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Laura Lee Hope

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JOHN FOWLES' NARRATIVE STYLISTICS IN
THE COLLECTOR, DANIEL MARTIN, AND A MAGGOT

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Laura Lee Hope
May 1990
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Abstract

Narrative structures have been traditionally framed by a conventional linear presentation of events. Thus, most readers approach a text with an expectation of sequence and chronological movement. These literary assumptions have been challenged by critics, such as Barthes, claiming that the events of any narrative are subordinate to a design. Within contemporary fiction, John Fowles skilfully experiments with this concept by designing narratives that invite the reader to participate in the creation of the fiction.

In the novels The Collector, Daniel Martin, and A Maggot, Fowles presents irregular narrative designs, subversing point of view, multiple viewpoints, and conventional time lines in order to force the reader take an active role in the development of the narrative. While some of these methods may confound the reader, they are also tempting puzzles. The reader's quest to solve these puzzles is Fowles' way of coercing the reader into becoming a part of the narrative design. He claims that it is part of a "deliberate policy of handing over part of the control of the work to the reader" (Loveday 133). These techniques give his work an added dimension of vitality. Though many critics comment on Fowles' style in terms of theme, the exploration of his narrative stylistics
reveals that Fowles is also concerned with empowering the
reader with the ability to become an essential part of the
novels' creation.
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Introduction

Literary theory and criticism have traditionally concerned themselves with a search for meaning in any fictional texts. This search has included a reader's study of figurative devices, symbols, and allusions in order to discover the value of the written text to the reader. Within this critical method, the writer and reader clearly had specified roles. The writer creates the art and the reader responds and extracts its value. For the most part, the writer and reader only glimpsed each other across the printed page. Within this search for meaning, the written manuscript itself was the primary focus of the criticism.

In recent years, some contemporary critics have come to view this methodology as unfair to the writer, the reader, and the text. Many current literary theorists devote renewed attention to the dynamic relationship between the writer and the reader as they relate with the text, rather than on the text alone. From this shifted emphasis, the study of fiction has grown to include the exploration of reading, and with reading comes the exploration of the writer's role in creating a text for the reader, as well as the reader's responses to the text. With the emergence of structuralist, deconstructionist, and reader-response movements, "most contemporary
criticism has something to say about reading" (Culler 30). Now with the activity of reading as the primary focus, contemporary literary criticism includes the study of "how various conventions and expectations are brought into play, where particular connections or hypothesis are posited, how expectations are defeated or confirmed" (Culler 35). The goal of current criticism has changed from identifying a formulated product to validating a continuing process.

Clearly, this concept of the active reader brings a new set of questions to be answered by the critic of any text. According to Stanley Fish, since the reader's attention has been slowed by the analysis of events, the concept of literary criticism has changed to include the "rigorous and disinterested asking of the question, what does this word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, chapter, novel, play, poem, do?" rather than asking what the fiction means (73). Hence, the majority of current literary theory seeks effects, and those effects are caused by what the writer created in the text and by what the reader found in recreating the text through reading. While indulgence in this methodology does encourage a sort of literary "solipsism," it has renewed the life to the written page by implicating the interaction of the writer and reader of a fictional work (Fish 87).
This inclusion of the reader into fiction has enhanced the use of some experimental techniques by modern novelists that elicit the reader's participation in the drama of fiction. "Modern texts frequently exploit [the reading process] quite deliberately. They are often so fragmentary that one's attention is almost exclusively occupied with the search for connections between the fragments" (Iser 55). If critics call for readers to participate with the writer in the creation of the fiction, then the writer creates a fiction answering the critic, "oblig[ing] him to participate more actively in the development of the narrative" (Prince 21).

Within contemporary fiction, John Fowles skilfully experiments with narrative variations that force the writer and reader to interact. While his work is mostly given thematic attention, his novels and stories challenge the reader to enter his fictional world and participate in the story, making his work particularly relevant in terms of current literary theory concerned with the reader's role in fiction. Fowles himself claims that "the self-conscious aspects of the writing are not accidental, but a part of a deliberate policy of handing over part of the control of the work to the reader" (Loveday 133). Though Fowles' work is often thematically existential, his narrative stylistics also require a reader willing to make authenticating choices.
Among his most fascinating works, The Collector, Daniel Martin, and A Maggot each represent complex examples of Fowles' talent for narrative irregularities designed to promote the reader's participation in the fictions he presents. Each one of these works includes stylistic experiments with point of view, fragmented chronology, and comparative texts. Each of these novels represents a progression in Fowles' experimentation with narrative technique, and this progression is marked by the increasing role of the reader as a mediator for the text. Though Fowles claims that "the greatest thing an artist can do is provide a mirror" for his readers, any student of literature knows that a mirror is a deceptive image because it reverses and slightly distorts its subject. The mirrors that Fowles presents to his reader are meant to invite, but not necessarily to illuminate. Through these narrative techniques, Fowles taunts his reader with the pretense of fixable images and unsatisfied expectations. While this certainly may frustrate the reader, Fowles' techniques accomplish what contemporary literary critics demand—an undeniably dynamic interchange between the reader and the written word.
Shifting Points of View

For most readers, the narration of a piece of fiction contains a certain amount of trust or presumed reliability in the narrator. But as Wayne Booth points out, modern fiction successfully challenges the reader's complacency through the use of unreliable narrators. This technique is "an aspect of the modern author's desire to make the reader participate in the act of creation" (Scholes and Kellogg 265). While the great majority of novels until the Twentieth Century relied on the reader's confidence in the words on the page to convey plot, most contemporary fiction concerns itself with a betrayal of that confidence, which draws the reader out of the traditional passive reading mode. Although the manipulation of narrators and point of view is inherently part of this betrayal, "to say that a story is told in the first or third person will tell us nothing unless we become more precise and describe how the particular qualities of the narrators relate to specific effects" (Booth 150).

Historically, literature containing an omniscient narrator has given readers a sense of surety in the actuality of the plot as told by the third person storyteller. However, many contemporary novelists use this certitude in the narrator's omniscient voice to
reverse the reader's expectations about truth and identity. For many contemporary novelists, "omniscience is just a pretense" used to fool the reader into believing that the narrator is trustworthy (Baker 668). With this assumption of confidence in the statements of the omniscient narrator, novelists such as Fowles use objectivity "to play tricks, as it were, with the reader's assumptions" (Baker 668). For instance, in a Fowles novel, the reader may begin reading resigned and relaxed in the unstated promise that the omniscient narrator holds the secret to understanding the events of the novel. As Booth asserts, the reader expects the narrator to be the "implied author who stands behind the scenes, whether as stage manager, as puppeteer, or as an indifferent God, silently paring his fingernails" (151). However, Fowles soon redefines the role of the omniscient narrator by adding unexpected dimensions to omniscience. His third person narrators often possess qualities and identities with distinct opinions and contradictions. The effect of this subversion is a forceable nudge by Fowles, pushing the reader out of a passive state into full engagement with his fictional world. While this may not be what the reader anticipates, the fulfillment of the reader's expectations is "given with a difference, and [the reader] is inevitably curious" about negotiating "what the difference will be" (Booth 127).
Similarly, contemporary novelists' use of first person narrators also coaxes the reader in the collaborative creation of the novel by forcing the reader to reconcile narrative irony. According to most critics, the use of a first person narrator automatically places the reader in an ironic tension between knowledge and the unknown, between actuality and perception. In a story told in first person, "we have no external source given to us either factual information or moral guidance: we have only what the text itself provides" (Loveday 11). A single storyteller sees the events of the fiction from a single perspective, yet this conspicuous situation implies irony for the reader who takes the word of that first person narrator and processes it as fact. Hence, authors like Fowles can build irony into the text as readers cling to the fictional covenant that the written word of the teller suggests objective authority when, actually, all first person narrators only have the limited insight of their own perceptions. The effect of this irony is twofold; first person narrators are used by authors as a "vehicle" that "underline[s] the relationship between the narrator and the narrative" (Walker 189). Although many readers believe that the words of the teller and the events of the plot are synonymous, the use of first person narration illuminates their differences to the reader, thereby forcing the reader to question both
the narrator's version of the events and the events themselves. Second, first person narration also is a sign of the "writer's deliberate attempt to mystify" the reader (Walker 192). The reader's contemplation is one sign of the reader's mystification. Hence, with mystification the writer has achieved the reader's participation in the fiction. Through layers of puzzles and questions within the narrative, Fowles forces the reader to seek solutions and answers; through searching, the reader creates the vitality necessary for Fowles' fictions to succeed. While the constant negotiation of narrative irony may lead the reader to the frustration of "infinite regressions" in the search for actuality, many authors, including Fowles, indicate that the reader's contributions to the creation of the fiction is worth possible alienation. Writing fiction that is complicated by distracting time sequences and fragmented points of view offers the writer a challenge. In turn, reading that fiction is also a challenge for most of Fowles' readers, yet that challenge includes the risk of offending some readers who may be unaccustomed to such demands. Fowles accepts that the price of presenting a challenge may be the alienation of some readers, but may also cultivate the tenacity of others.

Thus the active participation of the reader in the experience of fiction is critically related to the
author's use of point of view. "Because narrative point of view is so intimately and dynamically bound up with the reader's perception, it cannot be dealt with as a merely esthetic matter" (Scholes and Kellogg 275). The redefined use of first and third person narrators in order to erase the reader's traditional complacency forces the reader into a "constant clash between the author, the characters, and the audience" (Scholes and Kellogg). But without this conflict, the reader is content to sit idly by as the fiction unfolds rather than actively to open the box.

In his first published novel, The Collector, John Fowles skilfully experiments with first person narration in order to invite the reader into his ironic arena. The Collector is a highly emotional and cerebral exercise in control between the two main characters and the reader. The narrative is divided into two accounts that relay the instances of Clegg's capture of Miranda and her subsequent death. Since the novel is told in first person, Fowles tampers with the distortions and perceptions of both Clegg and Miranda, while at the same time playing with the reader's response to their separate evaluations of the events. The result of this is a sort of triple narrative. Fowles creates a story and characters. The characters self-fictionalize the events to suit their perspectives, and the reader makes final interpretations about the events of the novel based on an evaluation of the
characters' accounts. While the traditional goal of reading might be a pursuit of the truth concerning Miranda's tragedy, Fowles forces the reader to the conclusion that there is no objective truth to be found with the use of first person narratives. Hence, the reader is obliged to accept that, without objective affirmations of reality, subjective truth is all that remains. The reader's work, therefore, begins with examining each account on its own terms in order to weigh ultimately each character's statements against the other's. The novel begins with Clegg's testimony, professing his love for Miranda. Within Clegg's presentation of events, the reader not only becomes aware of the plot, but also intimately aware of the perceptions unique to the storyteller. Interestingly, Fowles gives the reader Clegg's retrospective account of the plot without any indication that Miranda's will be provided later in the novel. Thus, the reader begins to assume that Clegg's testimony contains more credibility since it is alone and seemingly primary. Through the narration, Clegg reveals himself as a self-conscious social paranoid who is so absorbed with his own view of the world that he asserts, "if more people were like me, in my opinion, the world would be better" (11). As Miranda correctly observes, "he doesn't believe in any other world but the one he lives in and sees" (106). Eventually, Fowles
invites the reader to view the world as Clegg does: as a vulgar and hostile place that threatens and persecutes well-intended misfits. With this thwarted viewpoint, Miranda's kidnapping appears initially to be a pathetic gesture of love on the part of a harmless social failure. Until Miranda's version and Clegg's final comments are disclosed, Clegg's narrative seems almost sympathetic.

Like Clegg's narrative, Miranda's account also illuminates the plot while revealing her view of the world as she articulates what she disdains and values. She claims:

I hate the uneducated and the ignorant. I hate the pompous and the phoney. I hate the jealous and the resentful. I hate the crabbed and the mean and the petty. I hate all the ordinary dull little people who aren't ashamed of being dull and little. (191)

Obviously, this passage epitomizes Miranda's perception of Clegg. Her description of all she hates explains the reason Miranda and Clegg struggle so fiercely.

Interestingly, within this struggle between representatives of the "Many" and the "Few" is the reader, who is charged by Fowles to examine the words of each narrator and see past the irony of the "I."

A stylistic examination of each storyteller yields clear indications of differing general points of view.
through the specific language chosen to express them. From the very beginning of the novel, Clegg asserts himself as the storyteller and the reader is undeniably his "narratee" (Prince 8). His prose style is restrained yet disguised with a chatty exterior that is "generally flat and pedestrian" (Loveday 21). For example, Clegg tells the reader "perhaps that was when it all started" (9). From that sentence, the reader notices the word "it," which becomes a device Clegg uses to control the full revelation of events. But "it" is also a sinister and unspeakable allusion to his crime, once Miranda's capture becomes clearer. Clegg's narrative is punctuated with the sentence, "what I'm trying to say is" (14). Though his stumbling style reflects his inarticulation, by comparison, his account of events is "more complete, more organized, and more linear than those in Miranda's" (Loveday 20). Such control suggests that the events of the novel have already occurred and been emotionally digested by Clegg. Since the novel ends with his disappointment and disgust for Miranda, the reader must conclude that even after the reconstruction of events for the sake of telling the story, Clegg has realized nothing about himself. This is "perhaps as chilling a glimpse into Clegg's mind as any we have had" (Loveday 21).

On the other hand, Miranda's account is presented in the form of a diary that is written without knowledge of
the following days. Miranda begins her first entry

It's the seventh night.
I keep on saying the same things.
If only they knew. If ONLY they knew.
Share the outrage.
So now I'm trying to tell it to this pad he bought me this morning. (111)

In this fragment, Miranda's language reflects raw spontaneity and emotion. While her abrupt style tends to evoke compassion for her honesty, Simard asserts that her fragmented analysis also suggests her incapacity for "extended logical thought" (81). He claims that once she discovers a truth, she abandons it and her revelation remains frozen in her words. He states, "truth remains an object which has no value in promoting awareness of self and remains a thought which she collects and stores away" (81). In any case, Miranda's style conveys vitality which strongly contrasts with Clegg's passivity. Though her active voice may be ironic, Miranda's diary gives a more favorable impression than Clegg's. The vibrance of her words helps to enhance the pathos surrounding her captivity.

Miranda's diary also reflects an inherent love of words and expression. While analyzing her capture, she states, "[I have] a feeling that we're groping towards a compromise. A sort of fog of unsolved desire and sadness
between us. [Like] two people in a desert, trying to find themselves and an oasis where they can live together" (179-80). The use of language such as "groping" indicates her linguistic precision. The use of the "fog" and the "desert" as emotional metaphors suggests her preferences for imaginative expression. Even Clegg recognizes Miranda's love for language in his retort "that's just your language" (102). Clearly, Miranda's varied usage reveals her distress, but the expression of that anguish endears her to the reader's sense of sympathy. Because Miranda is able to articulate her feelings, unlike Clegg, the reader is allied with Miranda. Indeed, Clegg is often confused and manipulated by Miranda's rhetorical skills, as the reader is also persuaded by her words. Her ability to communicate enhances the reader's belief that something of value is being victimized by Clegg.

At the periphery of these interesting demonstrations of character is the question "Why do Clegg and Miranda find it necessary to relate their stories to an audience?" This is the ultimate question of the first person narrative technique. Fowles implies the answer as a human need to order experience, which explains the self-reflexive nature of the novel. Walker claims that Clegg and Miranda write their narratives "seeking to reconstruct their own lives" (61). Perhaps this is what Fowles himself sought to do in *The Aristos*. But within this
process of reconstruction is style. Fowles seems to suggest that human beings are not only defined by what they perceive and how they perceive it, but also by the way they narrate that perception. This "[lays] on the reader a special burden of enjoyable ratiocination, as he seeks to understand what the character telling the story cannot himself comprehend" (Scholes and Kellogg 263). Hence, Fowles presents a prismatic predicament as he attempts to tell a story; within that story the characters attempt to explain themselves and each other, and the reader's task is to comprehend them all.

The next novel that clearly demonstrates a further complication of Fowles's preoccupation with point of view is Daniel Martin, in which Fowles continually shifts the point of view between third and first persons and presents a dual narrative. Hence, there is a constant tension between the past, present, and future that the reader must mediate. "There are five main time strata in the book: Daniel's childhood, his adolescence, his time at Oxford, his married and post-married life, and the events surrounding Anthony's suicide" (Loveday 110). The reader enters the novel as Daniel makes "the most important decision of his life"; he will write a novel and the process will afford him the opportunity to gain perspective on his own past (454). Thus, the "systematic distinction between first and third person, present and
past tense, is a technique for recording the stages in the
development of an autobiographical narrator" (Loveday 121).

Though the episodes lack chronology at times, Daniel experiences emotional growth through the span of the novel. Fowles compartmentalizes Daniel's life into episodes, and the reader's integration of these incidents acts as a rhetorical metaphor for Daniel's emotional integration. This technique exemplifies Daniel as a "man attempting to see himself as others do by escaping the first person and becom[ing] one's own third" (Olshen 114). But if the reader has no security in linear sequence, Fowles must provide some constant point of reference that gives the events their significance. In order to demonstrate Daniel's development, Fowles introduces a series of images that Daniel perceives from various chronological perspectives. The change or reconciliation of the image signifies Daniel's growing maturity. Further, the images represent more than just a string of tiny insights, but an accumulating process of epiphany that gives Daniel, and the reader, the fulfillment of the book's epigraph—"whole sight" (1).

For instance, throughout most of the novel, Daniel recounts a significant image from his young adulthood: a room full of mirrors. The image is initially introduced by the third person narrator describing Daniel's "highly
evolved narcissism" (53). "No other room in Oxford can have provided such easy access to the physical contemplation of self" (53). Clearly, Fowles is attempting to give the reader a connection between the mirrors and Daniel's selfish behavior. The narrator states:

He was arguably not even looking for a woman... but collecting mirrors still: surfaces before which he could make himself naked—or at any rate more naked than he could before men—and see himself reflected. (254)

If the reader is to accept the third person narrator as Daniel's more mature voice, the assessment of the mirrors seems an honest statement of introspection; unfortunately, Fowles confuses the reader with Daniel's first person narrator who claims earlier in the novel that he has "managed to ban" the narcissism from his life (122). Thus, Fowles demands that reader choose between the two narrative voices.

The image of the mirrors is finally reconciled through the third person perspective of Daniel acting as the novelist. He explains:

A love of mirrors may appear to be only too literally prima facie evidence of narcissism, but it can also be symbolic of an attempt to see oneself as others see one—to escape the first
person, and become one's own third. (63)

Through the image, Daniel is able to explain the shifting points of view in the novel. Each episode within the novel could be construed as a single mirror for the reader; collectively, they form a means for Daniel, and the reader, to transcend a limited perception of self and become omniscient. Interestingly, the objective voice that Daniel achieves denies Daniel's first person perspective most of its credibility. Thus, the objective narrator finally gains the reader's trust. And while Fowles and Daniel promise "whole sight" in the beginning of the novel, the point of the novel is not the final conclusion about Daniel's success or failure at becoming whole. The point of the novel is the process of deciding. The reader provides a necessary receptacle for Daniel's reflections. As Daniel provides memories and insights, the reader sorts them. The effect of Fowles' technique is a shared experience of completion by the end of the novel for both Daniel and the reader.

In an extension of the mirror image, Daniel also suggests the substance of his quest for "whole sight" (1). When Daniel's love for mirrors is introduced, the narrator defines narcissism: "when one grows too old to believe in uniqueness, one falls in love with one's complexity" (12). Daniel's constant remembering reveals that he is consumed with an eternal presentness. He is "haunted by
remembering and being remembered" (510). If, as the narrator suggests, Daniel is seeking to shed his self-absorption, which is symbolized by the use of first person, then he is seeking simplicity, symbolized in the use of general omniscience. Yet, as a paradox, Fowles continually introduces the reader to this evocatively complicated image of mirrors and prisms to coax the reader along on Daniel's search for the clarity of "whole sight." As in The Collector, Fowles uses the complex potentials of point of view and "tergiversation" in order to focus the reader toward integrating the aspects of the narrative.

Fowles' most recent novel, A Maggot, is also an elaborate experiment with point of view. While writing A Maggot, Fowles stated that it would be a "straightforward" historical novel, yet the story turns out to be Fowles' most intricately designed narrative (Barnum 202). Throughout the novel, the "point of view shifts constantly through a series of contradictory voices. An external third person narrator is, early on, a strangely cameralike observer reporting only surfaces of character and action, but this same narrator later on takes the prerogatives of traditional omniscient third person narrators" (Begiebing 46).

The novel begins like a conventional mystery with a description of the main characters and the setting. An omniscient narrator describes five travellers with an
ambiguous destination and purpose. Though they travel together, Fowles alludes to an oddity among them: "all ride as if lost in their own separate worlds" (3). From this early statement, Fowles raises the central issue of the novel; how is it possible for the reader to step in and out of those "separate worlds"? Like the opening of The French Lieutenant's Woman, Fowles presents a scenario with a narrator who possesses knowledge of both the past and present, "from a twentieth-century mind," forcing the reader into the uncomfortable situation of melding both worlds. For example, while describing the landscape, he states "the period had no sympathy with unregulated or primordial nature" (9). Comments like this impose the need for a comparison on the part of the reader between the past and the present and its relationship to the events of the novel. Hence, the reader's attention is suddenly occupied "with the search for connections between the fragments" (Iser 55).

Many of these narrative fragments occur as Fowles constantly keeps the reader in mind of the Eighteenth Century and the events of the novel, while using "modern idiom" to relate these events, and allusions to the future. During just the first chapter, the narrator introduces the readers to a scene and characters that appear to be from one of Fowles' romantic historical visions, yet he presents this scenario through a narrator
who intertwines his commentary of this vision with language of an "ancient type" and "modern sense" (29, 9). While all these devices may, on one hand, help to bridge the chasm between modern and past sensibilities and values, they also serve to distract the reader's attention. As the reader just becomes accommodated to the romantic diction of the characters, the narrator interjects an idiomatic description of a character as an "eternal bag of bullshit" (29). Through this shifting omniscient tone, Fowles is able to comfort his reader into continuing the plot, yet also occasionally to disturb and shock the reader out of a complacent lull.

The novel progresses with a series of depositions, letters, and documents pertaining to the investigation of the mystery by a lawyer, A. Ayscough. Most of these interrogations are presented without the benefit of the omniscient narrator's commentary, yet they do include Ayscough's opinions as he relates the events of the investigation. As in The Collector, Fowles makes use of the ironic implications of first person narrative as each character involved in the mystery gives his or her point of view. These testimonials function at least two ways; they serve as a vehicle that reveals Ayscough's character while also divulging details about the mystery.

Like Ayscough, the reader attempts to discern the incongruous relationship between the travellers and Dick's
death through each witness' deposition. At the same time, the reader is also aware that Fowles presents the pieces of the mystery through characters who have limited insight and perspective. Further, the questions asked of the witnesses are also tainted by Ayscough's point of view, which is also limited. As in *The Collector*, the person reporting information often reveals more of himself than the events he hopes to portray. Ayscough, like Clegg, acts as a kind of storyteller, and the manner in which the story is told reflects more about him than any substantial illumination about the mystery.

For example, during Ayscough's interviews with the innkeeper and the maid, Ayscough reveals his low opinion of women. As he interviews the maid, he continually questions her ability to give him a reliable account of the events at the inn. But when he questions the innkeeper, he seems to trust him and even brings her into his confidence about his concerns with the case. Hence, the reader's comparison of the two testimonies and Ayscough's point of view suggests that Ayscough mistrusts women, a significant factor as the novel progresses and he questions Rebecca Lee. While this may seem a rather obvious conclusion, the primary reason for comparing testimony is to solve the mystery, yet Fowles gives the reader no information from these two interviews to enlighten the reader about Dick's death. Thus, the reader
reads on, expecting to find facts about a mystery, and
gets a character study instead. This narrative technique
subverts the reader's expectations in order to hold the
reader's attention. An interpretation "thus comes to be
an account of what happens to the reader: how various
conventions and expectations are brought into play, where
particular connections or hypothesis are posited, how
expectations are defeated or confirmed" (Culler 35). Once
these expectations are denied, the reader is left with
unpredictability. And, as Stanley Fish notes,
unpredictability will compel attention" (94).

Encasing these shifting points of view is the novel's
Prologue and Epilogue, and Fowles speaks to the readers as
the novel's creator. In the Epilogue, Fowles defines A
Maggot as a "whim or a quirk" based on an "obsession with
a theme." He states that while "what follows may seem
like a historical novel...but it is not. It is maggot"
(Prologue). Certainly, the reader is left wondering still
how to classify the structure of the novel. In one way
this nebulous and somehow sinister introduction acts as a
signpost to the reader to prepare for confusion.

In the Epilogue, Fowles concludes the book by both
praising the strength of Ann Lee (his protagonist's
daughter) and degrading the trappings of organized
religion, yet, within these remarks, Fowles tells the
reader, "We novelists also demand a farfetched faith,
quite often seemingly absurd in relation to normal reality; we too need a bewildering degree of understanding from our readers before the truths behind our tropes can be conveyed" (463). This seems almost an apology to the reader for tolerating the endless narrative shifts and incongruities. Yet his statement also suggests a deliberate plan to elude as a means to inspire. Fowles asks for "faith" in the reader that the quest of deciphering his complicated "trope" promises a reward of "truth." While *A Maggot* offers some challenges, most critics argue that Fowles' prize for the reader at the end of the novel is only frustration.

In each one of these novels, Fowles uses shifting points of view in order to employ the reader as a intermediary between the characters. Further, he uses the irony of first person to engage the reader's sense of trust. If the teller is unreliable, then the reader must somehow reconcile the narrative into something believable. The culmination of both of these activities places the reader into constant "retrospection" (Iser 57). Without the reader to interact with the separate accounts, there is no story. Through differing narratives, Fowles provides enough information to keep control over his audience yet still maintain deliberate gaps in the reader's knowledge. These gaps are what give Fowles' fiction vitality. The reader becomes a part of the story,
providing the essential link between otherwise disjointed versions of a plot. As Baker states, "we've come to realize, I think, that one of the hallmarks of a Fowles novel is rather unusual handling of point of view or narrative voice, [or] perhaps I should say voices" (668). Fowles puts the reader to task to hear, harmonize, and orchestrate the apparent discords among these voices.
Another significant aspect of Fowles' narrative stylistics is the use of overlapping plot structures. This recursive organization forces the reader to circle back to familiar events and compare partial narratives in order to gain a complete story. According to Walker, "the multiplication of complimentary perspectives achieves precisely that wholeness of vision which is the author's aim. This is because in novels such as these the authors are seeking to break free from the conventions of narrative..." (208). Certainly, this intertextuality is another way in which Fowles compels the reader to participate in creating the fiction. When "narrative coherence is replaced by the notion of aesthetic and structural coherence, the reference in the portrayal of action and incident is replaced by meaning through reflexive reference[s]" (Walker 205). However, the reader is the most necessary aspect of this formula. Without a mediator for the differing textual presentations, there is no integration and thus no story. The reader provides an essential aspect of the story simply reorganizing the repetitive structure of the story.

In The Collector, Fowles gives each character the chance to narrate the events of Miranda's captivity.
Since each character has a limited subjective perspective, Fowles implicitly demands that these two accounts be compared. The recursive time scheme of the narratives is evidence that Fowles "intended to pull the reader into his novel by placing him in the central role of judge" (Simard 77). The effect of this circular structure is a "more objective and inclusive perspective on the events and their meaning, and a much fuller, more sophisticated understanding of the motives of the title character" (Olshen 20-1).

The ironic implications of first person are further explored by Fowles as he invites the reader to compare and contrast the two monologues. Each character's differing perceptions not only occur in the style of the storyteller, but also in the additions and omissions of each character's account of the events. The most obvious example of this incompatibility is the seduction scene. Clegg introduces the event close to the end of his narrative and indicates its influence through the extensive explication of his horror and shock. What only takes moments to transpire requires eight pages of analysis from Clegg. He states "it was terrible, it made me feel sick and trembling. I wished I was on the other side of the world" (95). Clearly, his interpretation of sexuality and Miranda's attempt to surface his feelings indicate far more about Clegg than Miranda. While Clegg
believes he is informing the reader about Miranda, he explains himself. In this case, the narrator knows less than the reader.

This scene generally consists of Clegg's own internal thoughts of insecurity and revulsion that are only punctuated with pieces of dialogue. The use of the word "it" in the passage demonstrates Clegg's inability to accept his own sexuality. Through Clegg's internal account of the event, the reader gains access to Clegg's thought processes. While Fowles has already allowed the reader to grasp Clegg's paranoia, Clegg's account of his interaction with sexuality dramatizes these emotions.

In counterpoint to Clegg's version of the seduction, Fowles provides the reader with Miranda's diary as a gauge of comparison for Clegg. Unlike Clegg's description, Miranda's narrative of the seduction is brief. While it also contains little dialogue, she describes it as "something extraordinary" she had to do "to give [herself] a shock as well as him" (220). Though she plans it as a means to survive and therapy for Clegg, she admits "in a nasty perverted way it was exciting" (220). Her statement suggests that she is more aware of her own sexuality, yet it also implies Miranda's enjoyment of power and superiority over Clegg. McSweeney notes, "for all their differences in their attitudes to sex and love, both Clegg and Miranda are virgins and both are, in their different
ways, untested by interpersonal experience" (131). Miranda observes "it wasn't natural. Just a desperate imitation of what he must think the real thing's like. Pathetically unconvincing" (221). Even though she may be an innocent, she perceives Clegg's sexual repression, which gives her credibility. In light of Clegg's own statements, she correctly diagnoses his emotional incapacities while also suggesting her own. Again, Fowles uses one character's analysis of the other as a mirror that reflects both of the characters for the reader. Each time Clegg or Miranda attempts to disclose what they observe about each other, they actually reveal more about themselves. In order to understand the novel, the reader must comprehend this irony and trace Miranda and Clegg's relationship.

Hence, Fowles shifts the emphasis of a conventional narrative from plot to a fragmented sequence. The reader experiences the novel through piecing together the structure rather than through following linear events. Walker quotes Culler, who claims that "in place of novel as mimesis, we have the novel as a structure which plays with different modes of ordering experience and enables the reader to understand how he [the character] makes sense of the world" (63). Fowles implicitly asks that the reader reorder the events of the novel, and this process of reflection is similar to that of the characters. This
process enables the reader to grasp the dimensional qualities of the characters.

Similarly, Fowles further experiments with the concept of recursive time sequences in *Daniel Martin*. The events of the novel center on Daniel's search for the "whole sight" mentioned throughout the novel. In order for the reader to discover whether or not Daniel ever achieves personal integration, the reader must first reconcile the shifting points of view of both third and first person. In order to help the reader with this task, Fowles cleverly connects the most dramatic narrative shifts with easily identifiable images.

For instance, the novel begins with the chapter entitled "The Harvest," describing a rural scene from Dan's childhood. Fowles describes the pastoral landscape with sensually evocative language. Simon Loveday claims the style of the chapter lulls the reader into a timeless "dreamlike" state that he likens to Proust (106). Suddenly, the reader's attention is jolted from the "perfect azure sky" to the violence of rabbits being herded into the reaper (3, 8). The abrupt juxtaposition is meant to impress the memory of this moment upon the reader. The image of the massacre is so shocking that it profoundly affects Daniel, while also impressing the reader. The omniscient narrator states, "his heart turns some strange premonitory turn, a day when in an empty
field he shall weep for this (8). From the passage, the reader shares Daniel's grief and becomes aware of an unresolved incident in Daniel's life. The chapter ends

Adieu, my boyhood and my dream

D.H.M

and underneath: 21 Aug 42. (10)

This journalistic ending indicates Daniel's presence in both the third and first person narratives. Thus the shift in point of view can be attributed, as Loveday suggests, to "a narrator contriving to look over the shoulder of his younger self" (107). In this way, the image can be introduced as though it were the present and also given a commentary from Daniel's more mature perspective.

The image is introduced twice more in the novel, reiterating its importance. At Oxford, approximately twenty years later, Daniel confesses his disturbance over the incident. He states, "When I was a kid helping with the harvest during the war, a rabbit got caught in the mower blades of a reaper. But he doesn't go on" (26). More than anything Daniel says, the reader notices his silence, which reveals the impact of the slaughter. He finally admits "it's all I can remember about that day now" (26). Interestingly, the image is almost all the reader remembers about that day as well. With the knowledge that Daniel seeks to reconcile his past, the
reader recognizes this incident as a part of Daniel's life that he has yet to resolve. By watching the resolution of this memorable example, the reader is able to trace Daniel's negotiation of other haunting memories.

Again, forty years later, the memory of the harvest comes to him following the funeral of his friend Anthony. Daniel recalls an evening he happened upon a dying rabbit--"how he stared at it, then walked on. He knew he should have dashed its brains out on the nearest gate rail...but when one has the disease oneself?" (278). One of the striking aspects of Daniel's insight is the notion that he can objectify his own memories. In remembering the incident, Daniel attempts to objectify himself so that he might rediscover and reconcile his past with his present. Perhaps this passage demonstrates the success of his objectification since he comes to realize why he is haunted by the image of the rabbits. Daniel finally sees that the violence of death is not the impetus for his memory but the kindreds sense of fatality. For forty years, Daniel has not grieved for the rabbits, but for a representation of a lost and failed potential that he sees in himself. Yet, Fowles ensures that the reader recognizes these insights by providing such an unforgettable image for the reader to link, gauge, and trace Daniel's changing perspectives and growth. Through a comparative analysis of this small moment in Daniel's
life, the reader is closer to the motivational beginnings of his journey into "whole sight" (1).

In an elaboration of Fowles' experiments with comparative texts, Fowles complicates Daniel's shifting narratives with several chapters written by his lover, Jenny. In this way, Fowles not only forces the reader to reconsider Daniel's vacillating perspectives but also to compare those to Jenny's point of view. As Olshen points out, Jenny's is "the first female narrative voice in Fowles' work since The Collector, and redress[es] the evident imbalance arising from the otherwise entirely male perceptions" (113).

Daniel's narrative is interrupted three times by chapters authored by Jenny. Her "contributions" provide intersecting perspectives reminiscent of The Collector and remind us that third person narration, by convention so authoritative is, in Daniel's hands, not wholly reliable" (Walker 206). In an early chapter entitled "An Unbiased View," Jenny writes a diary-like letter that Daniel later acknowledges (364). Like Miranda's diary, Jenny's writing is characterized by a spontaneous style and raw honesty that evoke the reader's trust. While her words appear almost as a stream of consciousness, she deliberately strives for accuracy. As she writes about Daniel, she thinks, "I've just reread that last paragraph and it's too based on that first meeting. I make him too stoney, too
static" (32). As she attempts to "define [Daniel's] essence," she speaks of him as though he is a character she creates (32). She even claims that what she writes is a fiction about S. Wolfe, the main character of Daniel's novel. However, as the reader and Jenny both know, Daniel is the main character of his novel.

Yet beneath the guise of Jenny's alleged fiction, she is able to present the reader with an additional perspective on Daniel's growing self-awareness. She provides, according to Fowles' title, an "unbiased view." Even though Jenny's chapter appears early in the novel, her point of view subverts whatever credibility Daniel achieved as a narrator to that point. Though Daniel gives glimpses of vulnerability, Jenny describes him as "pathetic" and "self-contained" (32-3). As in The Collector, the reader is forced to judge between Daniel and Jenny. Of course, Fowles contrives the reader into choosing both, thus introducing further complications in formulating an opinion about Daniel. In this way, the reader is caught in the gap between puzzlement and knowledge--informed enough to believe that a conclusion is near, yet confounded into accepting the ambiguity of Daniel's humaness.

Jenny's second and third "contributions" provide further affirmations or negations of Daniel's integrity. In one instance, Jenny claims that "Dan has faults of
perception" (248). Clearly, this statement is consistent in Fowles' development of the irony of first person. Even more ironic is Daniel's attempt to become omniscient about his own life. However thwarted this project might be, Fowles certainly seems to ennoble Daniel's efforts. While the reader is meant to accept Jenny's "unbiased contributions," Jenny's point of view is just as faulty and limited as Daniel's.

Despite the constraints of both characters' perceptions, Jenny is also able to confirm some of Daniel's personal insights. While describing their visit to Tsankawi, Jenny claims that Daniel "has a mistress. Her name is loss" (249). She believes that Daniel's marriage proposal was an invitation for rejection because he views loss as a "fertile thing" (249). She asserts that he actually "asked [her] to refuse to marry him" (249). More than one hundred pages later, Daniel confirms that the proposal was "done in a way to invite refusal" (354). Through this overlapping technique, "Fowles has allowed the gap between chronological order and presentational order . . . to vanish" (Fawkner 46). Thus, Jenny provides a gauge for the reader to compare honesty and judge the honesty of Daniel's awareness. While her perceptions often complicate Daniel's already confusing narrative, she also affirms the reader's confidence in Daniel's attempt to examine himself. Though Jenny claims
in the "Third Contribution" that she writes these epistles "more than half for herself," she is also writing to Daniel, and more implicitly to a narratee, the reader who reads these commentaries as a vehicle to retrace and evaluate Daniel's journey toward "whole sight" (471). Her additions to Daniel's perspective bring the reader closer to "whole sight" about both characters.

Fowles' most recent novel, A Maggot, also represents a further experiment in the use of comparative texts. The novel is a compilation of letters, clippings, and interviews that the reader believes will lead to the solution of a servant's death. With the illusion of accumulating information, Fowles presents a mystery with clues but denies the presence of a solution. Many critics chide Fowles' technique by asserting that he presents "the pretense of explaining things while continuing to play games" (Moynahan 47). Fowles' game, perhaps intentionally, is to present a quest. The problem in reading A Maggot occurs when the object of that quest changes in the middle of the novel.

Within this Chinese box, the attorney hired to solve the murder, A. Ayscough, acts as on behalf of the reader's curiosity by questioning the witnesses. He reveals that he will not be satisfied with what he terms "experimental truths," but seeks "the substantial truth of what passed" (190, 445). The disparity between these two forms of
truth is precisely the source of both frustration and revelation for both the reader and the characters. The reader of A Maggot is frustrated, like Ayscough, because Fowles presents what appears to be a dilemma that is solvable by finding the facts surrounding Dick's death. Unfortunately, this quest for truth or fact is doomed to failure.

Like Ayscough, the reader hopes that the depositions will lead to some "book truth," or objective account of the puzzling circumstances surrounding the mystical journey described at the beginning of the book and Dick's death (75). Through the interviews, the reader learns that those who accompanied Bartholomew toward his spiritual rendezvous were hired as a type of disguise. Farthing, Lacy, and Jones also testify and confirm that a mystical event took place at a cave near Barnstaple involving Bartholomew, Dick, and Fanny. The reader also learn that Fanny is allegedly a prostitute named Rebecca who was hired as a mistress for Dick and Bartholomew. Though Fowles provides at least some information for solving the mystery, this information fails to materialize into a complete picture. Like Ayscough, the reader is tantalized by bits of truths and half-truths but at the same time frustrated by continued incongruities and unanswered questions. As the tension builds toward Rebecca's testimony, Fowles lulls the reader into a false
belief that she can reveal the missing parts of the
mystery. Instead, Rebecca's testimony only brings the
reader further away from the objective truth that Ayscough
and the reader hope to find. Hence, after the final
depositions, the reader is faced with the reality that the
mystery has no solution.

Perhaps the slow realization that the reader can
never discover Ayscough's definition of the truth is what
compels Fowles to shift the attention of the reader to the
final conflict between Rebecca and Ayscough. Since Fowles
refuses to deliver the anticipated solution to the
mystery, the reader is forced to reconsider and adjust
this expectation. If putting the pieces of the narrative
together to complete a mystery are unsuccessful, then the
reader must attempt to assemble the pieces in a different
way--perhaps into the completion of another quest, the
pursuit of Rebecca's self-discovery. While this is only
one solution to the impenetrable problem of the novel's
plot shift, it consistently places *A Maggot* among Fowles'
many other novels that explore the facets of self-
awareness, another product of his "obsession" with a
theme, though its narrative structure is by far the most
complex.

Rebecca's testimony reveals that she was hired by
Bartholomew and was unknowingly brought into his
mysterious search for the "secrets of the world" (18).
She tells Ayscough her account of what happened at the cave, which includes a fantastic story about aliens and UFOs and witchcraft. Ironically, the reader initially believes that she will demystify the mystery, yet her testimony is the most mysterious and unbelievable. Obviously, Ayscough believes that "none of this [has] substance," so he attacks her credibility. Though he mocks and ridicules Rebecca, she holds confidently to her version of the truth. At one point, she exclaims, "I swear by Jesus, it happened so, or so it seemed" (374). When Ayscough pursues thisunspeakable qualification of the truth, Rebecca admits that she cannot convey a satisfactory account of the events "in thy alphabet, in mine I can" (388). To Rebecca, truth has clearly become internal and she has reconciled her past, but for Ayscough, there is "one and only one alphabet" and it is "incontestable" (424, 351). Thus, the novel undergoes a metamorphosis from a mystery to the comparison of "two mentalities" that each order experience differently (Baker 669). Fowles introduces the story through a maze of contradictions, which becomes a debate between the "scientific, objectivist, rationalistic [mind] vs. the imaginative, the visionary, the religious [soul]" (Baker 669).

In order to recognize this debate, however, the reader must recognize Rebecca's growth. She begins the
novel as a nondescript piece of the landscape, plain and subservient. As the novel progresses, she is known only by the reader as a mysterious mistress. But by the time Ayscough begins to question her, she changes and embodies a strange virtue. When Ayscough finds her, she is "a new self, defiant, determined by new circumstance and new conviction" (293). This new conviction or purpose, she says, is "change" (433). Whether or not her mystical experience at the cave brought her an insight into her role as a vehicle for change is unclear. Yet, what is clear is her "inner certainty" and ascension into selfness (400). Although the reader initially looked to Rebecca (Fanny) as the solution to this confounding mystery, she represents a new direction for the novel and a new journey for the reader—a journey into the nature of all humans who are both "too self-tyrannized by the Devil's great I" to trust what they cannot understand and yet are accepting of the mysteries of the soul (467). The reader of A Maggot must certainly embody the stubbornness of Ayscough and his search for the truth in order to continue reading and, yet, like Rebecca, acquiesce to the unknowable in order to be satisfied at the end of the novel. But this is precisely what critics despise about the novel. The reader must reformulate the purpose of the story in order for the novel to succeed, because Fowles gives the reader little guidance in how to interpret an unsolvable mystery.
Thus, the reader resorts to Fowles' familiar quest mode. In a way Fowles belies most of statements he makes against Christianity by presenting a religious heroine, yet Rebecca is not only religion, but rebellion. As Fowles states in the epilogue, "dissent" is a "precious legacy" (466). To Ayscough, "change means not progress, but decline and fall" (232). And ironically, Rebecca's child, Ann Lee, is a vehicle for the kind of selfless change that Ayscough fears. In A Maggot, Fowles presents a parallel between the dichotomy of these two points of view and the reader's experience in the novel. Once Fowles presents the beginnings of the mystery, the reader begins a pattern of anticipation, a search for the "incontestable" truth. However, once Fowles introduces a change in the direction of the novel, the reader must shed the "self-tyranny" of seeking a solution and submit to upheaval and the enigma of Rebecca's "newly born ego" (463).

Like Daniel Martin, A Maggot is a chronicle of personal change rather the detective story Fowles feigns it to be. However, the reader must work much harder in reading A Maggot to first compare the texts to find facts that equal no conclusion and then to reconsider that information with new expectations. "What is most prominent [in The Collector, Daniel Martin, and A Maggot] is the expression of the novelist's freedom to digress from the story line, his capacity to fracture chronology,
even to halt the passage of time altogether" (Olshen 111). Through this experimentation with sequence, Fowles manipulates the reader into reordering the experience of reading, and thus "call[ing] attention to the narration, to the process of telling rather than the events themselves" (Loveday 110). In this way, Fowles makes the reader an essential aspect of the story. Through the use of comparative texts Fowles forces the reader to anticipate in creating and reordering the events of a plot. The effect of this participation is an almost personal investment on the part of the reader to produce an orderly regeneration of the events. Fowles presents fragments, inconsistencies, and overlapping events, knowing that the human mind will attempt to organize them into something rational and complete.
Another important aspect of Fowles' narrative style is reflected in a pivotal passage from *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as Charles Smithson discovers,

> The great human illusion about time, which is that its reality is like that of a road—on which one can constantly see where one was and where one will probably be—instead of the truth: that time is a room, a now so close to us that we regularly fail to see it. (252)

Within these lines, Fowles articulates one of his most significant concepts of narrative design. Throughout Fowles' career, the subversion of traditional time sequences has been essential to the presentation of his fiction. Fowles claims that "even the dullest narrative is a form of adventure since it deals with a series of events in time" (Barnum 189). Thus, as the reader follows a Fowles narrative, the reader embarks on a sequential adventure, and through point of view or comparative texts, the reader must accept the novel as a "room" in which the ideas, dialogue, and actions constantly circulate throughout the fiction. In this way, the pages of the novel accumulate rather than follow each other. Fowles' experiments with both shifting points of view
and recursive chapters bring the reader to Fowles' room of
the perpetual present. Since the reader anticipates that
the fiction will follow a chronological, sequential order,
Fowles easily manipulates this expectation to increase the
reader's involvement in the novel. Certainly, the more
the reader clings to linearity, the more the reader paces
within the "room" that Fowles creates with each page.
This frustration only makes the reader work more
feverishly to reorder the events of the fiction, forcing
the reader's participation in creating the fiction.

Of course, Fowles is not the only author to
subordinate sequence within a piece of fiction. Because
of the "limitations of language," the subversion of linear
time is not only a way to engage the audience, but also a
successful technique to "express simultaneity and the flow
of human consciousness" (Mendilow 166). Similarly,
Barthes claims that a novel with a reflexive time sequence
typifies reality because,

The 'reality' of a sequence lies not in the
'natural' succession of the actions composing it
but in the logic there exposed, risked and
satisfied. Putting it another way, one could
say that the origin of a sequence is not the
observation of reality, but the need to vary and
transcend the first form given man, namely
repetition: a sequence is a whole within which
nothing is repeated. (294)

Hence, as the characters "move toward relationships and identity" through recursive patterns of experience, the reader reads the novel in "quotidian [horizontal] time" rather than in the anticipated "immersion in the transtemporal" (Fawkner 128). Fowles' irregular sequences give the reader a way to read beyond linearity and into the experience of the novel by reversing traditional time lines. Though these insequential segments are difficult to negotiate, they represent the closest recreation to real time as the printed word can be. The reader may not be familiar with juggling fictional time sequences, but the reader's mind already arranges the fragmentary nature of real time sequences, thus giving Fowles' fiction characteristics of actual time.

In The Collector, Fowles emphasizes this concept through the use of Clegg's and Miranda's diaries. While the use of the comparative texts leads the reader to one complete linear sequence, the use of the dual fragmented individual diaries also contributes to Fowles' exploration of horizontal time. As Loveday indicates, Fowles introduces circular time through patterns of events that are repeated (14). Part 1 of the novel contains Clegg's narrative and his confession about plotting to capture Miranda and his defenses of how he attempts to make Miranda love him. His account of the events is a very
controlled monologue that the reader "overhear[s Clegg] thinking, or as in a soliloquy, speaking to himself" (Sherer and Sternberg 16). Within this monologue, the reader is brought through Clegg's recursive vacillation between guilt and justification for his actions. Part 1 is riddled with statements like, "I know what I did the next day was a mistake, but up to that day, I thought I was acting within my rights" (108). Yet then he contradicts his admissions of guilt by stating, "I had done something very daring [like] doing something in enemy territory . . ." (29). While he attempts to relate the events according to a sequential pattern, he is clearly haunted by equivocation. The result of this moral shifting captures each moment of Miranda's capture and captivity and preserves it in Clegg's mind, giving the past a sense of the present for the reader.

Similarly, Miranda's diary in Section 2 also reveals her reflexive moral stances. Although her diary reflects a linear account of her captivity, she repeats patterns of equivocation as she reevaluates her role as Clegg's judge, model, therapist, and tormentor. For instance, at one point, Miranda asserts that she "has to show [Clegg] how decent human beings live and behave" (122). And then she claims that he is "not anything human" (150). Yet later she admits that there is some "humanity" between them, and only two pages later states that Clegg is only an "empty
space designed to be human" (203, 205). This scattered and spontaneous shifting is certainly reflective of real human emotions, and it also propels the reader forward and backward within the narrative. As the reader learns more of the plot, the reader is forced back through emotional parallels from the past, giving Miranda's account of the past a quality of presentness.

Section 4 of *The Collector* represents the most significant example of a recursive narrative pattern. In the first section of the narrative, Clegg attempts to explain the motivation behind Miranda's kidnapping, and the last section mirrors that initial explanation. As Clegg concludes his episode with Miranda, he begins a new narrative as he chillingly considers another victim for his collection. Obviously his "interest" in Marian "(another M)" is immediately likened by the reader to Miranda before her capture (255). Though Clegg has already committed one heinous crime and has caused Miranda's death, he seriously considers repeating his deed. Thus, the past is automatically conjured to the present with Clegg's repeated plot. Even after reconstructing the events, Clegg learns nothing about himself. His past is not only the present, but may also be his future.

As Barry Olshen acknowledges, *Daniel Martin* is "yet another experiment in style" (109). Fowles also
manipulates traditional time sequences through Daniel's journey toward "whole sight" (1). As the reader assembles the disconnected chapters of the novel, Daniel is likewise reconnecting the pieces of his life. Most of the reader's energy is spent in making sequential connections, yet these fragmented and recursive memories give the reader a new perspective on time. Daniel uses the novel he writes as a medium to explore his own mind. According to Daniel, this medium accurately portrays "the real structure of [his] racial being and mind. . . something dense, interweaving, treating time as horizontal, like a skyline; not cramped, linear and progressive" (28). Although Daniel indicates that his (and Fowles') horizontal perspective denies progression, the effect of the interchange between past and present is certainly progressive, leaving Daniel, and the reader, more insightful of who he is based on who he has been. Both the reader and Daniel share an "exorcism by the written word" (Arlett 253). Throughout the novel, both are haunted by pieces of Daniel's memory and the chaotic time frames that surround those images. By the end of the novel, the reader and Daniel have fit those memories into an orderly sequence and have settled into the comfort of linearity, free from the spectors of Daniel's past.

Just as in *The Collector*, repeated patterns play a significant role in contributing to the continual present.
Daniel's integration is punctuated by journeys to several pastoral landscapes: Thorncombe, Tarquinia, Tswakani, and Egypt. Mostly, the countryside embodies a sanctuary that Daniel cannot survive without. At one point, Daniel asks himself, and the reader, the rhetorical question "ban the green from your life and what have you got?" (406). Though Daniel never explicitly answers the question, the reader implicitly knows that the answer for Daniel is "nothing." In each stage in Daniel's life, he manages to secure a refuge for himself. For Daniel, the landscape evokes "all his real but unwritten worlds; his past futures, his future pasts" (456). In these settings Daniel can capture moments that "destroy time and [a] conscious notion of sequence" (189). For instance, Daniel describes Tswankani: "the mesa transcended all place and frontier; it had a haunting and mysterious familiarity" (346). Daniel uses similarly timeless descriptions of all the significant settings of his life. Fowles anticipates that the "familiarity" Daniel feels is the same familiarity the reader recognizes in his description. Each landscape seems an attempt to reproduce the last.

The countryside is so significant for Daniel that it is called his mistress by the third person narrator: A landscape was the only decent marriage he had ever made and perhaps been the deepest reason he had returned here in the first place--that is,
the knowledge he would never make a satisfactory marriage anywhere else (435).

Hence, the novel ends with Daniel and Jane's reconciliation in the timeless settings of Egypt and Syria. The passage indicates to the reader that Daniel's completion cannot occur anywhere else. In Egypt, Daniel's past and future coalesce through Jane and the surroundings. In this way, Daniel is finally able to permeate the bonds of time and the final chapters become integrated into a linear chronology. "Fowles settles the final twelve chapters into the style of which he is a master: a single focalsing [sic] narrator" (Loveday 127). Daniel has moved from fragmented sequence and point of view into a single sequential voice. With the change in organization, Fowles signals the reader to Daniel's sense of self. "[T]he lyric 'whole sight' of the childhood camera's eye becomes the mature whole and steady sight of the master artist who looks and speaks with knowledge of self, with both will and compassion, to his audience of fellow humans" (Arlett 183).

In A Maggot, Fowles forces the reader to shed any tendency toward superiority about the past through the collapse of time. The novel is filled with small descriptions of eighteenth-century landscapes accompanied by twentieth-century commentary. "One detail seems to contradict another, and so simultaneously stimulates and
frustrates our desire to 'picture,' thus continually causing out imposed 'gestalt' of the text to disintegrate" (Iser 59). This puts the reader in the uncomfortable position of reconciling both perspectives. In doing this, Fowles brings the past to the present. Thus, insights and judgments about the characters are less removed from the reader's sensibilities. While reading a typical historical novel, the reader may cling to the security that the events of the novel, however disturbing, are part of the past, and each page represents a step closer to the end. But, by presenting allusions to the past and present, Fowles denies the reader's assumption that people have progressed beyond the stubborn foolishness of Ayscough or the unquestioning naive of Rebecca.

For Fowles, the struggle between resistance and change is timeless. Clearly, Ayscough and Rebecca are only representatives of this struggle, and, while their values differ, Fowles asserts that every "modern ego" has an affinity with both of them because everyone is an "equal [victim] in the debtor's prison of History, and equally unable to leave it" (400). Thus, the convergence of past, present, and future enables Fowles to magnify the significance of the events of the novel as a human hereditary pattern of ascension and inevitable degeneration of dissent. In this way, the conflict between Rebecca and Ayscough, between revolt and
conformity, is almost allegorical. So while *A Maggot* takes place in the past, Fowles introduces suggestions of the present and future to enhance the ageless quality of this confrontation.

Unfortunately, Fowles' message is that "we have not progressed one inch" from the stalemate that Rebecca and Ayscough seem to reach at the end of the novel (466). And, as many critics indicate, the novel may fail for some readers because the anticipated mystery and solution remain unsatisfied, and the sanctity of Rebecca's spiritual discovery seems worthless after Fowles' pessimistic epilogue. However, for the hours that it takes to read *A Maggot*, past, present, and future are one, and Fowles seems satisfied with at least the ability to momentarily wrench the "order" and "control" from his audience of "honest, decent left lobers" (435). For Fowles, the pages of *A Maggot* employ the reader in the creation of the fiction because "they blur, they upset, they disturb" (435). The novel emerges as the reader attempts to clarify, rearrage, and understand the disorder of the plot.

Hence, in all three of these novels, Fowles compresses the reader's traditional concept of sequence in order to directly implicate the reader in the significance of the events.

It is not the fact of temporal telescoping,
then, that is significant, but the function of it. . . . The reader of this [type of] novel is never allowed to abstain from judging and questioning himself by condemning or writing off the novel's world. . . . The real and the imaginary, the present and the past, merge for the reader. (Hutcheons 60)

The plot of one of these novels is nonsense unless the scattered time frames are reconciled. And the only person able to converge these sequential puzzles is the reader. Thus, Fowles largely hinges the success or failure of his novels on the reader's ability to accumulate and integrate contradictory temporal landscapes. Fowles charges the reader to reorganize his plots and then to interpret this recreation and assign some meaning to it. Each novel he writes is vulnerable to the risk that this task for the reader may be overwhelming.

Fowles' novels *The Collector*, *Daniel Martin*, and *A Maggot* all contain narrative problems for the reader to solve. Each one of these inconsistencies is the evidence of a "shift in emphasis . . . from events and actions to the process of reporting them" (Walker 196). This shift implies that Fowles' work, as a representative of "kinetic art [that] does not lend itself to a static interpretation because it refuses to stay still and doesn't let [the reader] stay still either" (Fish 83). Through the uses of
recursive narrative stylistics such as shifting points of view, repeated narrative perspectives, and time compression, Fowles encourages active participation in his fiction. Without the reader's mediation of a fragmented plot, Fowles' novels surely fail. And although Fowles admits that he doesn't know what goes on in the reader's mind during one of his novels, he acknowledges that the reader's contributions to "making up" the novel are crucial (Barnum 189-90). The reader provides imagination, organization, and meaning to the deliberate disorder of Fowles' fiction. Once the reader begins these tasks, the efforts toward creating a complete and integrated narrative become part of the experience of the novel.
Works Cited


