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**Calibanity:
Gender Relationships in John Fowles's The Collector,
The Magus, and The French Lieutenant's Woman**

by

Dennis W. Miller

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts**

**Department of English
Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario
September 1994**

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Calibanity: Gender Relationships in John Fowles's
The Collector, The Magus, and The French Lieutenant's Woman

submitted by Dennis W. Miller B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts

J.R. Morrison, Thesis Supervisor

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Abstract

This thesis examines John Fowles's The Collector, The Magus, and The French Lieutenant's Woman as commentaries on "calibanity," a source of male dominance in gender relationships. The first novel investigates patriarchy in society as a non-progressive structure smothering the creative feminine element. The Magus presents a series of lessons by which masculine ideology can be combatted and exorcized. The final book explores this novelist's political goal, the self-liberation of women in a society entrenched in conservatism. By investigating the roles scripted for men and women in society, Fowles examines the social conditioning that forms an "Adamic" ideology and presents a vision of liberty for both men and women.

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Legend

A	<u>The Aristos</u>
C	<u>The Collector</u>
CL	<u>Contemporary Literature</u> (1976)
CO	<u>Counterpoint</u> (1964)
DM	<u>Daniel Martin</u>
ET	<u>The Ebony Tower</u>
FW	<u>The French Lieutenant's Woman</u>
HM	<u>Harper's Magazine</u> (1968)
LM	<u>London Magazine</u> (1971)
M	<u>The Magus</u>
MA	<u>MacLean's</u> (1977)
MF	<u>Modern Fiction Studies</u> (1985)
ML	<u>Journal of Modern Literature</u> (1980-81)
NR	<u>New Review</u> (1974)
NS	<u>New Socialist</u> (1983)
PR	<u>Paris Review</u> (1989)
RI	<u>The Radical Imagination and the Liberal Tradition</u>
ST	<u>Sunday Times Magazine</u> (1974)
T	<u>The Tree</u>
W	<u>Wanderer</u>
WA	<u>World Authors</u>

Chapter One

Time We Tried Eve

I feel that the universe is female in some deep way. I think one of the things that is lacking in our society is equality of male and female ways of looking at life. (CL 465)

Claiming, in his book, The Aristos, that the "male and female are the two most powerful biological principles [] and their smooth inter-action in society is one of the chief signs of social health"(A 165), John Fowles establishes himself as a socially-conscious writer. He continues by saying that "[i]n this respect our world shows, in spite of the now general political emancipation of women, considerable sickness; and most of this sickness arises from the selfish tyranny of the male"(A 165). Although sympathetic to the Women's Movement, Fowles does not agree with all the ideas that it advocates. Stating that a need exists for an "opposite" pole to generate a balance in our social system, he considers "countersupport" to be an important element in a society. Concerned with showing the "calibanity" of both man and woman, Fowles's fiction explains that "the dividing line between the Few and the Many must run through each

individual, not between individuals"(A 9-10).

The word calibanity, used in The Collector to define the character of Clegg, is derived from Shakespeare's The Tempest. For Fowles, at its simplest, it is the equivalent of "Adam-consciousness," as he shows in The Aristos. He explains: "Adam is hatred of change and futile nostalgia for the innocence of animals," while "Eve is the assumption of human responsibility" (A 165). Moreover, Adam societies "exact strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behaviour"(A 166). As a result, the definition of calibanity for Fowles becomes twofold: it constitutes the individual's conformity to social codes and the dominant ideology which controls these codes. Fowles, in The Tree, qualifies his definition when discussing the seventeenth-century view of nature; he explains: "Nature still remained a potential dissolver of decency . . . the nearer nature, the nearer Caliban"(T 68). Although Fowles's own views on nature differ from those of the seventeenth century, one can see that calibanity stands both for the "primitive" and the destructive. Shakespeare's character was a "savage and deformed slave"; Fowles's Caliban is also savage, in a different sense, and as much a slave. In his fiction, Fowles is concerned with the political situation caused by "Adam-consciousness." Eagleton is helpful here in explaining the use of the term political: he says politics are "the way[s] we organize our social life together, and the power-relations which this involves" (194). Examining our social life, Fowles presents fiction that is

clearly political. His first three novels, The Collector, The Magus and The French Lieutenant's Woman, are concerned with calibanity and how it affects gender relationships.

Fowles has maintained his concern with calibanity throughout his career, for he seems to have been raised in a "caliban" environment. Born March 31, 1926, in Leigh-on-Sea, a suburb of London, Fowles was an only child until his sister was born fifteen years later. Of his childhood he says: "I was born in a . . . small town dominated by conformism--the pursuit of respectability . . . and I believe that . . . partly caused my intense and continuing dislike of mankind en masse" (WA 485). Fowles disapproved of his father's Victorian views and considered his father to be "in the middle of the middle class" (ST 33) where he was always striving for a higher status. After graduating from school Fowles attended a Naval Short University Course in Edinburgh. However, the day that Fowles finished his recruit training World War Two ended.

The first step in Fowles's attempt at a new life was to return to his studies, this time at Oxford. Here he became interested in French literature and philosophy, particularly Sartre and Camus. At this time Fowles also became involved in writing, starting stories but never finishing them. After graduating from Oxford, he began teaching at the University of Poitiers in France. In 1951, he decided to move to Greece and took a position at a local school, the Anargyrios and Korgialenios School at Spetses, a source of inspiration for The

Magus. Fowles returned to England where he taught from 1953 until 1963 when the royalties from The Collector freed him to write full time. After suffering a mild stroke in 1988, he seems to have stopped writing.

In his fiction, Fowles works within different modes of narration and conventions of literature. Although the forms may differ in each novel, unity can be found in his central themes: the question of free will, the place of an individual in the community, and the problems of our society. One of the ways in which he investigates these concerns is by examining the relationship between men and women and the social conditioning that defines their roles in society. Being sympathetic to women in his fiction, he claims: "My female characters tend to dominate the male. I see man as a kind of artifice, and woman as a kind of reality"(HM 94). As a result, the role of the women in his fiction becomes important to understanding the sexual politics that drive these works.

His first published novel is The Collector (1963), which was followed by The Magus (1965; revised 1978), a book that was actually written during the 1950's. The French Lieutenant's Woman (1969), his third fictional work, assured his international success. His next published work, a collection of short stories called The Ebony Tower, which he wanted to subtitle "Variations," investigates the relationships between "old" and "new" art as well as commenting on criticism. Conflicts described in terms of the "hopeless parole in search of lost langue"(ET 174) are

investigated in the final story, "The Cloud." To a large extent, the inability to communicate reflects the conflict between the "Adam-" and "Eve-consciousness" in society. The next novel that Fowles published is Daniel Martin. Themes of self and love are at the forefront in this work. Unlike The Collector and The Magus, which were fables, Daniel Martin is a more realistic novel, the emphasis being on a Freudian interpretation of the social struggle between the sexes.

Primarily concerned with aesthetics, Mantissa, the next novel, is different from anything else Fowles has written. Describing the relationship between a writer and his muse, these two figures argue over who is writing and who is in control. Written as a response to a trend of modern criticism, particularly French critics such as Roland Barthes, this novel was begun in the early 1970's, after The French Lieutenant's Woman. Highly postmodern, Mantissa addresses many of the textual problems that Fowles himself has faced as a writer, particularly where sexuality is defined by the male world. The surrogate author of the novel is under attack by his Muse (Erato) for trying to be a dominating force in his sexual (and textual) experiences. The last novel that Fowles has published is A Maggot. Again setting the novel in the past, this time the eighteenth century, he questions the authority of received history. The use of the female voice and the idea of Holy Mother Wisdom continues Fowles's concern with the presence of the female in society and the loss of this voice in history. In this novel,

as in his others, Fowles examines the masculine ideology that creates present society.

In The Aristos, Fowles offers his own views concerning society and the "universal situation" of humanity. His thinking becomes political as he discusses the concept of the "few" and the "many." For Fowles, Heraclitus's idea of the aristoi and the polloi is relevant. The former is defined as "a moral and intellectual elite" while the latter is "an unthinking, conforming mass"(A 9). Admitting that such thinking may be considered fascist, Fowles maintains that the "basic contention is biologically irrefutable"(A 9). Such a split in humanity is false, for "the gradations are infinite . . . none of us are [sic] wholly perfect [] and none wholly imperfect"(A 9-10).

From the idea of this biological split, Fowles sees in humankind a form of socialism being born. He says that terms such as "'affluent society' and 'conspicuous consumption' are euphemisms, in the context of our poverty-stricken and starvation-ridden world, for selfishness"(A 35-6), since "our stereotyping societies force us to feel more alone"(A 39). Capitalist societies, according to Fowles, "condition[their] members to envy and be envied"(A 44); however, "this conditioning is a form of movement; and the movement [is] out of the capitalist society into a better one"(A 44). In short, such a society for Fowles contains the "seeds of [its] own transformation"(A 45).

One final aspect of Fowles's politics is his linking of

inequality in capitalist society with the human psyche. Adding a fourth dimension, the nemo, to the Freudian triune of id, ego and superego, Fowles investigates the concern with "the state of being nobody--'nobodiness'"(A 47). For him, the nemo is a "specifically human psychic force"(A 48) and is, moreover, a "negative force"(A 48) representing what we as humans react against. Stating that the "nemo is a man's sense of his own futility and ephemerality; of his relativity, his comparativeness; of his virtual nothingness"(A 49), suggests that Fowles believes that calibanity, the "hatred of change"(A 165), places the "dividing line" between individuals, and not within the individual. By allowing the "line" to exist between people, one is always in contrast with others; thus one does not confront the nemo but feeds it.

Focusing on the individual leads Fowles to investigate existential qualities in society. Existentialism, for him, is "the revolt of the individual against all those systems of thought, theories of psychology, and social and political pressures that attempt to rob him of his individuality"(A 122). It is an "attempt to combat . . . the nemo in modern man"(A 122). In Fowles's "perfect society," an individual's freedom of choice would not be smothered by socialist doctrine. Socialism, as it stands, does not allow the individual freedom Fowles desires: "Too much social security and equality breed individual restlessness and frustration"(A 118). Only a socialist doctrine that allows people "to choose the inauguration of a juster

world"(A 120) seems acceptable to him.

Concerned with the social position of women, Fowles analyzes society in terms of its dominant ideology. He claims that "the very cunning and sophisticated systems of brainwashing that so-called democratic Western societies have evolved to keep the ordinary man and woman passive and sheep-like"(RI 115) result in a state of calibanity. Such thinking is not Marxist, but one of concern for the unfortunate existence of the uneducated. He continues: "I'm against the glamorization of the Many. I think the common man is the curse of civilization, not its crowning glory. And he needs education, not adulation"(CO 218-19).

Fowles writes that the "one principal reason [he] think[s] the novel is not in any danger as a form is that it is a marvelous changer of social sensibility"(ML 183). In "A Personal Note" to The Ebony Tower, Fowles, in discussing the twelfth century and Marie de France, suggests that the social status of women has not changed very much. In this period "amour courtois was a desperately needed attempt to bring more civilization (more female intelligence) into a brutal society" (ET 114), much like our own. Fowles suggests that to free women "the crude things in men should be educated out of them and jettisoned"(NS 19). Aware of the influence of society on the individual, he shows that women also have to be educated. Moreover, he insists that he is "totally for the female principle, as [he] hope[s] all [his] novels prove"(ML 189). Although Fowles began writing The Aristos while at Oxford, he adheres to his earlier principles. He says:

I still think that most men, and still today, are over-obsessed by order, logic and theory--that is, by various abstract games systems that allow them to compete more or less ritually for artificial status--and women by the contrary qualities, which also have their faults. (RI 121) (emphasis added)

Almost thirty years after beginning The Aristos, Fowles still believes that "the only rational political doctrine one can hold is democratic socialism" (A 8), a brand of socialism that allows the individual freedom of choice.

As well as being popular with British and North American readers, the fiction of John Fowles has caused much debate among literary critics. Ranging from psychoanalytical to Bakhtinian to feminist approaches, much of the emphasis of the literary criticism of his novels has been on the relationships between the male and female characters. One critic, Bruce Woodcock, in his book, Male Mythologies, suggests that "while [Fowles's] work allows such an analysis to be made, its outcome is an evasion of this central issue, which promotes a realigned version of the very myths of masculinity he lays bare" (8). What Woodcock is referring to is Fowles's attempt to show the oppression of females in society. He goes on to say that "Fowles is caught within the limits of masculine ideology . . . [where] he exemplifies the use of women within the contemporary male imagination" (23). Magali Michael, in her criticism of The French Lieutenant's Woman, suggests that one must question Woodcock's argument for the same reason (233). In his criticism, Woodcock states that the novel is not about Sarah but about Charles. For evidence Woodcock quotes Fowles as saying that "the book was

always equally about Charles"(85) [emphasis added]. The central problem with Woodcock's and other criticism on Fowles's work is the refusal to discuss all the aspects of his ideas, his plurality, in these early works.

What the critics of Fowles's handling of gender relationships ignore is the fact that Fowles himself has provided The Aristos as a guide for treating his novels. The psycho-analytical interpretations often use Jungian terms to define the relationships between the male and female characters but neglect the fact that Fowles believes in the idea of the "nemo," which proposes another--a social--view of these relationships. Many of the feminist critics simply claim that Fowles is merely a male and cannot understand the problems women face. Yet, to claim that a person cannot at least make observations about social problems because of his sex is ludicrous, especially considering Fowles's concern with the education of the male. Defending the character of Sarah in The French Lieutenant's Woman, Fowles says "[he] would not blame her--as a symbol of a certain class of then much-exploited womankind--for using Charles to find her own freedom" (MF 195). He continues: "It has to be an excessively fastidious morality that condemns an oppressed race, class or sex for using the same weapons as its enemy"(RI 119). Chris Weedon posits that feminism "is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between men and women in society"(1). Although sympathizing with feminism, Fowles's overall concern is with more than female emancipation, what he refers to as "whole sight [] or

all the rest is desolation"(DM 1). He states that the problem of feminism is "its unhappy habit of beginning for just and good reasons but ending as one more tyranny"(MF 196).

To examine the politics in his fiction, one needs to be aware of Fowles's "theory" of writing. Claiming that he can "only report"(FW 81) his characters' thoughts and feelings, Fowles allows his characters a large degree of freedom. Distancing himself in this way, the novelist has shifted the responsibility of interpretation to his readers, requiring them to "question their own (and by implication others') interpretations"(Hutcheon 180). In discussing his politics, particular attention is given to The Aristos to define and explain the nature of the individual in society. Foucault's theory on power and discourse is helpful in investigating the nature of subjectivity in these texts. In order to establish this responsibility, the narratology of the novels is considered in postmodern terms to show that the morality at question in these novels is that of the reader as well as Fowles, for he challenges the reader to question both the text and society.

The loss of an individual's identity due to the force of social pressure is at the heart of Fowles's politics. This can be seen in his reworking of The Tempest in both The Collector and The Magus, where the transtextual characters--Caliban, Miranda, Prospero and Ferdinand--are deconstructed, laying bare Fowles's politics and sympathies with feminism. Fowles has, in The Aristos, given his readers not only the themes that pervade his

novels, but also the materials to construct a cultural or political theory by which to judge these novels. Discussing the nemo, he says:

The ordinary man and woman live in an asphyxiating smog of opinions foisted on them by society. They lose all independence of judgement and all freedom of action. They see themselves increasingly as limited special functions, as parts of a machine, with neither need nor right to perform any other than their role in the economic structure of society. (A 53)

Chapter Two

Whole Sight: Or All the Rest is Desolation

A strange thought: I would not want this not to have happened. Because if I escape I shall be a completely different and I think better person. Because if I don't escape, if something dreadful happened, I shall still know that the person I was and would have stayed if this hadn't happened was not the person I now want to be. (C 261)

Fowles posits that the tension "between the poles of poverty and wealth [] is one of the most potent in our societies"(A 125). He continues: "Money is potentiality: is control of, and access to, hazard; is freedom to choose; is power"(A 125). In The Collector, Clegg's character defines the potential evils of such power. Knowing that he is "inferior" to those who have more money, Clegg isolates himself from society. He even states that "power corrupts . . . [a]nd Money is Power"(C 23). Again, Fowles chooses to develop his protagonist as both villain and victim. Clegg is from a lower class background, but in winning the pools he is allowed access to society's "money paradise." What happens to Clegg is what Fowles believes happens to the upper class in society: "Having, not being, governs [their] time"(A 124).

Fowles structures his novel by incorporating two narrative voices, Clegg's and Miranda's, which serve to counteract each other. William Palmer suggests that "the tragedy of The Collector exists in the lack of communication . . . between the worlds of the two central characters"(34). Clegg's "confession" and the silent comments Miranda makes about him create a resonance which helps to foreground the role of the reader. That Fowles problematizes his characters' points of view by juxtaposing differing versions of the same narrative serves to distance him from his work. The reader does not have the authorial voice entering the text to condemn Clegg or sympathize with Miranda. The ultimate ending of the novel is left open; the reader must evaluate what has occurred.

Examining the power struggle presented in The Collector, this chapter addresses Fowles's concern with social health. Employing Foucault's ideas of "confession," the novel's structure shows how the power relations are set up. The two narrators are, on one level, opposites which create the conflict between the "few" and the "many." How this division between the characters evolves is the second aspect investigated in this chapter: both Clegg and Miranda are victims of socialization, a process which forces them to face the "nemo." Finally, this chapter investigates the potential for authenticity in the characters. Both Miranda and Clegg are given the opportunity to confront the "nemo," but neither is totally successful in defeating it. Miranda is not allowed the needed time to succeed and Clegg is

too crippled to face the confrontation.

The seemingly simple structure of The Collector, two narrations of one event by two different subjects, is a major component in the reader's re-constructing process. McHale posits that if one pushes "epistemological questions far enough . . . they 'tip over' into ontological questions"(11). Fowles investigates both the modernist concern with knowledge and the ontological status of each of these narrations. Foregrounding both epistemological as well as ontological issues, Fowles employs a binary narrative to present both Clegg's and Miranda's "own" stories. Clegg retells how he won the pools and abducted Miranda, keeping her prisoner in his underground cellar while Miranda's discourse, although also telling of her abduction, explores much of her life before her imprisonment. The resonance that occurs between these two narrations presents many conflicts for the reader. One problem that has to be considered is the fact that both narrators are telling "their" story. Discrepancies between the discourses concerning the "reality" of certain issues are questioned by the reader. One instance where such a discrepancy occurs is Miranda's attempts to seduce Clegg in order to escape. Clegg declines these advances because "a psychiatrist has told him he won't ever be able to [have sex]"(C 252). The reader is aware that this is false as Clegg admits he never visited a therapist but just "made up a long story"(C 110). Moreover, Miranda herself posits that at times she writes "what [she] want[ed] to say as well as what [she actually] did"(C 142);

as a result, her "report is consciously literary"(Onega 26).

The novel's two characters are in pursuit of authenticity, in an existential sense. Coupling the double narrative with the character's quests creates a text that is "polyphonic." Bakhtin claims that in a polyphonic novel characters are "not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse"(1984 7) and that each discourse constitutes a "point of view, a social-ideological conceptual system of real social groups"(1981 411). The two narrative voices in The Collector represent differing and authentic ideological concerns, what Fowles calls the "polar view of life"(A 11). Following McHale's concern with ontology, the question of reality sought in the interspace of these narratives leads the reader to the question of plural realities. If Miranda believes that Clegg is impotent and acts accordingly, her "reality" is dictated by this information. However, much of Miranda's narrative does not concern Clegg, but her artist friend G.P. Therefore, the interspace between the two narratives moves in another direction, one of ideological difference. In this textual space Fowles examines the politics of the "few" and the "many," the effect of calibanity on this relationship.

In The Collector, Clegg and Miranda appear to be "Adam" and "Eve" figures; here Adam is "stasis [] or conservatism" and Eve is "kinesis or progress"(A 165-66). Clegg claims that he has the desire to change, but he is unable to do so. He says: "I know my English isn't correct, but I try to make it correct"(C 172).

However, the fact that Fowles gives Clegg his own discourse humanizes what has been considered an "evil" character. Yet, Clegg's reason for changing is superficial; he wants to impress Miranda. The desire "to be loved" (A 49) is a result of the nemo's manifestation in Clegg. He refuses to accept that his own weaknesses (in this case, his use of language) are the ultimate problem in his psychological make-up, whereas Miranda has a potential for growth by beginning to question both Clegg's and her own character. At first, Miranda does not want to change. She says: "I hate the way I have changed" (C 137), but later she realizes that she must change. She states: "How I hate ignorance! Caliban's ignorance, my ignorance, the world's ignorance" (C 160). The relationship between the stagnant Clegg and the progressive Miranda raises both the question of the "few" and the "many" and the question of responsibility. The tension between the two characters allows Fowles to investigate the political structure of society and the effect calibanity has on it.

To establish the opposition between Clegg and Miranda, Fowles gives each a different social status: Clegg is working-class while Miranda is middle-class. This division is exemplified in the characters' use of language and their views on sexuality and art. According to Miranda, Clegg appears to be "[a]bsolutely sexless" (C 131) while he believes her to be the epitome of sexuality. Clegg's inability to understand and appreciate art symbolizes his "sexlessness" or repressed

sexuality. Central to the novel is "the destructiveness of a failure to develop psychological strength and insight . . . as well as the pathos of an inability to acquire an attitude of imaginative consciousness" (Beatty 73).

The first sentence of the novel lays bare the "common" language of Clegg by incorporating poor grammatic structure. He says: "When she was home from her boarding-school I used to see her almost every day sometimes, because her house was right opposite the Town Hall Annexe"(§ 5). Clegg's language is full of clichés and euphemisms such as: "Shall I be mother?"(§ 59), "Don't oblige me."(§ 31) and "[Y]ou're all I've got that makes life worth living."(§ 54), indicating his dependence on someone else's language, probably his aunt's. While planning Miranda's abduction, Clegg read "the classy newspapers" and "went to the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery" so he "wouldn't seem ignorant"(§ 17). That Clegg does not want to "seem" ignorant suggests that he has a feeling of low self-worth. He exhibits his ignorance by only desiring to change the external qualities of his character. To appreciate fully what Fowles is doing in this novel, one must investigate Clegg's character and discover the root of his need to be accepted.

Raised by his aunt, and for a short time his uncle, Clegg had surrogate parents. When he was two years old his father died in an automobile accident caused by drunk driving. However, he reports that his aunt said it was "his mother who drove [his father] to drink"(§ 7). The absence of his mother is explained

to him by his cousin: "[S]he was a woman of the streets who went off with a foreigner"(C 7). The sense of isolation caused both by his father's death and the subsequent departure of his mother, and his aunt's didacticism concerning conformity, has made it difficult for Clegg to interact with others. This affliction manifests itself most in Clegg's own "false assumption of inferiority"(A 10). For Clegg, the "nemo" is growing "in strict relation to [his] sense and knowledge of general and personal inequality"(A 48). That Clegg is isolated from his parents suggests a vulnerability in his character, a need for companionship, in which his aunt figures. Although a "nonconformist," she "never forced [him] to go to the chapel or such like"(C 10). Seemingly innocent, his aunt's actions go beyond "nonconformism" into a realm of "calibanity." Her apathy has left him with no sense of responsibility; moreover, his upbringing in a "nonconformist" environment has allowed Clegg to avoid facing his sense of "nothingness." He claims that he always "stayed the lone wolf"(C 8), even when he was fishing with uncle Dick, his surrogate father. Clegg does not seem strong enough to defeat the "nemo" and prove that "[he is] somebody" (A 50).

During his time in the Pay Corps, Clegg was inexperienced with women. He says: "I never thought about women much . . . I know I don't have what it is girls look for"(C 10). What Clegg thinks girls seek is some "crude animal thing [he] was born without"(C 10). Seeing himself as an unlikely candidate for

romance, Clegg further separates himself from "normal" society. However, there is an irony in his views of himself and his views of others. Although he will trap Miranda and eventually let her die, Clegg does have an acute sense of social illness. He states that he is glad he was not born with that "crude animal thing" because he feels "if more people were like [him] . . . the world would be better" (§ 10). Ironically, it is that aspect of male ideology that is referred to as the "crude animal thing" that Fowles is attacking in his fiction. Yet Clegg's seemingly acute ability to see the world around him does not help him with his view of himself. Being sexually repressed, he is an ironic Caliban, not trying to populate the world with Cleggs. This repression is an important addition to the Shakespearean character. Too stunted and repressed to criticize himself objectively, Clegg allows others to define his character for him. At a respectable hotel Clegg believes that the other patrons looked down on him. He explains: "You could see them saying, don't kid us, we know what you are, why don't you go back where you came from" (§ 11). Claiming London is "all arranged for the people who can act like public schoolboys, and you don't get anywhere if you don't have the manner born and the right la-di-da voice--I mean rich people's London" (§ 11), Clegg is again perceptive concerning social problems caused by the nemo, yet blind to his own obsessive nature.

The concern with possession manifests itself fully in The Collector, the title itself referring to this activity.

Throughout all of his novels Fowles examines humankind's inability "to be." Miranda notices this tendency in Clegg when she says: "He knows that part of my beauty is being alive, but it's the dead me he wants"(C 215). However, even though Clegg is the person with power in this relationship, the blame cannot fall solely on him. Power, in Foucault's terms, does not result "from the choice or decision of an individual subject" but its existence "depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance" (1978 95). The ways his aunt and Miranda treat him, his socialization, are examples of the "points of resistance." Clegg's need to collect stems from both his desire for power and his feelings of alienation. By actively collecting, Clegg has assumed a label by which he can be identified.

Like Clegg, Miranda is a product of socialization. Whereas Clegg is a product of conformity, Miranda is shaped by rebellion. Being from a middle-class family causes Miranda to react against it. During the course of the novel Miranda insults Clegg for trying to conform to the middle-class ideology. However, in the process of rebellion, Miranda isolates herself from her family. She says that her mother is someone she has always "hated or been ashamed of"(C 152) and wants "to marry . . . to prove . . . that all marriages needn't be like D and M's"(C 151). Perhaps her desire to be an artist is a way of reacting against them and rebelling against the "nemo." Whatever the case, Miranda falls in love with the artist G.P. and his ideas. To her, he represents what is good and artistic. Either way, it is from

this middle-class ideology that Miranda is trying to escape. As Clegg has tried to escape from his ideological social class by using his money, Miranda does the same using G.P. However, both characters fall victim to the very ideology they are fleeing.

Miranda realizes that Clegg is the victim of his history, his social position. She says that "he's a victim of a miserable nonconformist suburban world and a miserable social class" (§ 172). Yet, Miranda does not consider her own concern with social position. She continually attacks Clegg for his inarticulate speech in an attempt to assert superiority over him. Not until she begins to question her own "self" does her potential for authenticity grow. Miranda says she hates "the uneducated and the ignorant" and "the pompous and the phoney" (§ 218). Both Clegg and Miranda share these flaws. Miranda's feeling of self-worth seems to suggest at first that it is she who is pompous, for Clegg never claims that he is educated. But Miranda, being too inexperienced, is not yet of the "few"; she wants "to be one of them, and that's not the same thing" (§ 220). Recognition of the power relations between the "few" and the "many" allows Miranda to deal with her own person; thus she realizes that she feels "a responsibility towards him" (§ 224) which suggests Miranda might have the potential to be one of the "few."

In contrast with Clegg's, Miranda's use of language is more precise and clear. The difference in language is foregrounded by the fact that the narrative style changes when Miranda begins her discourse. Written as a diary, the highly subjective style is

articulated with a sense of intelligence. However, Miranda is not above using other people's language in her discourse. She constantly repeats what G.P. has said to her at one point or another. Moreover, the style of her discourse, the diary, suggests a creative element in her character. However, Pamela Cooper notes that, "as a narrator, [Miranda] is . . . intellectually and artistically dependent on G.P"(41). Yet, Miranda is still young, only eighteen or nineteen years old, and should be granted some latitude for her inexperience. Fowles describes the "few" as the "moral and intellectual élite" and the "many" as the "unthinking, conforming mass"(A 9). The language of the two characters suggests that Miranda has begun her journey towards the former group while Clegg has stagnated in the latter. The fact that Clegg tries to improve his language suggests a willingness and desire to learn, but an incomprehension of the depth of change required.

In examining the psychodynamics of Clegg and Miranda, one must consider the allusions Fowles makes to The Tempest. The names of the characters--Miranda, Ferdinand and Caliban--are borrowed from Shakespeare. In The Collector, the author appropriates these personae to serve very different purposes, to exploit, among other things, the political relationship between what Fowles's calls the "few" and the "many." In The Collector Miranda is a victim of her middle-class upbringing. Similarly, Lorie Leininger suggests that in the play Miranda "might prove a victim of the play's hierarchical values"(208). The most obvious

way that Miranda Grey resembles Shakespeare's character is through Clegg's idealization of Miranda. In The Tempest she is young, beautiful, and innocent. Fowles's character possesses these three traits as well; however, Miranda Grey does not find a "brave new world" with her Ferdinand. In fact, all she finds is a "sick new world" (C 255).

The character of Clegg is called both Ferdinand and Caliban in the novel. Clegg himself wants to be thought of as Ferdinand, his fantasy being the happy union of Miranda and Ferdinand in the play. However, Miranda Grey calls him Caliban, the vile and monstrous villain of Shakespeare. However, Clegg does not have the physical appearances of Caliban. Miranda herself says he was "the sort of man you would not expect" (C 128) to kidnap her. Because of his earlier attempt to rape Miranda, Shakespeare's Caliban is punished by Prospero. As in Shakespeare, Fowles believes that the calibans of the world should not be adulated. Like Clegg, Caliban's language is considered uncivilized; however, as Caliban says: "You taught me language, and my profit on't/Is, I know how to curse" (I.ii.363-364). In both the play and the novel it is Miranda who tries to educate Caliban.

The one element that is not as obvious in Fowles's working of The Tempest is the role and character of Prospero. In the play, Prospero is introduced as the magician who finally allows freedom to all, showing his true ability to forgive. In The Collector, there is no character to play the role of Prospero. However, there are implications of his character. Miran'

appears to be the Prospero for Clegg. Like Prospero, Miranda tests the novel's "Ferdinand," asking Clegg to free her and by doing so attain her respect. G.P. seems to be a Prospero figure for Miranda. He is her "magus," showing her the meaning of art and life. However, her own self-analysis shows that he is a false Prospero, that it is her realization of her own faults that allows growth. Only by developing one's own "unique persona" (A 50), by becoming Prospero, are Fowles's characters capable of their own metamorphosis. Not until The Magus does Fowles introduce a full-blown Prospero figure in Maurice Conchis.

The stagnation in Clegg's character can be seen throughout the text. He has an ideal view of Miranda, judging her solely on her looks and the story about her in the local paper. Miranda is developed in his mind before he ever meets her: he has found an anima figure. When he captures her, he realizes: "She didn't look quite like [he'd] always remembered her" (C 31). However, Clegg does not question his own constructed view of Miranda. He always claims that he never intended to abduct her, that it just happened. Then he claims that "there'd be a blooming lot more of this if more people had the money and the time to do it" (C 75). That this statement foregrounds one of the main themes of the novel problematizes our judgement of Clegg's character: the collector "is as imprisoned, is missing as much, as his victim" (Palmer 55).

One can condemn Clegg's actions, but there is a certain knowledge, or potential, that he has which the reader recognizes.

Miranda says to Clegg: "What I fear in you is something that you don't know is in you" (§ 75). She contends:

'You're the most perfect specimen of petit bourgeois squareness I've ever met.'

Am I?

'Yes, you are. You despise the real bourgeois classes for all their snobbishness and their snobbish voices and ways. . . . Yet all you put in their place is a horrid little refusal to have nasty thoughts or do nasty things or be nasty in any way.' (§ 81)

One sees this contradiction between ideals and actions again when Clegg believes he is being generous by spending money on Miranda. Moreover, after taking nude photographs, symbolically raping Miranda, he tries to justify his action to himself. He says: "[N]ot many would have kept control of themselves, just taken photos, it was almost a point in my favour" (§ 95).

At the end of the novel the reader observes Clegg's preparation for his next "guest." Clegg suggests that it is "just an idea" (§ 288); however, after seeing Clegg make similar suggestions concerning his relationship with Miranda, one is prepared for Clegg to repeat his performance with another victim. Perhaps the most sinister scene in the novel occurs when Clegg discovers Miranda's diary. Until this point the reader, although not forgiving Clegg's actions, may have some sympathy for him because of the social factors that have stunted him. However, when Clegg claims that "it was just like [him] to see only the dark side" (§ 286) and that a "doctor probably could have done little good" (§ 286) for Miranda, one is aware that Clegg denies his responsibility for Miranda's death. He suggests his problem was that he aimed "too high" (§ 287), and that he needed someone

who would actually respect him. Clegg does not realize that he has to respect himself, that the "true destiny of man is to become a magician himself" (A 213): in order to learn his own weaknesses and strengths and emerge from calibanity.

As well as being opposites in terms of language and education, Clegg and Miranda are polarities in terms of their views on sexuality. Unlike Shakespeare's Caliban, Clegg is sexually impotent. When Miranda questions him about his sexual interest in her, Clegg says: "It shocked me" (C 36). This prudish attitude towards sexuality recurs throughout the novel. While taking Miranda for a walk around the garden, Clegg becomes uncomfortable with his touching her. His desire to kiss her makes him feel awkward. The innocence that Clegg displays towards sex is subverted by his photography. Clegg believes that sex is the "other thing" that is immoral when it comes to living sexuality. He is only able to come to terms with sexuality when it is in the form of photographs, when it is dead. Clegg begins taking innocent photographs of Miranda but he evolves as an amateur pornographer. This symbolic rape suggests not only Clegg's fear of human interaction but also his abusive nature. The juxtaposition of sexual impotence and sexual abuse suggests the complex nature of Clegg's character.

The view of sexuality that Miranda displays is also problematic. Like Clegg, she is a virgin; however, she claims that she is not consumed by Victorian ideals on sex that Clegg displays. Yet, we learn that she is not willing to go to bed

with G.P. when he asks her. The one time she says that G.P. could have gone to bed with her seems to be retrospective rationalization. When confronting the possibility of being raped by Clegg, Miranda tells herself: "[D]on't resist, don't resist" (§ 127). This lack of resistance turns into an attempt on her part to weaken Clegg. She tries to seduce him in hopes of being set free. Yet her comment on the episode suggests something else: "In a nasty perverted way it was exciting" (§ 251). There appears to be a movement towards sexual awakening in Miranda that is missing in Clegg.

The two views on sexuality reveal differing views on art. Perhaps the most obvious distinction is that Miranda is "artistic" while Clegg is "scientific." Miranda views art as something that brings its subjects to life. She posits: "When you draw something it lives and when you photograph it it dies" (§ 58). For Clegg, photographs, his butterfly collection, and Miranda herself are art. The polarity between these two views is expressed in terms of life and death. Miranda tries to create and give life through her art whereas Clegg has to kill his specimens in order for him to feel creative. Even his narrative was written after Miranda's death. At one point Miranda asks Clegg to pick the best of a number of pictures. As expected, he picks "all those that looked most like the wretched bowl of fruit" (§ 141). Clegg's fear of looking beyond the superficial suggests something deep in his character, the fear of love. Described as being full of emotion, art serves as a symbol of

internal emotions and desires. Art that is "genuinely 'creative' . . . is [] nemo-killing"(A 51). That Miranda's art is becoming genuine indicates that she is confronting the nemo. However, Clegg's lack of originality signifies his being consumed by the "emptiness [he] feel[s]"(A 49).

The inability to understand the internal also poses a problem for Clegg as he realizes that Miranda is not the person he had once thought. As Miranda becomes assertive about her feelings, Clegg begins to find her less attractive. His view of women falls into two categories: virgins and whores. The anima figure that Clegg had once believed Miranda to be is subverted by her attempt to seduce him, her use of "improper" language and her never-ending battle to escape. Unlike Clegg, Miranda does show signs of progress in terms of her relationship with G.P. and within herself. At first, Miranda is smothered by the role of G.P. in her life. Miranda has accepted G.P. as an "animus" figure and has trouble separating herself from him. Miranda writes, for example, in her diary that many times she has disagreed with G.P., only to find that "a week later with someone else [she] find[s] [she's] arguing as he would"(C 153). Miranda is in a similar situation to Clegg at this point: "They both greatly admire a person of the opposite sex whom they feel disdain for but pretend to believe to be better than themselves" (Nodelman 338).

Miranda's own voice has been stifled, to some extent, by what she thinks is a better one. By appropriating G.P.'s voice,

Miranda begins to believe that she is superior to other people; she explains:

Remembering things G.P. has said to me, and other people. Knowing I am rather a special person. Knowing I am intelligent, knowing that I am beginning to understand life much better than most people of my age. Even knowing that I shall never be so stupid as to be vain about it . . . I shall never let anyone see this. Even if it is the truth, it must sound vain. (C 155)

Miranda's concern with what other people might think is her weakness. She has been concerned with how G.P. will think of her, hoping for him to like her. Also, when she brings her friends over to G.P.'s, it appears as if she is trying to impress them with her friendship with him. Miranda's desire to impress people suggests a lack of self-confidence in her character. However, as the novel progresses, she matures and learns to respect herself for her own individuality.

Early in the novel, Miranda suggests that she is not capable of being authentic. She claims that she will never be a great artist because, "[she's] not egocentric enough. [She's] a woman" (C 63). Miranda identifies herself with the patriarchal, standard definition of "woman"; therefore, the nemo grows in her in relation to her knowledge of "general and personal inequality" (A 48) in society. She also presents a number of contradictions within her own character. On the night she tries to seduce Clegg she says: "You must realize that I've sacrificed all my principles tonight" (C 111). Bruce Woodcock suggests that this scene demonstrates that Miranda is "autonomous and challenges [Clegg's] fantasies" (32). Yet, it is through her actions that

her potential for autonomy grows. Woodcock's assumption that Miranda has always been autonomous is misleading, creating a false sense of the direction of the novel. Miranda's principles suggest that she is "priggish," as Clegg claims. Early in the text she is young and does not understand herself; therefore, she is unable to comprehend Clegg. Her innocence is also seen in her views on the H-bomb: "It's despair that anyone can even contemplate the idea of dropping a bomb" (§ 142). Her belief in pacifism is challenged when she claims that "you have to break principles sometimes to survive" (§ 234). This recognition shows an advance in Miranda's character. Now she is able not only to judge Clegg but, more importantly, to judge herself. Realizing that "everything is relative" (Δ 212), Miranda has started on her journey to become her own "magician."

Throughout the novel Miranda searches for her own voice. Some of her naiveté begins to change as she matures. Her belief in the evil of the "H-bomb" changes when she realizes "being so weak seems wrong now too" (§ 126). Miranda has shown her ability to overcome her innocent principles and reveals great strength, the knowledge that "[w]e are all sometimes of the Many" (Δ 212). When she tries to escape, she realizes that she may have to kill Clegg, but goes ahead with her attempt anyway. It seems that Miranda, who had been concerned with what other people felt about her, would not have been able to do this. Her development can also be seen in her changing attitude to her mother. At first Miranda had a low opinion of her. Faced with the situation of

being a prisoner of Clegg, she realizes that she has "never given her [mother] enough sympathy. [She hadn't] given her this year . . . one half of the consideration [she has] given the beastly creature upstairs"(C 152). The potential for sympathy in Miranda suggests that she is becoming more aware of her own, and therefore other's, individuality: the "Eve" identity that is "tolerance . . . the most fundamental of all human wisdoms"(A 167). On thinking about G.P., she claims that she "would have gone to bed with him that night. . . . Not for his sake, but for being alive's"(C 202). However, this thought does not occur to Miranda until well into her captivity.

Miranda also recognizes that she has had a rather easy life compared to other people. Challenging her past, she claims that change is necessary. She explains:

All this business, it's bound up with my bossy attitude to life. I've always known where I'm going, how I want things to happen. And they have happened as I wanted, and I have taken it for granted that they have because I know where I'm going. But I have been lucky in all sorts of things.

I've always tried to happen to life; but it's time I let life happen to me. (C 250)

A shift in Miranda's character is apparent by the acknowledgment that she has been lucky. Ironically, Miranda will never have the chance to "let life happen" to her. However, the misfortune of the ending of the novel does not undermine the implications of Miranda's development. The very last thing that Miranda says to Clegg is "'I forgive you'"(C 271). As Peter Conradi suggests, "[C]ritics who emphasize the book's warm and humane morality run the risk of prettifying its perceptions"(41). That she is able

to forgive does not imply that the reader also has to forgive Clegg, but that one has to recognize Miranda for what she has become and what she might have become.

Almost two months after Miranda has been abducted by Clegg she is able to find a voice and discerns that she has not had a voice until this time. After trying to seduce Clegg, Miranda realizes that she has "done for the first time in [her] life something original"(C 254). That she is able to be genuine suggests not only development in her character, but also that she recognizes that her past was not really her own. Miranda says that the "pity Shakespeare feels for his Caliban, [she] feel[s] . . . for [hers]"(C 255). Clegg is not fully to blame as Miranda realizes that she shares responsibility for educating him. The novel does not suggest sympathy for Clegg, but does imply that it is necessary for him to be educated. Bruce Woodcock suggests that the novel "invites an almost voyeuristic interest from the reader"(27) and that the novel is "both an exercising and exorcism of power: it is after all [Fowles] who "kills" Miranda to make way for another version of the fantasy woman"(40). The novel may suggest this male ideology in Clegg, but to shift the blame onto Fowles is illogical. Woodcock's argument seems to be a justification of his own enjoyment of voyeurism with the text. Fowles's interest is "clearly with [Miranda] and all she represents in the novel"(Grace 255), the conflict between "Adam-" and "Eve-consciousness."

The death of Miranda, according to Katherine Tarbox, "serves

no purpose but to open the subject of death to the reader's reluctant mind"(56). This statement holds some truth, but Miranda's death has a much greater purpose. It implies the symbolic death of the "few" at the hand of the "many," "Eve" by "Adam," an entire group of people in society by another group. Unlike Clegg, who is unable to change, Miranda is willing to face life with the realization that she has the potential for further growth. She is "groping for her own authenticity. Her tragedy [and that of society] is that she will never live to achieve it. Her triumph is that one day she would have done so"(CQ 235).

CHAPTER 3

Cruel . . . to be Kind

. . . its events could have taken place only in a world where man considers himself superior to woman. In what the Americans call "a man's world." That is, a world governed by brute force, humourless arrogance, illusory prestige and primeval stupidity. (M 420)

"Un débauché de profession est rarement un homme pitoyable": this epigraph from the Marquis de Sade has been the root of much attention for The Magus. The De Sade epigraph has been used in arguments both attacking and defending the protagonist, Nicholas Urfe. However, in defining Fowles's feminism, one must regard the epigraph for what it is, a warning to the reader not to become enslaved to the protagonist's self-pity and self-justification, but rather to judge Nicholas's character and actions from an objective distance. Considering Fowles's view that "common man is the curse of civilization . . . And he needs education, not adulation" [emphasis added](CQ 219), one can see the same idea being developed in the novel. The narrator uses his distance from the action to comment on his decisions. Such narration suggests that there are two Nicholases, an early

Nicholas and an older one who has become more authentic. Even though the novel is a type of confession, Nicholas's character remains under close scrutiny at the end of the novel. That Nicholas's and Alison's future is uncertain forces the reader to consider what has occurred throughout novel.

Structuring the novel in three parts, London-Greece-London, Fowles suggests a circular movement through space; however, thematically the return to London presents a "new" Nicholas. To make sure that this movement is noticed, Fowles uses a few lines from Eliot's "Little Gidding": ". . . to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time"(M 71). The development of Nicholas and, to a certain extent the reader, is the central concern of the novel. That the action of the central portion of the novel takes place on an island suggests that the "island" of the self is where one is able to combat the nemo. What Fowles attempts to explain is the necessary procedures for educating the "Adam-consciousness" out of society.

Examining the power relations in The Magus, this chapter addresses Fowles's idea of feminism, his desire for an "Eve-consciousness". First, the narratology of the novel, the use of mise-en-abyme and the open ending, reveal several themes of the novel, most importantly the need for plurality. That the novel is, in Foucault's terms, a "confession" enables Fowles to suggest his own views on feminism and society and to foreground the reader's responsibility. To understand fully the importance of Nicholas's education in relation to Fowles's feminist concerns,

one must investigate Conchis's role in the process. The second aspect of this chapter focuses on Conchis as the voice of the "educated" male, the male who has confronted the "nemo" and drained the "calibanity" from his self. What these investigations lead to is Fowles's own politics and feminism. Because of the process that Nicholas undergoes, the idea of the "few" and the "elect" is considered both in social and political terms. That Nicholas is "elect" suggests his character has potential to become aware of his "calibanity." His education is the most important aspect of creating a healthy society. Yet, it is not only Nicholas who is educated, but also Alison. The education of Nicholas and Alison and the coming of the "new magus" are the final concerns of this chapter. The narrator now has the part of "magus" and attempts to educate his audience by re-creating the maze that he himself has gone through.

One of the most complex features of The Magus is the narrative technique employed by Fowles. The narrator, Nicholas, looks back on his life and his role in the "godgame," commenting on his decisions and actions from an "objective" distance. Creating somewhat of a confession, Nicholas includes Conchis's narratives to illustrate his own development. This Chinese-box structure, along with the openness of the ending, both commonplace in postmodern fiction, allows the reader to become a participant, creating a two-way discourse. The novel becomes what Catherine Belsey calls an "interrogative text . . . invit[ing] the reader to produce answers"(91). Through the

narratology of The Magus Fowles is able to foreground his political philosophy concerning power struggles.

The opening paragraph of the novel introduces not only the subject of the discourse but also the object of it. The first-person pronoun suggests that the narrator and protagonist are one and the same; however, there is a distinction between the two. After being told that Nicholas was born of middle-class parents and attended a public school, the narrator emphasizes the fact that at Oxford he "began to discover that [he] was not the person [he] wanted to be" (M 17). This suggests that the character undergoes some form of development, for it appears that the narrator intends to discuss his growth. Distinguishing between the naive Nicholas and the experienced narrator is essential to understanding the novel.

Michel Foucault says that the confession is a "ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement" (1978 61) and that it produces "intrinsic modifications" (1978 62) in the speaker. What occurs in The Magus is Nicholas's initiation into the "elect." Again, the use of the confession suggests that there are two different time periods employed. The time lapse between Nicholas's visit to Greece and his re-telling of his initiation is not stated, but it certainly is considerably later. He says of Greece: "It took me many months to understand this, and many years to accept it" (M 51). The use of binaries in the novel reinforces the dual identity of Nicholas. At school, Nicholas led "two lives" (M 18)

and Alison had "two voices"(M 26). That Alison is included in the binary is discussed later in reference to her development.

An important aspect of the pluralism of the novel is the role of the reader. Again, considering Foucault's ideas on confession, the reader is included not only in the process of constructing the novel but is given the privilege of authority. Foucault says that confession is

a ritual that unfolds within a power relationship, for one does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply the interlocutor but the authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile. (1978 61-62)

The authority in The Magus, in terms of its use as a confession, would be the reader who "hears" Nicholas's story. Having read the text, the reader then is obliged to respond to the ideas that Fowles has laid bare if the novel is to work. In The Aristos Fowles says, "I state; you, if you wish, refute"(A 13). This idea recurs in his novels as well. Not only is the reader forced to contemplate Fowles's own views, or politics, but also to reconsider his or her own.

The text draws the reader into an active role using a "mystery-story" plot, raising interest in the "godgame," practically forcing him or her to play along with Nicholas. It is understood that the narrator is aware of all the events that occurred at Bourani, but he retells them the way they happened, revealing a little of the mystery each time. The suspense created by such a technique engages the reader in the action.

The novel becomes absorbed in what can be called Fowles's socialism. Particularly, the idea of individual freedom within society is foregrounded in the novel; thus the reader's own views are brought into question in the novel. The two main ways that Fowles presents his own definition of feminism in the novel are through the characters of Nicholas and Alison. Conchis is important in this aspect as well, but this is discussed later in conjunction with Nicholas's education.

Nested in the narrative of Nicholas's experiences is the story of the magus, Conchis. Described as having the eyes of a "chess player who has made a good move" (M 87), this surrogate author is central to the book. Aspects of his past are presented throughout the novel, exposing the process through which he himself has learned to be elect. His retelling of these events demonstrate Conchis's new role as the magus, his responsibility to educate others. Unlike Nicholas, who is introduced as wanting some noble ancestry, Conchis claims that he has "forgotten" his English name. The contrast between these two characters establishes the central issue of power-relations in the novel by polarizing the two extremes: the Adam and Eve figures. Conchis presents himself as Prospero controlling his domain, whereas Nicholas characterizes himself as "not the person [he] wanted to be" (M 17) in the beginning. The purpose of Conchis's character in the novel is twofold: he acts as "divine" intervention in Nicholas's life while exemplifying the product of the education process.

Conchis's story is presented as a narrative foil to that of Nicholas. Three episodes are particularly relevant: the loaded dice experience in World War One, the religious experience at Seidevarre, and finally the experience in World War Two when Conchis is faced with having to kill the Greek prisoners. Although the novel is primarily concerned with Nicholas and his education, Conchis himself has been through a parallel process of learning. Fashioned as a mise-en-abyme, Conchis's narrative is a "nested or embedded representation, occupying a narrative level inferior to that of the primary . . . narrative . . . this nested representation resembles . . . something at the level of the primary . . . world"(McHale 124). By establishing Conchis as a man who has recognized his own potential, his right to be the magus, Fowles implies that Nicholas's education will help him to do the same.

Conchis's experiences during World War One force him to see war as a play "on our pride in our own free will"(M 125). Although such a statement appears ambiguous, Conchis clarifies it when discussing the "loaded dice" that he presented to Nicholas. He says: "'Patriotism, propaganda, professional honour, esprit de corps--what are all those things? Cogged dice"(M 129). Clearly Conchis is commenting on the impact that national ideology has on society, especially during wartime. Moreover, he is attacking the power that ideology has over one's own freedom of choice. Concerned with action, the emphasis in The Magus is "quite clearly on beginnings, not endings [but] on the moment of choice

which initiates action"(Olshen 919). Conchis attacks such an ideology when he says that "it was a thousand times better that England should be a Prussian colony" than to have a "butcher's shop of war"(M 127). Conchis developed a "mad lust not to be killed"(M 127) during the war. What he indicates by these comments is the essential desire of an individual, the desire to live; "[t]he word 'being' [is] no longer passive . . . but [becomes] active"(M 133). The result is the defeated nemo, the knowledge that "we [do] not 'not exist'"(A 49).

Conchis's visit to Seidevarre is the second experience that has an important influence on him: it presents a complicated "religious" ceremony that helps to define the meaning of the word "elect." When Nygaard is sighted at the water's edge, Conchis understands the power of Nygaard's beliefs: "He was meeting God"(M 314). Something was happening to Nygaard that only he could understand. Conchis realizes that he, too, could have a similar experience, an epiphany, for on that night he "bridged a dozen years"(M 315). This moment of recognition for Conchis forced him to reconsider reality, not in a spiritual way, but in a way that allowed mystery. Henrik Nygaard shows Conchis the meaning of freedom and the truth of authenticity. "'Henrik was a Jansenist, he believed in a divine cruelty'"(M 308), Conchis states. Through election Nygaard believed that he was "chosen to be punished and tormented"(M 308). However, what he did not understand was that "destiny is hazard"(M 308). The concern with punishment and cruelty plays an important part in Nicholas's

education as well.

The final experience that helps to form Conchis as the magus occurs during World War Two. Specifically, it is the incident when he is called upon to execute the Greek prisoners that establishes Conchis's new philosophy. After being ordered to execute the prisoners, Conchis holds the gun up "blindly" and shoots. The unloaded gun does not fire and he realizes that he is meant to club the prisoners to death. What forces Conchis to decide not to kill the prisoners is a word that he heard one of the guerillas yell: "Eleutheria: freedom"(M 441). This is the epiphany Conchis experiences. Being the only person left on the island with the freedom of choice, Conchis chose not to kill. He says that his "reason has repeatedly told [him] that [he] was wrong. Yet [his] total being still tells [him he] was right"(M 442).

That Conchis assumes the role of magus indicates that he has assumed some form of power also. The allusions to The Tempest and in particular to Conchis as a Prospero figure suggest that he does embody a special kind of power. This power originates in self-knowledge and entails a responsibility to "accept one's limited freedom, to accept one's isolation"(A 214). With this acceptance comes the obligation to guide and lead others. Unlike Shakespeare's Prospero, who has a twofold agenda, to protect his daughter Miranda and regain his dukedom, Conchis's role is singular; that is, to educate so that his student becomes authentic. The power that Conchis possesses is an invited power,

for Nicholas chooses to go to Bourani in the first place, and is always free to leave. What Conchis's actions accomplish is to help Nicholas to recognize his own flaws and his own potential. The absence of Conchis at the end of the novel is important to show that Nicholas is capable of returning to his old world as a "new" man. Nicholas must confront the nemo alone and be his own "magus."

As his name suggests, Conchis can be considered in terms of "consciousness." Characterizing him in this way, there are two aspects which need to be emphasized. As the magus, the "new male," Conchis symbolizes a collective male consciousness, or what it might become. Being a "feminist," he is the ideal of the proper social education. However, in terms of process, Conchis may be a more abstract symbol of Nicholas's own consciousness. In both cases, one of the primary concerns is the birth of a "new male consciousness." Michael Boccia claims that in "The Magus Fowles makes his strongest statement about the female and male roles in our culture"(60). However, all Boccia concludes is that "the purpose of the Godgame is to educate Nicholas to be feminist and a humanist"(60). What exactly "feminist" and "humanist" mean never receives much discussion. Finding a definition of these terms, particularly "feminism," is essential to an understanding not only of this novel, but of Fowles's other works as well. The main voice of feminism in the novel is Conchis, through his own words and actions and those of his "actors." His views on war are directly related to the differences between men and women.

Conchis believes that the two sexes are different, that females have an "intuitive humanity" (M 301) that males do not. That women see these relationships makes them a better choice for occupying power positions as they would be able to see the already existing relationships in our society that now are often ignored. Such a change would allow men to be taught to acknowledge these associations as well.

The feminism of Fowles is more than just a plea for sexual liberation of females in our society: it is also a call for mass education. Fowles says:

. . . the education in humanity, which must be designed to alleviate a chief cause of all crime, the sense of inequality that makes social irresponsibility almost a courageous revolutionary gesture, is plainly best suited to establishing such control. (A 161).

However, the novel also suggests that because of male domination in society the female must also be educated. The effect of male ideology on the female has restricted the positive elements of femininity: "To the Adam in man, woman is no more than a rapable receptacle . . . anything not based on brute power is rapable" (A 166). Therefore, caliban societies are not progressive as all "progressive philosophies are feminist" (A 166).

Placing the protagonist of The Magus, Nicholas Urfe, in a middle-class background, Fowles brings social conditioning to the forefront of the novel. The reader is immediately made aware of Nicholas's obsession with his social environment when he states that his parents were "born in the grotesquely elongated shadow, which they never rose sufficiently above history to leave, of

that monstrous dwarf Queen Victoria"(M 17). Nicholas discovered that he "lacked the parents and ancestors [he] needed"(M 17); instead, his father was a man who valued "Discipline and Tradition and Responsibility"(M 17). These references suggest Nicholas's dislike of conformity; nonetheless, he seeks some form of identity in a "wishful tradition"(M 17) of his family. Later he learns that his earlier reactions against his parents and their views were not authentic actions, but only for the sake of revolt itself.

Class consciousness and environment have created a psychological effect on Nicholas, what Fowles refers to as the "nemo." When in Greece and thinking of Alison, Nicholas contemplates suicide; he tells us:

I hated myself. I had created nothing. I belonged to nothingness, to the néant, and it seemed to me that my own death was the only thing left that I could create; and still, even then, I thought it might accuse everyone who had ever known me. (M 62)

At this point Nicholas does retreat into the hills to kill himself. As he points the gun at his head he looks "into the black O of [his] non-existence"(M 63). Both of these references allude to "man's sense of his own futility"(A 49), his "nemo." The relationship between the concern with the "nemo" and the politics of the novel is again complex. In The Aristos Fowles discusses the political nemo in terms of women's emancipation. He claims that our actions are a result of social defining and that to oppose these definitions would place one "outside" the status quo; therefore, woman may be fickle because she has "never

been allowed or expected or conditioned to be anything else"(A 57). The nemo is the result of social ideology conditioning individuals and Nicholas must learn to recognize it in order to progress. The narrator has faced his nemo; he realizes: "It was a Mercutio death [he] was looking for, not a real one"(M 64). Even Conchis is aware of this "failure" in Nicholas's character and tells him that he is "a disaster. So defeated. So pessimistic"(M 149).

Nicholas also attended Oxford, where he and his classmates "argued about being and nothingness"(M 19) and mistook "metaphorical descriptions of complex modes of feeling for straightforward prescriptions of behaviour"(M 19). The narrator is aware of his own mistaken behaviour at Oxford and is commenting not only on the philosophy itself, but also the naiveté of many university students who felt at the time that they were opposing the "system." Concerning himself with the social structure in which his protagonist is raised, Fowles establishes his concern with social conditioning. He says: "The petty, cruel and still prevalent antifeminism of Adam-dominated mankind . . . is the long afterglow of the male's once important physical superiority" (A 166).

In the early stages of the novel Nicholas recalls the time immediately preceding his employment in Greece. As Nicholas searches for work the reader learns that he wants to leave England, one of the reasons being that there was "also a girl [he] was tired of"(M 20). That he was "also tired" of Janet

indicates a condescending view of her, and of women in general. Leaving England is his way of separating himself from Janet without having to face her himself. Nicholas's sexist attitude is described again when he indicates that his "'technique' [with women] was to make a show of unpredictability, cynicism, and indifference. Then . . . [he] produced the solitary heart"(M 23). Furthermore, he "didn't collect conquests . . . It was like being good at golf, but despising the game"(M 23). His boredom and the need for the belief in having control are symptoms of the nemo.

The first relationship that the reader is exposed to is Nicholas's affair with Alison. The day after their first meeting, and their sexual encounter, Alison asks him if he thinks she is a tramp. "Yes, you are a tramp," he thinks to himself, "and even worse, you exploit your tramp-hood"(M 32). That Nicholas is employing the traditional double-standard, assuming that she is a tramp for acting the same way he has, indicates his true feelings about Alison: he sees her as a sexual toy, nothing more. He even says that she is "cheaper than central heating"(M 38). As the relationship progresses, Nicholas's attitude does not change much. He still remains the individual who is in control; he says: "I felt I was teaching her, anglicizing her accent, polishing off her roughness"(M 37). In fact, he seems to be trying to create the "acceptable" woman; however, it is she who does the teaching when it comes to sexual matters. This fantasy relationship for Nicholas exemplifies his characteristic

chauvinism, his inability to view women as individuals.

Nicholas's feeling upon leaving Alison, and England, is one of escape and a "desire to celebrate [his] release"(M 50).

Nicholas's fear of his nemo ultimately drives him away from responsibility. At the end of the novel, Nicholas appears to have exorcized his nemo. He recalls his meeting with Mitford, the student Conchis could not help: "I disliked Mitford because he was crass and mean, but even more because he was a caricature, an extension, of certain qualities in myself"(M 627).

Realizing that Nicholas's character has been defined in terms of a sexist upon his arrival in Greece is important. His mother never argued with his father and "always behaved as if [his father] were listening in the next room"(M 17). This type of female "obedience" indicates the "caliban" childhood in which Nicholas grew up. The lengths to which Fowles goes to establish this fact suggests that the education he receives from Conchis at Bourani is meant to help Nicholas develop towards a more "progressive" or "Eve-consciousness." Nicholas's education begins when he meets Maurice Conchis and is told he is "elect," with "many things to discover"(M 90). What "elect" means is rather ambiguous. At first Nicholas is elect because Conchis chooses him to be elect. Conchis tells Nicholas that "Greece is like a mirror. It makes you suffer. Then you learn"(M 101). Conchis has not been successful in all his attempts to educate. However, if one is to learn, apparently one must pay a price.

Nicholas's education has been one that has not been without

pain. At one point Nicholas says that for "weeks [he] had the sense of being taken apart, disconnected from a previous self"(M 393). This statement suggests both the pain that he experiences as well as the potential for growth. However, Conchis realizes, because he himself is elect, that it is his responsibility to help Nicholas, and that the pain is a small price for education. Conchis is the one who sets up the "metatheatre" at Bourani and brings Nicholas through the initiation. By allowing Nicholas to experience a number of episodes in which he must make choices, Conchis pushes Nicholas to confront life and death. The first test that Nicholas encounters occurs in the dice-throwing episode. Throwing the dice and risking death suggests a willingness to reach for something, to be able to say, "I risked death"(M 128), and survived. Both his willingness to play the game and his refusal to accept death by swallowing the poisoned pill after he loses imply that Nicholas wants an active "being," an authentic existence.

The main vehicle for Nicholas's education at Bourani is Julie. Upon first seeing her, Nicholas is intrigued by her beauty; and Conchis uses this fact to educate Nicholas. Acting as an innocent pawn in Conchis's "godgame," Julie seduces Nicholas to the point that he believes he is in love with her. At one point he is lying in bed and imagines "Julie coming to [him] there . . . a willing rape"(M 238). What is important is that Nicholas believes that Julie desires him sexually. This fantasy permeates the novel, even when Conchis warns him against

it. Conchis knows that Julie will never be a victim to Nicholas, as were many other women. Even more importantly Conchis knows that by telling Nicholas not to indulge in his fantasies about Julie, he will. This form of manipulation is what lures Nicholas further into the godgame.

The next episode that Conchis establishes for Nicholas involves hypnotism. Similar both to Conchis's lessons during World War One concerning "being" and Henrik Nygaard's experience with "god," the hypnotism allows Nicholas to confront that which he has "no desire to state or define"(M 244). Under hypnosis, Nicholas stares into the night sky at a star "both breeding and needing the void around it"(M 242). He recognizes a similarity between the star and himself: "We were poised, exactly equal weights"(M 242). This illusion is broken by a wind breaking over his face, blowing "from all directions at the same time"(M 243). At this moment Nicholas realizes that life is inter-connected, that the wind became light and that light "became mere secondaries, roads to the present state . . . of pure being"(M 243). This "religious" experience shows Nicholas that mystery, "or unknowing, is energy"(A 28) and is essential in life, that life is dominated by hazard. He was "aware of existing, and this being aware of existing became more significant"(M 243).

The final, and most important, stage of Nicholas's education is the trial. It is here that Nicholas, and the reader, are given several "psychological" analyses of his character in terms of sex and power. These three analyses constitute more than a

characterization of Nicholas, for they also represent definitions of certain ills in society. In the one selected here, Dr. Ciardi, one of the actor/psychiatrists, says:

I predict that breast-fixated men like the subject will become the norm. We are entering an amoral and permissive era in which self-gratification in the form of high wages and a wide range of consumer goods obtained and obtainable against a background of apparently imminent universal doom will be available. (M 520)

Apart from the economic aspects of this analysis, the idea of "Adam-consciousness" is apparent, although overstated and constructed to cut deeply into Nicholas. That mere self-gratification is becoming the "norm" suggests a social illness, one that is also found in Nicholas and his attitudes towards women. Such passages indicate the political nature of the novel, that Nicholas's "selfishness and social inadequacy have been determined by his past" (M 521). In his education at Bourani, Nicholas has been told that it is "the self that must not be betrayed" (M 135), that he must recognize the dividing line within the individual.

Following the different analyses of himself, Nicholas is given the opportunity to seek revenge on Julie for using him the way she did. His opportunity comes in a flogging frame and whip. Nicholas is given the chance to flog Julie because she represents why he feels betrayed. As with Conchis's decision not to shoot the villagers during the war, Nicholas also chooses not to act. His motivation is not quite clear: because he thinks his action is being double-guessed by the others, his decision is influenced

by this knowledge. Despite his anger, he realizes that he "was not holding a cat in [his] hand in an underground cistern, [he] was in a sunlit square ten years before and in [his] hands [he] held a German sub-machine-gun"(M 526). Again "doubling" becomes important in the parallel with Conchis. The magus's experience implies that the decision Nicholas makes will decide whether he is truly "elect" or not. It appears that Nicholas is successful in his decision, for it is the same decision Conchis himself made: his "freedom too was in not striking"(M 526).

A final stage of Nicholas's education is his "disintoxication." The purpose of this process is to free him from his attachment to Julie and allow him to return to his regular life, void of emotional anger and hatred. This is achieved in part by forcing him to watch a film of Julie and Joe having sex. However, he claims that he now knows Julie's "real name" and that he does not forgive her but feels more rage with her. Bruce Woodcock suggests that her real name is Eve, which would lead one to think that Nicholas has not changed very much. However, considering Fowles's own version of the myth of the Fall, this idea becomes more complex. Woodcock says that "Eve, the fatal woman, was made responsible"(66) for the Fall of man. One must remember that in Fowles's mind Eve represents "the assumption of human responsibility, of the need to progress and the need to control progress"(A 165). Julie, at this point, represents for Nicholas his own lack of authenticity, his need to be defined.

At the heart of Nicholas's education process lies Conchis, the magus. Not only does he serve as a teacher, but he is also the example that Fowles provides to illustrate a male who recognizes both the need for the emancipation of women in society and the responsibility he has because of this knowledge. As with The Collector, Fowles alludes to The Tempest in this novel. The role of Prospero is performed at first by Conchis with the meta-theatre at Bourani. His seeming manipulation of Nicholas is similar to Prospero's control over Ferdinand and Miranda. Conchis, like Shakespeare's character, exercises his control in order to aid Nicholas on his journey. Both Ferdinand and Nicholas participate in "tests" to evaluate their character. There is finally an implication of a third Prospero figure, Nicholas's own self. In The Aristos, Fowles says that "the dividing line between the Few and the Many must run through each individual, not between individuals" (A 9-10). To this end Conchis attempts to educate Nicholas. Nicholas's early inability to recognize this is the reason for his unwillingness to remain in a relationship and his ultimate attitude towards women. Again, one recalls his upbringing amidst Victorian values and realizes the impact of his family's "wishful tradition" (M 17) that they were descendants of the aristocratic Honoré d'Urfé. Nicholas's progress has allowed him to seek his identity not in the past but in his own present self, where a dividing line between the "few" and the "many" is forged.

More than a simple teacher for Nicholas, Conchis is also an

instructor for the reader. A relevant aspect of his teachings for our purpose is on war. Conchis equates war with the fact that men are in a power position in society. With biting satire he says that "men love war because it allows them to look serious. Because they imagine it is the one thing that stops women laughing at them. In it they can reduce women to the status of objects" (M 420). He continues by saying that the difference between men and women is that men "see objects, women see the relationship between objects," and that war is "a psychosis caused by an inability to see relationships" (M 420). What Fowles is discussing here is the "Eve-" and "Adam-consciousness" that are working in society. The overstatement employed by Conchis forces the reader to consider the "Adamic" society in which he lives. That Nicholas chooses not to whip Julie shows he has begun his journey "to learn one's particular powers, and then with them to humanize the whole" (A 214).

Along with the education of Nicholas there is also that of Alison. Although Alison's process is not depicted in the novel, one is aware of some differences in her character at the end of the book. Early in the novel Alison is described as being nemo-ridden. The guilt she feels because of her sexuality makes her think that she will be an "Australian slut for ever" (M 31). Again, as with Nicholas, Alison claims to want to commit suicide because of her anger with Nicholas for thinking she had slept with Pete, her old boyfriend. What Alison is actually angry with is herself. She is, at this point, being defeated by her own

nemo. What Fowles has done with Alison is create a foil, another "doubling," for Nicholas. While Nicholas is being educated at Bourani, he is told that Alison has died. The exact situation of her "death" and "rebirth" is not revealed to the reader, but the suggestion is that Alison has also undergone some sort of "godgame". When Alison returns at the end of the novel, she appears to be without her old feelings of inadequacy. Instead, when Nicholas slaps her she turns to him and tells him she hates him. This simple gesture is quite different from what one would have expected from the earlier Alison, who would have thought that she deserved such treatment.

If we can assume Conchis is a Prospero figure, then there ought to be a Caliban and Ferdinand as well. Nicholas fills both of these roles quite well. Assuming Julie is Miranda, then one can view him as Ferdinand because of the game that "Prospero" plays with the two "lovers." However, considering Nicholas' attitudes towards women early in the novel, he, like Clegg, resembles Caliban. In The Collector the protagonist does not appear to develop in any way at all due to his inability to change, but Nicholas shows at least a few signs of developing an "Eve-consciousness." By the end of the novel it is not clear how far Nicholas has progressed in his metamorphoses, but the fact that he retells his story many years later suggests that he has progressed. Like The Tempest, The Magus contains elements of the traditional "comic structure," suggestive of marriage. That Miranda and Ferdinand are to be married in the play suggests a

similar conclusion for the novel. The possibility of a "marriage" is suggested by the final words of the novel: "cras amet qui nunquam amavit/quique amavit cras amet"(M 668), which can be translated as "May he who has never loved love tomorrow, and may he who is loved love tomorrow." The union expected at the end of this "comedy" is found in the form of "an anagram made flesh"(M 668). Nicholas has begun the journey to become the new "magus" and, by recounting his experiences, is attempting to teach his audience.

The relationships with Alison at the beginning of the novel and the liaison in Athens indicate Nicholas is a Caliban figure. He uses Alison for his own personal enjoyment, like Shakespeare's character wanting to "people[] . . . [t]his isle with Calibans"(I.ii.350-1). Caliban is offensive to society--he attempted to rape Miranda--and Nicholas does assume this role in the early part of the novel, claiming quietly to "rape the island"(M 65). In the play, Prospero educated Caliban to use language but his 'profit on't/Is, [he only knows] how to curse"(I.ii.363-364). In The Magus, Conchis's education gives Nicholas the choice to be authentic. However, at the end of the novel it appears that Nicholas is ready to accept Alison for who she is. Unlike Caliban, Nicholas has found a sense of his own identity in Conchis's lessons. Nicholas's writing of the story suggests he has found a new language of self.

In light of Fowles's theory that the nemo is a "human psychic force"(A 48), one realizes that his feminism not only

includes the education of the male but also the female. Alison is introduced into the novel with "calibanity" in her character, just as Nicholas was. That she must change suggests that the modern woman has the responsibility to adjust her own "maleness" or "Adam-consciousness." Changing the cause of masculine ideology is not sufficient; one must also seek to repair its effects. Here Fowles reaches one of his most political statements, claiming that society defines what we are, and to change society also requires changing those in it.

Nicholas's slapping of Alison at the end of the work does not allow the reader to accept Nicholas readily as the "new male." However, that the story is being told many years after the action suggests that, now, he has become one of the "few." The narrator even calls the earlier Nicholas the "antihero" (M 657), suggesting a critical awareness of his past mistakes. One concludes that the narrator and the character at the end of the novel are not necessarily at the same point in their development. That is, the narrator has obtained his freedom. Seemingly a humanist novel, The Magus subtly mixes concerns of individual freedom with socialism. The political nature of the novel allows the reader to become engaged in the novel, and, through the "godgame," life.

Feminism in The Magus may be, as Boccia claims, Fowles's strongest statement about power relations in society. However, the novel is also a textbook on educating "Adam-consciousness" out of people and allowing them to realize their potential and

the potential of society. The main social illness in our society is the lack of a female voice, of progress. The Magus is John Fowles's political statement on social change and individual freedom. According to Fowles, allowing individuals their freedom is the only way to unite those same individuals. Both Nicholas and Alison have become members of the group he labels the "few." Their self-realization has allowed them to return to where they began, and "know the place for the first time" (M 71).

Chapter Four

Freedom Beyond the Pale

Where it was universally maintained that women do not have orgasms: and yet every prostitute was taught to simulate them. Where there was an enormous progress and liberation in every other field of human activity; and nothing but tyranny in the most personal and fundamental. (FW 212)

Fowles's third published novel, The French Lieutenant's Woman, addresses a number of concerns that are introduced in his earlier works. In this work, the concern with the feminine voice is addressed more fully than in The Collector where the only female voice, Miranda, has her diary embedded in Clegg's narrative. The protagonist of the novel, Sarah Woodruff, acts as surrogate author, affording her the power of narration within the confines of the text proper. She "writes for herself a freedom 'beyond the pale'" (Hagen 446). The French Lieutenant's Woman also addresses the influence, the presence, of history in our society. George Steiner posits that it is "not the literal past that rules us," but it is "images of the past. These are often as highly structured and selective as myths" (13). In this novel, Fowles examines the Victorian Age in terms of his own society,

commenting on the social illness that he sees in it. The book's epigraph from Marx indicates the political drive of the novel: "Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself." Another, less quoted epigraph helps to focus this concern:

Now, what if I am a prostitute, what business has society to abuse me? Have I received any favours at the hands of society? If I am a hideous cancer in society, are not the causes of the disease to be sought in the rottenness of the carcass? Am I not its legitimate child; no bastard, Sir? (FW 235)

Relating the plight of individuals, especially women, in society to social ideology makes The French Lieutenant's Woman's primary focus a feminist one.

Examining the politics of feminism in the novel, this chapter addresses the constructed male-dominated ideology that Fowles criticizes. Postmodernist theory is used to investigate the nature of power within the narrative and how it reflects the thematic concerns of the novel, "how the meanings and values of that world have been constructed and how, therefore, they can be challenged or changed" (Waugh 34). Frederick Holmes suggests that "Fowles sensitizes the reader to the fictionality of his work in order to emphasize his view that all of life is a web of fictions" (191). The second aspect of this chapter addresses the nature of "historiographic metafiction." By setting the novel in 1867, Fowles is able to show the existence of the nemo in both Victorian times as well as his own. Foucault's idea of "historical ontology" is discussed in relation to Fowles's employment of nineteenth-century history in the novel. Finally,

the relationship between Sarah and Charles is viewed in terms of author and character/reader. The quest for freedom for both of these characters rests on the metafictional concept of the relationship between fiction and reality.

Fowles posits that the genesis of the novel was "an obsessive image [he had] of a woman with her back turned, looking out to sea" (CL 464) who "represented a reproach on the Victorian Age" (HM 88). The choice to set the novel in Victorian times was not a conscious one. Not knowing the Victorian age "in the historian's sense very well, [he does] know the by-ways, the psychological side" (ML 190-1). However, Fowles does realize why he would "unconsciously" choose this age, claiming: "[He] also had to come to terms with [his] own hatred of it" (ML 191). Fowles admits to the social conditioning that he and "every English child of [his] generation . . . grew up with" (ML 191).

Once the writing was started, however, it became "an exercise in technique . . . a complex bit of literary gymnastics" (IM 36). As well as borrowing literary pieces from writers of the age, Fowles also structures his novel using some conventions of the Victorian novel. The interruption of sequences of events and of the change of location from chapter to chapter is similar to the serialized novels of the nineteenth century. For example, Chapter 8 ends with Charles preparing to return from Undercliff, leading the reader to expect Charles's reunion with Ernestina in the following chapter. However, Chapter 9 begins with a description of Mrs. Poultney.

Also borrowed from the Victorian writers is the practice of using an intrusive and omniscient narrator. Having a "cinematic eye," the narrator freely moves from one character to another, describing events that are happening simultaneously. Fowles realizes that "of course the novelist is a god"(NR 35). That the narrator of The French Lieutenant's Woman claims that he is only writing in a "convention universally accepted at the time of [his] story"(FW 80) demonstrates that the novel is "the ultimate con"(NR 35) game. Fowles has created "a 'Victorian' novel that is a contemporary novel 'about' the Victorian novel"(Eddins 48). The playfulness Fowles displays concerning narrative indicates his interest in the construction of discourse, as well as his response to current literary theory concerning the role of the author.

Incorporating these conventions into the text, Fowles then challenges them. Claiming that "the Victorian age . . . was highly existentialist in many of its personal dilemmas"(HM 90), he propagates his quasi-existential philosophy of freedom by having his characters contest both the socialization of the age and their limited freedom as fictional personas. The mixture of history and fiction is characteristic of the postmodern novel. Linda Hutcheon argues that both history and fiction "derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs"(105). The interrelation of these two types of discourses allows Fowles the means to criticize modern society in an historic novel.

Mahmoud Salami posits that the real strength of The French Lieutenant's Woman "resides in its metafictional self-consciousness [] and in the way it addresses the reader and connects him/her with the world outside the text"(107). Fowles is able to do this by employing a number of narrative techniques that force the reader to question his own role in the novel. First, by challenging the concept of the author as a godlike figure, Fowles lays bare the power position of the reader as constructor of the text. Brian McHale calls this "laying bare the processes by which the readers, in collaboration with texts, construct fictional worlds and objects"(100). Second, Fowles is able to transcend time, ignoring boundaries, allowing the "narrator [to] represent[] the hindsight made possible by history, and in this way facilitate[] the illumination of the past in the optic of the present"(Cooper 105). Finally, Fowles creates a Chinese-box structure giving Sarah the role of author within the text. All three processes help develop the novel's concerns with politics as well as forcing the reader to become an active participant.

After twelve chapters of straightforward third-person narration, the "author" invades his text in Chapter Thirteen. Ending the twelfth chapter with the questions "Who is Sarah? Out of what shadows does she come?"(FW 80), the author shocks the reader by claiming, "I do not know"(FW 80). Immediately the characters, and the reader, are given a kind of autonomy. However, the author does claim some accountability for what is

allowed in the text, for "possibility is not permissibility"(FW 81). The author also refers to the reader as "you," indicating the "presence of a communicative circuit linking addressor and addressee"(McHale 223). Thus, the reader is brought into the text as a character much as the author physically enters the text later on the train.

Claiming that the only good definition of God is "the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist"(FW 82), the author, as "god", although not dispossessed of his power, understands his limitations. In Foucault's terms, the author is "reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence"(1984 102). Self-referential, the novel is constructed "less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier"(1984 102-03). Arguing that a text consists of multiple writings, Roland Barthes states that "there is a site where this multiplicity is collected, and this site is not the author . . . but the reader" (59). Using intertexts--various discourses from Victorian literature, history and philosophy--Fowles is able to foreground the reader. The most common form of intertext in the novel is the use of epigraphs to show that "the novel's narrative is representational but not referential"(Salami 109). These borrowed discourses foreground the work as artifice, an attempt to reconstruct possible history.

Brian McHale says, when the postmodernist author "appears to know that s/he is only a function, s/he chooses to behave . . . like a subject"(201). In The French Lieutenant's Woman the

author claims not to be a subject but to be a function, the most important perhaps bridging one hundred years of history. The story of Sarah and Charles is set in 1867, yet the author lives "in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes" (FW 80). Linda Hutcheon posits that the postmodern novel "suggests that to re-write or to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present" (110). In the novel Fowles not only "opens up" history to the present, but blurs the boundaries between past and present. Apart from the authorial intrusion into the text on behalf of the author, we also note the physical appearance of the author of 1967 in the actions of 1867. We see the bearded creator enter the action as an observer twice in the novel: first on the train to London and again at the home of the Rossettis. The author claims that he has "pretended to slip back into the year 1867; but of course that year is a century past" (FW 317-18).

What such movement from the author suggests, apart from his power over the text, is the likeness of the two ages. David Gross says that the "historical past, by being inserted directly or indirectly into a novel at certain crucial points in the narrative, can provide a striking commentary on the present by the simple power of contrast" (19). In The French Lieutenant's Woman this is the case. Using the Victorian age as foil for his own, Fowles comments on modern society in the novel. However, the opposite is also true. By inserting an author into the historical text, Fowles is positioning the present within the

past. Blurring the boundaries of time, Fowles allows himself much more freedom to comment on the modern world: "time was the great fallacy; existence was without history, was always now, was always this being caught in the same fiendish machine"(FW 165). Fowles is not suffering from what Russell Jacoby calls "social amnesia" or "society's repression of remembrance--society's own past"(5), but realizes that much of the past exists in the present. Foucault says that in criticizing the past we must,

on the one hand, open up a realm of historical inquiry and, on the other, put itself to the test of reality. . . . This means the historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical. (1984 46)

For Fowles, "time is a function of matter; and matter therefore is the clock that makes infinity real"(A 25). The "matter" of the past, and of the present, is what Fowles is concerned with in the novel.

Foucault begins his work, The History of Sexuality: An Introduction, by stating that, "for a long time, the story goes, we supported a Victorian regime, and we continue to be dominated by it even today"(1978 3). In The French Lieutenant's Woman, Fowles shows how we are dominated by Queen Victoria, the "monstrous dwarf" of the age. Using the Victorian period as a mirror for post-World War Two society, Fowles examines the calibanity of both periods and the influence of it on the individual, particularly women. He considers the Victorian age to be a time of contradictions, an "age where woman was sacred; and where you could buy a thirteen-year-old girl for a few

pounds"(FW 211). It was a time of "duty" and "responsibility," a time where convention was more important than authenticity. Here the nemo becomes an intricate part of the characters in the novel. The expectations society has of the individual caused a malaise in these individuals. The author tells us of Charles: "His statement to himself should have been, 'I possess this now, therefore I am happy,' instead of what it so Victorianly was: 'I cannot possess this forever, and therefore am sad'"(FW 60). What is at issue in this novel is "the relationship between a psychological and historical dimension"(Jacoby 98). It appears that Fowles is allowing the nemo into social psychology. The conventions of the time, "duty," and the fear of God (as with Mrs. Poulteney) dictated to many individuals their roles in society.

The French Lieutenant's Woman is the nearest Fowles comes to writing an explicitly political novel. Charles Mosley posits that the political novel "tends to feature ministerial and parliamentary life"(46). In his novel, Fowles is able to suggest these themes by using epigraphs, particularly those of Marx and Darwin, reminding the reader of the political climates and movements of the time. Moreover, in the background of the novel is a reminder of the 1832 Reform Bill and the inclusion of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, key events in "working out that awful straight-jacketed, puritanical aspect of the Victorian age"(CL 464). Victorian society, to Fowles, was controlled by the nemo. Complying with convention was the only means of being accepted by

society. Gentlemen of the time had a "profound humorlessness (called by the Victorians earnestness, moral rectitude, probity, and a thousand other misleading names)" (FW 20). In terms of sexuality, copulation was seen as an act of "Duty": "[Ernestina] sometimes wondered why God had permitted such a bestial version of Duty to spoil such an innocent longing" (FW 29). The protocol expected from both men and women was considered to be the only way to keep society "civilized," safe from "caliban." However, as can be discovered from the novel, the opposite occurs. Charles is said to lack both passion and imagination: "This dismissive double equation was Charles's greatest defect--and here he stands truly for his age" (FW 153).

The character of Mrs. Poulteney also exposes some of the conventions of Victorian England. Claiming that there "would have been a place in the Gestapo for the lady" (FW 23), the narrator describes her as a woman with two obsessions: "One was Dirt...and the other was Immorality" (FW 22). Being a God-fearing woman, Mrs. Poulteney believed in hell. Due to this position, she had to allow the "French Lieutenant's Whore" into her home because "there was God to be accounted to" (FW 33). Positive actions brought about by the wrong reasons seem to be Mrs. Poulteney's, and perhaps the Victorians', motives for acting. What occurs in The French Lieutenant's Woman is the challenge of such conventions. Most prominent is the character of Sarah. Being named after her, the novel is obviously concerned with her development. While she and Charles both figure in the thematic

concerns of the novel, Sarah is much more involved in the narrative structure of the work. In Sarah, Fowles "creates a positive role model . . . a woman of imagination, intelligence, daring, and moral integrity"(Byrd 306). The story of the novel hinges on her being the "French Lieutenant's Whore," the surrogate author. She is in fact the "magus" of the novel's world, creating a reality, her encounter with the French Lieutenant, and allowing others to "act" within that reality.

Patricia Hagen states that, "by re-writing herself as a 'fallen woman,' Sarah rejects the roles constructed for her by Victorian convention and writes for herself a freedom"(446). Establishing Sarah as the surrogate author of the text plays an important role in considering the political nature of the novel. It has been suggested that "Fowles wants to represent the development of such a feminist consciousness and yet he does not give Sarah a voice"(Michael 233). However, considering the important role Sarah plays, essentially dictating the text to the other characters, one must realize that Sarah does indeed have a voice. While Fowles believes there is an essential difference between men and women in terms of emotions, logic, and sensibility, Sarah's "voice" can not be transmitted in a conventional manner. Her thoughts and feelings are not offered to the reader unless she wishes it so. Philip Cohen suggests that, by "placing a veil between Sarah's thoughts and the reader, the narrator may be respecting her autonomy, but someone is keeping the book's structure intact"(158). Yet, Sarah's

"autonomy" serves a second purpose: not only does it structure the novel, it also shows Fowles's concern with the emancipation of women.

As with Miranda in The Collector, Sarah is an artist. She has consciously created a world in which she can freely choose her destiny. Two such choices are especially important in the text: her choice to lie about the French lieutenant and her decision at the end of the novel to live without a relationship with a man. The former allows her freedom from the conventions of Victorian society. She is a social outcast; yet she becomes "authentic," existentially speaking, due to the freedom she creates for herself. In terms of a political concern, Sarah becomes the "new" woman, the woman who escapes the "Adam-consciousness" that defines society. Magali Michael posits that the novel "wants to assert the theme of feminism and yet fails as a feminist novel"(225). Although the novel does not construct a discourse "in which words acquire new meanings which validate and celebrate a new, positive version of women"(Weedon 9) it does assert feminist themes. By making herself the surrogate author, Sarah has challenged male power. The two male characters who are closest to Sarah are Charles and Dr. Grogan. Grogan claims that Sarah suffers from "[m]elancholia as plain as measles"(FW 126) and that she "wants to be a sacrificial victim"(FW 127). Ironically Grogan is fairly accurate in his diagnosis. However, Sarah is not "melancholy" because of the French lieutenant, as Grogan believes. Her despair comes from being "allowed to live

in paradise, but forbidden to enjoy it"(FW 138). To achieve freedom in "paradise" Sarah creates the story of the French lieutenant,

so that [she] should never be the same again. [She] did it so that people should point at [her], should say, there walks the French Lieutenant's Whore. . . . So that they should know [she has] suffered, and suffer[s], as others suffer in every town and village in this land. (FW 142)

Such a statement shows concern with the social position of women and the domination masculine society has over women. Identified with women in other towns, Sarah becomes Fowles's voice for female emancipation.

In the first of the two endings Sarah suggests her role as artist. When confronted by Charles she claims that she has "seen artists destroy work that might to the amateur seem perfectly good . . . [she] was told that if an artist is not his own sternest judge he is not fit to be an artist"(FW 351). She justifies destroying any possible relationship with Charles because it contained a "falsehood in it"(FW 351). What is important is that Sarah, given the opportunity to wed Charles, declines. Unlike Ernestina, who was prepared to become the dutiful wife, Sarah is not. "I have found new affections," she says, "[b]ut they are not of the kind you suggest"(FW 350). Sarah continues: "I do not wish to marry. . . . I do not want to share my life. I wish to be what I am"(FW 352-3). Brunilda Lemos suggests that "only the last [ending] fulfills our expectations of Sarah"(87). In this ending, Charles hurries out into the streets, leaving Sarah and his child. By not marrying, Sarah has

defeated the Victorian convention that has tried to define her.

Unlike both Clegg and Nicholas, Charles is a wealthy, educated man. However, these characters are similar in that all lost their parents at a fairly young age. Charles's mother dies when he is only a year old, leaving him alone with his father. Considering that the story of the novel occurs in 1867, it is likely that Charles was still in his late teens or early twenties when his father died in 1856. However, what appears to be more important in shaping Charles's character is the Victorian Age itself. Being raised to be a gentleman, Charles was largely unmotivated. The narrator says:

Laziness was, I am afraid, Charles's distinguishing trait. Like many of his contemporaries he sensed that the earlier self-responsibility of the century was turning into self-importance: that what drove the new Britain was increasingly a desire to seem respectable, in the place of the desire to do good for good's sake. (FW 19)

What Charles was facing was the nemo, his desire to be a "somebody." In short, he had "all the Byronic ennui with neither of the Byronic outlets" (FW 19).

Pamela Cooper suggests that "it is in relation to Charles, therefore, that Sarah (at least within the framework of the book) assumes her full narrational function--a function that defines him by association as a reader" (123). Like Nicholas in The Magus, Charles becomes both a reader and character in Sarah's text. Woodcock posits that Sarah is "the mystery woman who is both a male fantasy and the catalyst for male redemption" (92). However, considering Sarah had already positioned herself as the

"fallen" woman before Charles's arrival in Lyme Regis, one cannot claim that Charles made Sarah anything. Unknowingly, though, it is Sarah who creates a world for Charles. That Charles should become interested in Sarah, and eventually break his engagement with Ernestina, suggests that he is not content with his present situation. Even if Charles's character is not the most likable of Fowles's male protagonists, at least he does realize that he is becoming too willing to remain within the conventions of society. This perhaps explains Charles's fascination with Sarah. She is a woman who has defied convention, or so he believes.

Sarah does become the catalyst for Charles's potential redemption in the novel. Yet, it is he who initiates this process. Being intrigued by Sarah's position, Charles sets out to live up to "his original chivalrous intention: to show the poor woman that not everybody in her world was a barbarian" (FW 74). As the novel is postmodernist, it is fitting that Charles becomes the "reader." As well, the reader of the novel and Charles discover Sarah's fabrication simultaneously during the climax of the novel. Up to this point, "Charles . . . views Sarah less as author than as text; reading Sarah as one reads a novel . . . he continually constructs and revises his hypotheses about her" (Hagen 445). Like Nicholas, Charles believes that he is in control of his situation, that his choices are made of free will. Both of these protagonists leave their lovers for other women who are "fictionalized." However, Charles does not have the knowledge that there is a "godgame" occurring.

Charles's freedom occurs in a rather atypical manner. His uncle having decided to marry, Charles loses the much expected money he would have received from the will. Ernestina's father offers a proposal to Charles that consists of becoming a partner in the family business. More than just pride overtakes Charles in refusing the offer; the nemo again confronts him:

Charles did indeed by this time feel like a badly stitched sample napkin, in all ways a victim of evolution. Those old doubts about the futility of his existence were only too easily reawakened. He guessed now what Mr. Freeman really thought of him: he was an idler. And what he proposed him: that he should earn his wife's dowry. . . . It was to Charles as if he had travelled all his life among pleasant hills; and now came to a vast plain of tedium--and unlike the more famous pilgrim, he saw only Duty and Humiliation down there below--most certainly not Happiness or Progress. (FW 228)

There are two ways to confront and destroy the nemo: "[He] can conform or [he] can conflict" (A 50). Charles's final decision is to rebel. He breaks off his engagement with Ernestina, leaving his potential father-in-law's money, and attempts to begin a relationship with Sarah. As has been suggested, it was not Sarah who willingly deceived Charles, but it was Charles himself who realized that he needed to break with the conventions that were being dictated to him. However, Charles remains confused about this sudden turn of events. He says: "If you only knew the mess my life was in . . . the waste of it . . . the uselessness of it. I have no moral purpose, no real sense of duty to anything" (FW 180). Sarah's final rejection of his proposal seems the best possible solution for Charles. After leaving the Rossetti's, he now begins to pace, a man behind the invisible gun

carriage on which rests his own corpse. He walks towards an imminent, self-given death? [The narrator] think[s] not; for [Charles] has at last found an atom of faith in himself, a true uniqueness. (FW 366)

He has started to challenge the nemo and endure life.

Having been criticized by Bruce Woodcock for being a "camouflage for the voyeur in [Fowles]"(81), The French Lieutenant's Woman, like The Magus, investigates the need for change within the male ideology of society. Even though Charles may have seen Sarah as "the enigma of his Oedipal quest"(Woodcock 99) early in the novel, the final ending suggests not the oppression of Sarah, but her emancipation. How Charles views Sarah is a comment on his character, on male character, not a comment on her. Sarah has gained her autonomy from Victorian convention and from the reader. She has collapsed "all the incrustations, however formed, that hide what [she] really feel[s] and what [she] really think[s]"(A 176).

Chapter Five

The Eternal Torment

I could fill a book with reasons, and they would all be true, though not true of all. Only one same reason is shared by all of us: we wish to create worlds as real as, but other than the world that is. (FW 81)

Fowles asserts that art is "a human shorthand of knowledge"(A 151) meant to "humanize the whole"(A 214). A novelist of "being," his work has "an inclusiveness rare in today's fiction"(Wolfe 111). Because of this "inclusiveness," the mixture of existentialism, humanism, socialism and postmodernism, it is difficult to label the author. Openly admitting that he believes in "[b]iological elitism"(CL 468) while maintaining that he "hope[s] the Marxist element in this country will grow"(CL 469), Fowles realizes the paradoxical nature of these beliefs and admits that this plurality is an "eternal torment"(PR 51) for him. However, because of this ambiguity, the novels are also quests for Fowles himself. Believing that the dividing line between the "few" and the "many," between "Adam" and "Eve," needs to be dismantled in order for society to progress, Fowles suggests that these constructed

obstacles weaken the relationship of the individual and society; maintaining the dividing line leads only to a stagnant society.

Critics vary in their assessments of Fowles's works. Jeff Rackham suggests that Fowles's novels are "undeniably brilliant intrigues, intricately plotted and emotionally tense"(89), whereas Bruce Woodcock argues that Fowles's analysis of male power "remains moral, rather than political"(13-14). A "serious philosophical writer"(Hill 211), Fowles admits that entertainment is a legitimate function of the novel; yet "didactic teaching"(MA 4) seems essential to him. The real strength in John Fowles's writing, however, lies in the nexus of form and content, in its honesty and its conviction. Perhaps Joyce Carol Oates describes him best when she calls him "half scholar and half magus"(qtd. in Wolfe 114).

Fowles's attempts at "enlarging or focusing sensibility [and] changing climates"(RI 114) are evident in his fiction but do not undermine the aesthetics of the works. Rooted firmly in biological elitism, Fowles criticizes society from a Darwinian perspective. Propagating a feminine principle, Fowles says that in "terms of history men have failed; it is time we tried Eve"(PR 60). This essentialist thinking that women contain a "magic" cure to society's evils has been the grounds for many attacks on Fowles and his politics. Nonetheless, he firmly believes in it. More important than his essentialist view is his belief that education is the most important aspect in social development. Such a conviction suggests a possible victory for his socialist

theory. That education can be used to lift the masses from calibanity places responsibility, not superiority, on the "few."

Fowles feels that "[c]ommunication through printed symbol requires almost as much effort and 'creativity'--and as much sensitivity--from the recipient as from the sender"(RI 115). The privilege of the "verbal form" is "the cooperation between writer and reader, the one to suggest, the other to make concrete"(HM 94). By allowing a certain amount of freedom to his readers, Fowles forces the reader to question the political issues that are raised in the text. In effect, Fowles is assuming a responsibility to educate his readers. When Carol Barnum asked the author if he wanted the reader to "enter [into his fiction] and to learn something about life," Fowles answered: "Well one hopes for that. One hopes for that"(MF 203). The responsibility of addressing one's own weaknesses, therefore, falls on the reader; he says:

A good novel is a human document, is like an interesting meeting with a stranger; it is not a machine, a thing you don't understand till you have taken it to bits. (W 223)

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