

**DANIEL MARTIN:**

**A QUEST FOR WHOLE SIGHT WITHIN  
NARRATIVE COMPLEXITY**

*Dr. Serpil OPPERMANN(\*)*

This article attempts to discuss *Daniel Martin*(\*\*) in detail as a metafictional text that plays with the double mode of writing. The employment of this double mode, or realism/fiction polarity, has caused some unjust and erroneous criticism of Fowles's novel. Most critics have considered *Daniel Martin* a realistic novel ignoring the double image of the text. For example, Peter Conrad claims:

What is distinct in *Daniel Martin* is the stajection of these elements into a fiction so much more quibotically obliged towards realism than anything else he has attempted... Here Fowles's natural allegiance towards a more romantic version of realism... quarrels unwittingly with a form committed to finding an overview. (98)

It is true that fictional reference to fact and fiction is warring in the novel. However, this opposition is displaced, reversed, deliberately questioned and held in tension. Certainly, there is no "unwitting" quarrel, but instead a very "witty" exploration of the nature of novel writing. Conrad agrees with Heide Ziegler and Christopher Bigsby in their assertion that this novel "returns to

(\*) Assis. Prof., Hacettepe University, Faculty of Letters, Department of English Language and Literature.

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the 'middle-ground' of realism" (qtd in Conrad 94). Simon Loveday also asserts that *Daniel Martin* aims at being "a realist novel" and considers the novel defective: "the style... is terribly uneven... worse still, I think, is the structural redundancy of much of the book" (18). Huffaker claims that in this novel "Fowles was working toward fiction based on reality, a great part of which is mystery" (43). Much of this criticism that emphasizes the realistic side of the novel and finds its structure uneven and faulty, arises from misunderstanding Fowles's use of two opposite narrative modes and from his stylistic variations.

The narrative manipulations of time and discontinuity and the arbitrariness of style create multiple expressive possibilities in the novel. There is a multiple temporality of story and discourse. The novel problematizes the continuity between past and present and shows time to be disjunctive. Thus, within the world of styles there emerges a true self-conscious novel of considerable complexity.

What makes this novel a self-reflexive text are the complex variations in the pattern of the story, repetition of textual elements, discontinuities and the use of polystylism. Among many things, *Daniel Martin* is about writing a novel, because it deals with fiction-writing extensively, and exposes its process. It also records the central character's growth into maturity in terms of his search for authentic identity. It describes Daniel's experiences in realistic detail, and draws a picture of the English middle-class society of the post-war period. The realistic referents of the subject-matter and the stylistic experimentation point to the interrelationship of what Daniel calls "the aesthetic theme" and "the existential theme," which is a fine indication of Fowles's method of mixing the two opposite modes. Thus, by exploiting both sides of the dichotomy, Fowles prevents his text from being conclusive. What makes this novel a postmodern text is that it both installs and then subverts the traditional codes and concepts. As Foucault states, such postmodernist texts "both assert and subvert the unity of man's being through which it was

thought that he could extent his sovereignty to the events of the past" (153). In *Daniel Martin* this unity is the object of Daniel's quest and it is referred to as "whole sight" which the novel tries to capture but it is structurally subverted. In this respect, the realist dictates are constantly undermined by metafictional manipulations showing the inability of realism to communicate reality as a whole.

The narrative is rendered through distinct voices and a discontinuous syntax. Ambiguity is created in the self-reflexivity and in the dissonance in the plot. The variations in the plot contribute to the variations of the style. Therefore, the thematic and structural concerns will be given equal emphasis in the analysis of the novel.

By presenting fragmented, fractured chronology, stopping the passage of time and places he lived, the narrator digresses from the story line. This indicates his decentered identity. Equally significant are the shifts in the narrative perspective. Since the past is always present in the narrator's mind, the narration is delivered in the first and the third persons in the past and present without consistency and warning.

Daniel is a successful script writer in Hollywood, but he is dissatisfied with the inauthenticity of his scenarios. He has a secret desire to write a novel, the story of his own life: "The real history of what I am" (26). At the beginning, he is seen living in Los Angeles with a Scottish film star, Jenny Mc Neil. After a telephone call, he returns to England at the request of his old Oxford friend, Anthony Mallory, who is about to die of cancer. They have been estranged for many years because of a play Daniel had written in the past. Anthony's wife Jane is the woman Daniel had loved when they were at Oxford, but he had married her sister, Nell, twenty years ago. From the start both marriages failed. Daniel's marriage ended with a divorce. Anthony is now a don at Oxford, and he wants to see Daniel and Jane reconciled before he commits suicide. His purpose is to correct "a design failure" (191). He asks Daniel "to help disinter the person Jane

might have been from beneath the person she now is" (191). After his encounter with Anthony, Dan is left with his reminiscences. He starts to reevaluate his identity and their lives, and he realizes that he betrayed his true qualities, namely, the ability to write serious fiction and the ability to love another human being wholly. He will now attempt to write a novel creating a fictional persona of himself. Thus, he escapes the first person and becomes his own third as the narrator of his life.

The entire story is told between the alternating first and third person points of view and in fractured time sequence. The process of revisiting and re-creating the past in this discontinuous narrative not only points to the double narrative perspective but also inverts the novel's realistic progress. The narrative goes in two directions simultaneously, it goes backwards as it goes forwards. This movement breaks the structural coherence. For example, Chapter 13 is called "Forward Backward," Chapter 46, the last, "Future Past." This calls attention to the impossibility of totalized vision, unity, wholeness and closure. The search for wholeness is suspended and disrupted by the use of double mode. In fact, the novel Dan is writing actually starts at the very end of the text, therefore it achieves no finality or closure. Instead, through its circular form it indicates the impossibility of achieving a final meaning. Furthermore, by referring to the various selves, past and present, both of himself and others, Daniel creates a multiplicity of texts. By doing so, he hopes to achieve a total vision. But, on the contrary this multiplicity complicates the totalized vision he is seeking. On the other hand, the multiplication of texts allows an existential freedom for the characters. Each character can break out of the form imposed upon him or her. Jenny, for example, not only writes her own text, but also she is aware of this liberation. She refuses to be written through the "others" discourse. In this respect, what the story appears to achieve and to mean is actually subverted by its own fictional referents. Thus, the question of whole sight remains ambiguous.

Just as the fragmented plurality of texts in the novel does not allow whole sight to be achieved, Dan's attempts to describe a total self within a totality of perspective are met with the fragmented plurality of the contemporary society. In this society the self is fragmented into various roles it has to adopt under different circumstances. The self is divided into separate identities under the modern masks, under the pressures and multi-realities of the social life. Although Dan blames this fragmentation on his egocentric Oxford generation and the "unique selfishness" of his age (610-11), and thinks it is a total failure of personal authenticity, he cannot easily break out of his depersonalized life. Since his generation broke up into "private selves" (170), the obsessive concern with personal identity is fundamental to his narrative. He realizes that his past has contributed to his fragmentation as a human being; hence his concern to achieve a unified sense of being through the multiple selves into which the self is dispersed. But, this problematizes his identity even further. His attempts to see life totally are overshadowed by the sense of impossibility of seeing whole:

It was the emotional attempt to see life totally, in its essence and phenomena: the force, the thought, the seriousness. It was medicine in a way, and the arrived bourgeois in Dan himself did not always like its taste. But he was unexpectedly impressed, and felt both his world-view and his own being as a writer enlarged and redefined. (532)

Dan persistently evokes places from the past as a mode of fixing identity as a whole image. To evoke the sense of self he switches back and forth between the places that influenced his personal development. Finally Dan comes to believe in the loneliness of the self, and realizes that it is caused by the irreconcilable multiple realities of the contemporary society. The loneliness of the self is also considered to be the cause of failure of individual authenticity. These two views are constantly presented as binary oppositions, and they are vividly illustrated by the way both American and English expressions indicate the subtle

differences within the text. This oppositional play within the narrative reaches its climax when Dan ends the novel with the sentence he has begun, and remarks that "he had found a last sentence for the novel he was never going to write" (668). However, he has already written it.

In this way the novel designates a textual self-awareness. Thus, the whole intricate narrative presentation supports the novel's self-analysing development. That is why, *Daniel Martin* belongs to the category of those texts "which are... diagetically self-aware, that is, conscious of their own narrative processes" (Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative* 22-23). Also, the referential quality of language is challenged by numerous allusions to the metaphoric nature of language in the creation of a fictional world. When Dan asserts that the "word is the most imprecise of signs" (95), he actually draws attention to the fact that the use of verbal sign allows for imaginative freedom. Novelistic language is representational only of a fictional world drawing the main interest to the writing process. In *Narcissistic Narrative* Linda Hutcheon points out that:

In most novels, it is the narrator who provides the reader with the most explicit bridge into a novelistic universe, since, for the reader, his living in that world is simultaneous with his writing of it. (92)

This assumption holds equally true for *Daniel Martin*. As Daniel says: "...in my life I could invent too many variations, as if I lived the event to its full before its limited reality took place" (142). Elsewhere he declares: "I create, I am; all the rest is dream, though concrete and executed" (224). So, the novel encourages the reader to understand that the referents of language are fictive. The fictional world permits "too many variations" (142). *Daniel Martin* exposes the problematics of language in transferring experience into fiction. The word's being the most imprecise of signs points out this problem. Thus, all the thematic concerns of the novel, the characters' actions and words, turn out to form a thematization of the structural anxieties of its process.

Many texts thematize, through the characters and plot, the inadequacy of language in conveying feeling, in communicating thought, or even fact. Often this theme is introduced as an allegory of the frustration of the writer when faced with the need to present only through language, a world of his making that must be actualized through the act of reading.

(Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative* 29)

Daniel suffers from the same feeling of inadequacy of verbal display in his attempts to convey the true history of himself. It is at this point that the referential aspect of language is called into question because his serious concerns for structure and point of view place the issue of language and fictionality in the core of the content. Since the linguistic sign is arbitrary, language becomes the basis of subjectivity, as Emil Benveniste argues in *Problems in General Linguistics*; only in language can the speaker designate himself or herself as "I." "I" is not, however, a term which has a single referent in language. This is most explicitly conveyed in the first Chapter where "I" merges into "he" as the story slides into discourse.

In the first chapter, entitled "The Harvest" and dated as "august 1942," we see Daniel as a young boy. At the very end of the chapter occurs the first characteristic switch in point of view, merging of times and persons comprising Daniel:

*I feel in his pocket and bring out a clasp-knife; plunge the blade in the red earth to clean it of the filth from the two rabbits he has gutted; slit; liver, intestines, stench. He stands and turns and begins to carve his initials on the beechtree. Deep incision in the bark, peeling the gray skin away to the sappy green of the living stem. Adieu, my boyhood and my dream. Close shot.*

D.H.M.

And Underneath: 21 Aug 42. (16)<sup>1</sup>.

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(1) Italics are my own.

Here, "I" is the narrator, and "he" is Daniel's teenage self. The personal form of "I" belongs to the discourse, and the impersonal "he" to the story. The narrating "I" becomes the subject of the discourse and should be seen differently from the "I" who is the subject of the story. In this passage, Daniel visualizes the carved tree by his initials and the date on it in the form of a cinematic flashback. Dan is both participant ("I") and an observer ("he") in this scene. At the end of the chapter, he sits alone looking out at the field, "without past or future, purged of tenses; collecting this day, pregnant with being" (16). Again, the narrator's self has fused into Dan's teenage self. By merging the tenses the narrator captures the past forms from future perspectives, so he is able to create the feeling of different pasts on present consciousness. In this way, Dan rediscovers the past through his imagination, and recollects in full the present perspective of the past setting of the Harvest scene. Thus, he starts the double narrative perspective.

There are three distinctive tenses that "The Harvest" scene initiates: past, present and future. Also, the specification of detail intensifies descriptive precision in the visual sense, like the report of the rabbit "not eight inches long." The visual effect is rendered with words. The narrator evokes the objects of description calling attention to the expressive use of language to interpret the objects: The "hyper-alert dog," "the bemused rabbit," "the sourgreen of cider," "the soreness of tired wrists and scratched forearms," and so on, are made intensively real. Furthermore, the use of metaphors and allusions heighten the intensity of presence: "The Argus-eyes," the pheasant as a "brown-speckled jack-in-the-box," the wheat field as "a trout-wave in a stream," the rabbit's dead eyes as "Doe-eyes glazing" (7-16). Descriptions of such rural activities not only convey a timeless quality and have ritual overtones, but also they create an illusion of reality. The feeling of timelessness is rendered by abundant verbless sentences: "The last swathe," "Guffaws, screams, curses, cries of triumph..." etc. In this scene, the sequence of verb tenses, first in the past, then in the present, and furthermore the entire omission of the tenses in favor of a series of nouns with adjectival modifiers,



such as "excited faces scrutinizing," produce an absolute dramatic presence of past objects and events.

This chapter in its referential and self-referential use of language is closely related to the cinematic language which plays an important role in Daniel's life. Also, the cinematic and novelistic technique in the presentation of human experience form one of the most striking binary oppositions in the novel. For example, the novel includes comments on realistic techniques by means of film vocabulary and attempts to make verbal images into visual ones. Thus, the narrative is made visual by the verbal versions of representational film techniques, such as "Final Cut." In fact, the chapter ends with "Final Cut." But, as Daniel remarks, final cut "allows no choice, no more than one angle... no time for one's own thoughts... it destroys the past of the mind of each spectator" (95). Whereas the cinema is regarded as a trap for the individual imagination, the novel's open medium is presented as a means of freedom of the mind to interpret the presented material in as many ways as possible.

The text is always open to many interpretations and it is created anew with every reader. Therefore, Dan tells Jenny that "I would murder my past if I tried to evoke it on camera." Writing his past, however, enables him to "awaken some analogous experience in other memories and sensitivities, that it must be written" (95). The past, being "something discontinuous, and disconnected from the present being," turns into "an object, an artifice, an antique, a flashback" to be recollected in writing although "the mode of recollection usurps the reality of the recalled" (94-5). But, as a script writer Daniel is ironically limited by the cinematic techniques he tries to avoid.

The novel has a freedom of form and style, because words have infinite variations enabling the imagination to operate fully. There are not sufficient visual equivalents for all kinds of narrative styles, but as Fowles argues in his article "Is the Novel Dead?", visual styles can easily be "translated into words" (5). Fiction can convey the intense immediacy of the imagination much better

than the film since language is always open to play. The narrative medium has a better access to the multiple recollections and evokes the pure essence of things using a variety of styles.

As a self-conscious novel *Daniel Martin* epitomizes these ideas. It emphasizes the need for freedom of expression and stylistic variety in fiction writing. The novel gives Daniel the possibility of "a medium that would be something dense, interweaving, treating time as a horizontal, like a skyline; not cramped, linear and progressive" (353). A novel can express, in infinite ways, "what the camera cannot capture-- the continual evasion of the inner self, the continual actual reality of saying one thing and thinking another" (293). Thus, throughout the novel film is used as a foil to the novel genre.

The novel's medium can transform chronological time into a perpetual flow. The first chapter is a clear indicative of this technique. Thus, the past of Daniel's early childhood is followed by the third person account of his three distinctive pasts revealing polystylism more explicitly. The first is his present life in Hollywood with Jenny. This is the second chapter called "Games," which moves thirty years ahead of time to 1977, and from England to Los Angeles. Dan is living in disoriented affection with Jenny. He receives a phone call from his ex-wife Nell. This phone call opens his past in Oxford with Nell, Jane and Anthony in the third chapter, "The Woman in the Reeds." Their relationships are conveyed in the third person point of view. The fourth chapter, "An Unbiased View" is written by Jenny giving her account of the story. The next chapter is a continuation of "Games." The sixth chapter, "Aftermath" is set in Oxford, after their discovery of the woman in the reeds, and includes Dan's and Jane's mutual confession of love. This scene is concluded three chapters later. Their sexual union forms the central event in the collective pasts of the four friends. The last section of the novel is a chronological account of Dan and Jane's journey to the Middle East.

Until Chapter 7, where Daniel is established as the implied narrator of the whole narrative, his knowledge of himself is not yet

complete. As is implied at the end of the Harvest scene, he longs to harvest his own experiences, and to fulfill his creative potential, since he is "pregnant with being. The shifts continue from Chapter 7 to Chapter 35 exposing Dan's desire to explore his identity and to achieve whole sight. They also convey a sense of opposition between his past and his present, between reason and emotion, and between the story told and the story-telling.

Daniel's third person objectivity is inseparable from his first person subjectivity giving an impression of incoherence. This kind of fragmented style not only renders the complex consciousness of the narrator, but also emphasizes the process of fictional creation. Also, the manipulation of the novel's temporal dimension points to the fictional process. There is the clock time of the physical world, and the psychological time within Dan's consciousness. These two temporal dimensions are further merged with the fictional time within *Simon Wolfe*, the novel Dan is writing, and it develops within the novel's fictional time. The novel within a novel creates a fictional complexity of author, pseudo-author, narrator and character. Daniel's novel is going to be written in the future, but it is actually being written in the present taking shape within *Daniel Martin* which is already written in the past. Thus, the last sentence of *Simon Wolfe* becomes the first sentence of *Daniel Martin*, making the novel end where it begins. Moreover, the narrator of *Simon Wolfe* is a fictional version of Daniel who is himself a fictional entity created by another author--Fowles. However, it is very ironical that Daniel, who is a fictional construct of a self-conscious text, tries to write a realistic fiction since he believes that the mimetic genre would not "betray the thing"-- his life story. But, the novel he is situated in is a critique of this convention. It resists all the attempts of a mimetic representation and conveys the opposite of what the conventions want it to convey-- namely its process.

Daniel states that "a novel is written in the two past tenses: the present perfect of the writer's mind, the concluded past of a fictional convention" (256). Later he comes to realize that a good

novel is never finished; it can go on forever, and therefore it can only be written in the present tense. That is why the novel is the only art form that can densely interweave multiple truths and times, and that can render a metaphorical account of consciousness and reality. It can be a free form with many possibilities of the verbal medium. So, it is stated at the end of *Daniel Martin* that the novel Daniel wants to write but never will, "can never be read, lies eternally in the future, his ill concealed ghost has made that impossible last his own possible first" (668). The irony lies in the word "never," because in one sense we have read the novel, Daniel wrote it; in another, he is still writing it and will continue to write it which sends us back to the first sentence: "Whole sight."

Daniel's major aim in writing the novel is to move from fragmentation to integration in order to achieve self-realization and authenticity. He wants to see "life totally, in its essence, and in its phenomena" (32). But, he will come to realize that it is not possible to write a conventional realistic novel in his age of pluralist society. Ironically, the only way of facing the unreality and the fragmented identity of himself is to present it in the unreality of fiction and its fragmentation. Therefore, the shifts from past to present, or present to past, and from third person to first person points of view point not to an integration but to double narrative perspective and to discontinuity. However, by interlocking time fragments Dan hopes to progress toward unity. Instead, the interaction of the first and third person points of view denies such a unity. Daniel's aim is to rediscover his real self, the woman he had loved, his artistic freedom and his Englishness from which he had long been alienated. By means of such transitions he hopes to see himself as "others see one- to escape the first person, and become one's own third" (68).

To write about oneself is implicitly to pose as an "other," and narrating oneself both in the personal form of "I" (of the discourse) and the impersonal "he" (of the story) is further complicated by another level of subjective perspective, the authorial "I." This

enables the narrator to establish two levels of participant point of view: "I" of the discourse and "I" of the story, and so the theme of existential authorship.

He reserved an especially, and symptomatically, dark corner for the first person narration; and the closer the narrative "I" approximated to what one could deduce of authorial "I", the more murky this corner grew. (68)

When Daniel wants to become his own third, he overtly explores himself as he sees himself and as others see him, since he will be situated in someone else's fiction which is manifested by Jenny's three contributions. Dan's fictional versions of himself and of others finally entail his recognizing his condition of subjectivity, and that others may perceive one in ways one possibly cannot see himself. The logic of these radical shifts in point of view suggests that reality and fiction can have no final certainty, but can be substitutions for one another. Dan exists in the fictional discourse of his own as a narrator, because the real life he describes in his story is deliberately transformed into a fictional frame. Thus, what appears to be reality can only be a comment on it and also be its alternative. This alternative world is actualized only through the act of reading. The self-conscious recognition of the contextual significances is the very process that forms "the link between reading and writing- that is between life and art, reality and fiction" (Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narratives* 35). The relation between story and discourse is characteristic of many metafictional novels. With regards to this idea, Patricia Waugh argues that, "A common strategy is to begin the novel in the first person and then shift to the third person narration and then back again" (134). In this respect, *Daniel Martin* is a typical metafiction. It also thematizes the contradictory nature of metafiction. On the one hand, it assures the certainty of events, and on the other, it points to the indeterminacy of such events. Therefore, achieving whole sight is problematical despite all the attempts to realize it.

Although Daniel wants to write a realistic novel, he cannot help but contemplate, in the third person, "breaking the established

codes" (223), and thus, he tries to achieve a liberation from the traditional authorial narration. He becomes a self-conscious writer. Like all self-conscious writers, he too feels liberated "from the heart of reality to the supposed artifice of art" (224). He realizes that creation of fiction is possible "in an eternity of presents" (224). Past is inseparable from present in his mind, and present has no finality. It is a continuous process which is all-inclusive and allows for a eternal vision of time. That is why, Dan wants to keep the narrative in the present tense. It makes the novel more capacious, and since it can never end, more auto-referential and spontaneous. Dan thinks that, "all writing, private and mental, or public and literal, is an attempt to escape from the conditioned past and future," and he argues that "the hyperactive imagination is as damaging a preparation for reality as it is useful for writing" (142). Daniel knows that the present tense keeps the narrative forever alive and enhances the vision. It also prevents closure.

The chronological jumps in the novel are further complicated by Jenny's letters as "contributions" to the novel Dan wants to write. Jenny writes her own text, and she wants a liberation from authorial control. Her contributions (chapters 4, 21, and part of chapters 28 and 34) are crucial to the novel, because they give the reader essential information about Daniel and shed light on his emotional growth. They also expose the fictionality process.

Jenny's first contribution appears as the Fourth chapter, "An Unbiased View," before Dan's departure from Hollywood. "A Second Contribution" is more straightforward and follows Dan's arrival in Oxford. In "A Third Contribution," Jenny invents a scene on her own, taking a full control of the narrative. She creates her own text. She is against Dan's tendency to treat his female characters as "something in (his) script," or as "figments in his imagination" (471). The reader has been informed about the third contribution earlier in the narrative describing Dan and Jenny's visit to Tsankawi, New Mexico. Her account of the day there is much different from Dan's account and much more perceptive.

The thematic and structural intricacies of the novel indicate that fact and fiction underlie and interpret each other. The multiple ways in which the narrative is structured shows that an engaging story is as important as the writing process itself. In the writing process Dan tries to make sense of the fragmented realities. The sense of opposition between his past and present dissolves in his symbolic union with Jane. This is essential for his fragmented self to merge into wholeness. This leads to the idea that the possible realization of whole sight is reflected only within the thematic material through the protean self. However, Dan's insistence on achieving whole sight in the novel form is in vain, because the self-consciousness of the novel form subverts such attempts. Daniel believes that if one can perceive the world in its complexity, one can see life in its totality. But, instead, by interfering with the continuity of syntax and narrative process, and by using dissonant and multiple voices to tell the story, Dan actually indicates the ultimate ambiguity of fiction, and thus achieves the opposite of what he wants to state. In addition, inclusion of such diverse fields as history, politics, cinema, socialism, and extensive discussions on novel writing are not only metacommentaries but also they reveal the intertextuality of the novel. They not only reveal the narrator in fundamental ways but also they play an important role in shaping his future. Moreover, they enable modes of understanding and self-knowledge for Daniel. Thus, he gains a double vision in his perceptions of both reality and fiction. He writes: "If life is largely made of retreats from reality, its relation must be of retreats from the imagined" (296). The retreat from the imagined leads the writer towards reality, but it also makes him realize that reality is too relative to be captured and reproduced in fiction. It becomes a form of fiction after it is written down.

Therefore, in Fowles's fiction, fact and fiction permeate and complement one another, and fuse together to produce problematical texts. What underlines the reality principle here, is that reality can only be rendered by the metaphorical use of language, and thus it gets transformed into an alternative world.

Dan acknowledges this when he states: "all language, even the most logical and philosophical, is metaphorical in origin" (362).

The activity of writing forms the major metafictional concern in *Daniel Martin*. The possible relationship between the subjective perspective, and the concern for self-conscious fiction to assert its fictionality which claims that "for real authenticity there can be no absolute truths" (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 197), creates a significant critical self-awareness in the novel. *Daniel Martin* presents itself as what Barthes calls in *S/Z* a *lisible* (readable) text rather than a *scriptible* (writable) text (4). The process of writing, however, is as intense as the story, if not so engaging. The *lisible* text is constantly undermined and its established view of reality and values is questioned by the concerns of the writing process. These two kinds of texts are placed together and then displaced showing the activity of creation and the codes of storytelling. Both are integrated and evaluated within the framework of narrative and its self-reflexivity. As a result, the novel reveals multiplicity of meanings and shatters the simple reflection of reality. Plurality and ambiguity invoke tensions between meanings generated in this process.

The mimetic commitments of the text relate to the area of experience of reality. But, since this is fictionalized by metacommentaries, the text shows itself as a problematic relationship to the empirical reality. The notion of reference is complicated by the discursive reality of the text itself. The language of the text and its literariness are explored from within the text, but with a considerable concern for reference. In this respect, *Daniel Martin* plays both with the notions of referentiality (reflecting reality), and with the concept of fiction as a play of differences within language. These two views create the tensions and ambiguity of meanings. Thus, mixing the aesthetic with the factual, "the novel tunes itself to its developing subject" (Wolfe 182).

The novel emphasizes the notion that writing can only have a metaphorical reference to reality. The metaphor for writing



appears as "La bonne vauze: the valley of abundance," or the "Sacred Combe." Talking about Rostand de la Bretonne's work, Monsieur Nicholas, Daniel especially emphasizes "the sacred combe" which symbolizes the vision of every writer, and which shaped Dan's imaginative career. Thus, writing is:

of a place outside the moral world, intensely private and enclosed, intensely green and fertile, numinous, haunted and haunting, dominated by a sense of magic that is also a sense of mysterious yet profound parity in all existence. Of course it recurs again and again in literature and art in one form or another. (292).

As this passage indicates, the process of writing is a fertile act dominated by the principle of hazard as all life is. It is precisely in this perspective that Fowles places narrative art. "The Sacred Combe" is a myth for creative writing, and therefore, it is open to intuitive truth. This passage sheds light on Dan's individual development towards authenticity as well as his literary career. He must learn to gain a wider perspective of freedom of expression by choosing to participate in the multiplicity of the world and fiction writing.

The last section of the novel focuses on Dan and Jane. Dan takes Jane to the river Nile. During their cruise on the river, Dan acquires a deeper sensibility about himself and his art. He also discovers the warmth of his past relationship with Jane. While sailing up the river, Dan observes that he is in a journey not only into Africa but also into the heart of time. His sense of timelessness is symbolically bound with the river Nile. The river appears to him as the "river of existence" whose origins "lay in something deeper." He finally sees himself as the river which "sets all life in perspective" (254). Thus, he achieves a freedom to know himself more deeply. He feels the freedom of expressing the depth of his inner state, and he accepts his feelings as the inevitable part of his true identity. This deeper awareness becomes the touchstone of his relationship with Jane. In possessing Jane, Dan finds himself in possession of his past. He also begins to realize

that Jane has whole sight which is "a sense of natural orientation." He recognizes this as the right feeling. In feeling deeply, she has the ability to perceive life totally. Thus, Dan believes that their relationship will reaffirm their sense of unity and will help him to achieve a totality of vision. The meaning of whole sight is thus displaced from what it implies. It is not closure, or any affirmation of a stable and determinate meaning. It is a natural instinct in man to feel at one with the forces of life, a sense of identification with the essence of things. It is becoming one with the whole. Whole sight is not, then, the imperative complete vision in fiction writing. The text itself refuses such a completion by its circular shape. As Alison Lee argues, "Dan's novel can never be read, it is because his intentions have been consistently subverted, both in his desire for mimesis and for whole sight which can be achieved by neither novel nor film" (125).

The closing scene of the novel shows Dan walking into a public art gallery in London and standing before Rembrandt's self-portrait. This painting affects him very deeply with its profound gaze, and Dan pictures himself saying the secret to Jane: "The imagining of the real and the realizing of the imagined" (667). By extension, this is the secret behind the problematic novels of Fowles—the double vision. The Rembrandt portrait strengthens Dan's faith in art as the deepest human reality, and he finds the first sentence of his novel that he will never write: Whole Sight; but Dan succeeds in "being" and the novel succeeds in affirming the genre's infinite freedom to be what it wants to be (Fowles "Notes" 144).

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