multiple endings . The novel , however , emphasizes that meanings become possible only within certain historical contexts ."