

## Writing and the Self: John Fowles' Autobiographical Non-Fiction

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### Abstract

One of the greatest novelists of the twentieth-century English Literature, John Robert Fowles (1926-2005), claims that he has always wanted to write poetry and philosophy. Despite the lack of the same critical interest in his non-fiction as in his fiction, it is his non-fiction as well as his fiction where Fowles makes clear what it means to him to be a writer, and a novelist in particular. Some of Fowles' essays specially represent his obsessions with and passions for writing as a prolific novelist. He says, for example, referring to this idea that writing is a natural process like love. Moreover, Fowles' essays quickly remind the reader of especially his fiction of the notions and the themes that he has already dealt with in his novels. In addition to all these, Fowles surprisingly confesses in one of his essays that a simple image of a woman standing at the end of a deserted quay and staring out to sea was how one of his most famous and one of his most acclaimed novels of the twentieth-century English literature came to life (This novel is the writer's 1969 work, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*). Fowles, in his essays, does not hesitate to talk about the difficulties he had either. Writing, for Fowles, is a very personal business. Fiction making is creating another world. It is a godgame where the novelist even falls in love with his heroine.

**Keywords:** Writing, fiction, non-fiction, self, confession.

### Yazı ve Benlik: John Fowles'ın Kurgu Dışı Otobiyografik Yazıları

#### Öz

Yirminci yüzyıl İngiliz Edebiyatı'nın en önemli romancıları arasında yer alan John Robert Fowles, daima şiir ve felsefe yazmak istediğini iddia eder. Kurgusal eserlerine gösterilen ilginin kurgu dışı yazılarına olan eksikliğine rağmen, Fowles tıpkı kurgusal eserlerinde yaptığı gibi kurgu dışı yazılarında da bir yazar, özellikle de bir romancı olmanın ne anlama geldiğini gösterir. Fowles'in bazı yazıları oldukça verimli bir romancı olarak kendisinin yazıya olan tutku ve saplantısını belirtir. Örneğin yazı yazmanın tıpkı aşk gibi doğallığından bahseder. Bunun yanında Fowles'in yazıları okuyucuya kurgusal eserlerinde zaten ele aldığı kavram ve düşünceleri hatırlatır. Bütün bunlara ek olarak, Fowles yazılarında kendisinin en bilinen ve yirminci yüzyıl İngiliz Edebiyatı'nın en beğenilen romanları arasında yer alan bir eserinin, terk edilmiş bir iskelenin ucunda durup denize bakan bir kadın imgesinin sonucu olduğunu itiraf eder. Karşılaştığı zorluklardan bahsetmekten de çekinmez. Fowles için yazı kişisel bir uğraştır. Kurgu başka dünyalar yaratmaktır. Hatta romancının kendi karakterine aşık olduğu ilahi bir oyundur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yazı, kurgu, kurgu dışı, benlik, itiraf.

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## I. INTRODUCTION: WRITING AS CONFESSIONS

It should first be underlined right at the beginning of this study that writing autobiographical non-fiction – as it might have been the case for many of his contemporaries – was not only an influential but also a practical means of confessing the most intimate truths about his life as a writer for the English novelist John R. Fowles.<sup>1</sup> Relevant to this specific claim, it is pointed out elsewhere about Fowles' non-fiction that "*The [autobiographical] essays, published between 1965 and 1997, cover reflections on the act of writing*" (Wilson 2006: 10). Moreover, pointing to the highly classical analogy between writing and confession, 'I Write Therefore I Am',<sup>2</sup> which is one of Fowles' most interesting and informative autobiographical essays in terms of his individual approach to the question of what writing means to him as a very prolific and a very well-known twentieth-century English novelist, begins with a particularly personal and an absolutely surprising confession of the writer that he never wanted to be a novelist.

Such a revelation might sound quite surprising for the reader since Fowles' literary reputation as a novelist had already been acknowledged by academic criticism at the time of the publication of his second novel in 1965, *The Magus*. According to a critical view, "*Fowles' writings are rich and varied and have occasioned much criticism as a result. The range of critical approaches previously taken to Fowles' work is extensive*" (Wilson 2006: 15). As stated in another critical approach to Fowles' writing,

*John Fowles has the distinction of being both a best-selling novelist and one whose work has earned the respect of academic critics. Why his novels are best-sellers is clear enough. Like Daniel Defoe, a writer he greatly admires, Fowles has tremendous narrative drive, the ability to compel his readers' attention from the beginning of his novels through to the end. Fowles so beguiles us with uncertainty in his fiction, so tantalises us with a variety of possible outcomes, that we read his novels and short stories eagerly to find out what happens in the end. (Acheson 1998: 1)*

Furthermore, especially after the publication of one of his most influential novels in 1969, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, "*Fowles offered a strange collection of short stories in his next published work, The Ebony Tower. Despite his forays into poetry, philosophy, and non-fiction writing, Fowles had established a reputation as a fine novelist by this time*" (Lenz 2008: 133). It is also argued that Fowles was a "*fierce individualist committed above all else to his writing*" (Lenz 2008: 224). The revelation of Fowles displayed above might become more compelling for the reader when the novelist says, "*For me the word carries a load of bad connotations – like author and literature and reviewer, only worse*" (1998: 5). However, it is paradoxical enough that Fowles made this unexpected confession while energetically publishing a number of novels and essays until his death in 2005.

Writing, for Fowles, was so essential a means of confession that his special dislike, for example, of the typical macho hero of the '50s English and American fiction – which Fowles carefully displayed through his portrayals of powerful heroines in his novels – was a disclosure of his unique identity as a novelist. According to this, it is stated – although from a particularly feminist point of view – that "*Fowles explicitly professed, both in interviews and in his writing, his enthusiasm for feminist movement; he admired and promoted women writers who have often been neglected; he offered explicit and pointed criticisms of masculinity, especially in comparison to femininity; and he deliberately created impressive and compelling women characters*

<sup>1</sup> See Defne Erdem Mete on how autobiographical non-fiction as a genre can also be used for educational purposes, especially for writing (2017).

<sup>2</sup> First published in 1964.

who provide the impetus for his novels" (Lenz 2008: 9). As stated in this quotation, Fowles sometimes acknowledges his personal interpretation of writing through the interviews. In one of these interviews, he asserts that

*you have to distinguish two kinds of writing: most important is first-draft writing, which to an extraordinary degree is an intuitive thing—you never quite know when you sit down whether it's going to come or not, and you get all kinds of good ideas from nowhere. They just come between one line and the next. But revision writing's very different—you have to turn yourself into an academic and mark yourself. With this, of course, comes the research. And I find that rather boring.* (Campbell 1976: 456)

In another interview where he does not hesitate to answer many of the questions about his methodology in writing the first drafts of his fictional works, Fowles says, "I'm totally against what I understand is the creative writing approach. You know, planning . . . structure, symbolism. I rely absolutely on . . . it would be an exaggeration to say I write first drafts in a trance-like state. It's not that" (Singh 1980: 188).

Then the inquiry to be made now is probably this specific question: what was Fowles' reason for believing in those bad connotations of the term 'novelist'? Fowles himself actually answers the question through the following statements: "It suggests something factitious as well as fictitious, insipidly entertaining; train-journeyish. One can't imagine a "novelist"'s ever saying what he actually means or feels – one can hardly even imagine his meaning or feeling" (1998: 5). Therefore, as it seems, what Fowles principally does here in this statement is to clearly differentiate between two categorical types of writing: the first type is the activity of a writer who has been writing fiction, and the second type is the activity of a writer who has been writing non-fiction. In addition to this, it has never been a secret from literary circles that Fowles had always wanted to write philosophy instead of fiction (Fowles 1998: 5). Moreover, what Fowles actually did was that

*Fowles has kept us busy with unusual challenges: he has mocked our illusions of aesthetic perfection and authorial objectivity by intruding into an ostensibly historical novel, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, to share his frustrations and self-doubts; he has interfered in our work on *The Magus* by offering an improved version of the original novel, accompanied by a preface in which he outlines his intentions and discusses sources and influences we had not discovered for ourselves; recently, in *Daniel Martin*, he has presented a critical portrait of his own inadequate generation fumbling with the dilemmas of a world 'inter-regnum' as their old values die and a new consciousness struggles to be born. We now realize that all of these novels are, in part, self-portraits – portraits of a thinker and an evolving artist who refuses to hide behind the façade of perfected styles and structures.* (Baker 1980: 164)

Although it is not as surprising as one would expect, the same situation could be observed in the case of some other novelists who wrote during the same period as when Fowles published some of his most remarkable works. It was, for example, the Irish novelist Iris Murdoch,<sup>3</sup> who systematically complained in her works about the potential falsity that the activity of writing fiction obviously connoted. Moreover, it should be recollected that Murdoch was a philosopher who taught and wrote about the philosophy of Plato. This specific situation today becomes more meaningful when one remembers another contemporary novelist who published some of her most significant works during the same

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<sup>3</sup> She lived between 1919 and 1999.

decades. It was the Scottish novelist Muriel Spark<sup>4</sup> who, as a converted Catholic, deeply felt the agony of playing God and thus telling lies to the reader during the process of fictional creation.<sup>5</sup> Besides these, it is obvious that writing, for Fowles, was an entertaining activity as it was for some of his contemporaries, such as Murdoch and Spark. But these novelists all believed, for their own individual reasons, that fiction writing was indeed a risky business. They even believed that it was a pack of lies.<sup>6</sup>

## II. WRITING AND THE THEORY

This chapter should perhaps begin with the startling fact that although it was his profession, Fowles once said that he did not see writing as a category of activity among his primary ambitions (1998: 5). Such an attitude of the novelist might be traced to Fowles' intellectual background as a young man. Besides being a devoted novelist, Fowles was at the same time – but particularly in his earlier period – an existentialist thinker (Fowles 1998: 5-6; 18-19). This specific situation of the novelist has been mentioned by almost every single Fowles critic in their critical works. What is underlined in one of these studies, for example, is the fact that “*Existentialism was a felt presence in at least Fowles' first three novels, and early critics responded with existentialist readings*” (Wilson 2006: 16). And the following commentary provides an informative summary of Fowles' interest in existentialism:

*Fowles's interest in French existentialism dates from his undergraduate years at Oxford. He was particularly attracted to the existentialists' views on authenticity and personal freedom. Just as it is important, to him, that sensitive, intelligent men shatter the 'crust' of masculinity, and explore the feminine component within themselves, so under existentialist influence, it also became important that the sensitive and intelligent throw off the shackles of convention freely to discover their authentic selves - the people they really are. 'This', Fowles told James Campbell in 1976, 'is the sort of existential thesis of [my] books - that one has to discover one's [true] feelings'.* (Acheson 1998: 6)

Fowles' existentialism has been so decisive in creating the meaning in his fiction that “*This has long been a favourite area of critical inquiry for Fowles scholars and the existentialist emphasis in his thinking has often been discussed*” (Cooper 1991: 7). In addition to this, in terms of characterisation in Fowles's fiction, it is argued that “*The characters in all Fowles' novels are involved in a struggle with extension, a struggle to order and recognize the Other, and such a struggle is of course that of the fictionist in writing. Behind this lies the desire to create 'free' characters, characters who determine their own history, who existentially create themselves in the writing of their own textual histoire*” (Docherty 1981: 119). Comparable to the argument here, it is also expressed that “*Fowles involves his characters in initiations designed to make them the existentialist authors of their own lives*” (Eddins 1976: 206-07). Fowles' first ambition, regarding his existentialist involvement, he again said, was to change the society that he was part of (Fowles 1998: 5). And this situation is still clearly observed in his fictional writings, particularly in his first published novel, *The Collector*.<sup>7</sup> The central figure of the novel is a heroine, an art student,<sup>8</sup> Fowles created in accordance with his existentialist questions and concerns.<sup>9</sup> Fowles says, “*I chose ten years ago to be a writer - chose in the existentialist sense of the*

<sup>4</sup> She lived between 1918 and 2006.

<sup>5</sup> This is one of the most discussed themes of Spark's first published novel, *The Comforters*.

<sup>6</sup> This is, of course, because of the nature of writing fiction.

<sup>7</sup> Although *The Magus* was Fowles' first written novel, *The Collector* was the first novel that he published.

<sup>8</sup> This character is one of the two speakers of the novel, although she is not the protagonist.

<sup>9</sup> This situation is clearly observed during the intellectual discussions between Frederick Clegg and Miranda Grey.

act of choosing" (1998: 6). In accordance with this claim, Fowles interprets the postwar social disturbance of '50s and '60s Britain under the guidance of his existentialist background in his novel in the characterisation of this art student.<sup>10</sup>

Fowles' writing, in his first published novel, literally refers to a widespread social problem among contemporary people living in Britain during the '60s. Following and interpreting the philosophical discussions of Heraclitus,<sup>11</sup>Fowles agrees on observing the society as consisting of two different and opposing categories, the Few and the Many:<sup>12</sup>

*How Heraclitus saw mankind divided into a moral and intellectual elite (the aristoi, the good ones, not—this is a later sense—the ones of noble birth) and an unthinking, conforming mass — hoi polloi, the many. Anyone can see how such a distinction plays into the hands of all those subsequent thinkers who have advanced theories of the master-race, the superman, government by the few or by the one, and the rest. One cannot deny that Heraclitus has, like some in itself innocent weapon left lying on the ground, been used by reactionaries: but it seems to me that his basic contention is biologically irrefutable. (Aristos 1970: 9)*

Therefore the characterisations of the two narrators of his novel obviously represent these two social groups: "When Miranda talks about the Few, in *The Collector*, this is the kind of people I meant her to mean: pre-eminently creators, not simply highly intelligent or well-informed people, nor people who are simply skilled with words" (Fowles 1998: 13).

When Fowles's later fictional works as well as his non-fictional autobiographical writings are recollected in terms of the meaning and the significance of writing for the novelist, his 1982 novel *Mantissa*, where he ironically deconstructs and then reconstructs the secrets of the special relationship between the writer and the muse, particularly appears as a significant example. The novel is "an allegory that proceeds by means of, and within, a parody of contemporary theoretical ideas on that same creative process. Within his parody, Fowles takes hold of the post-structuralist sexual metaphor of texts and transforms it into a unique image of the creative process—the reemerging of the public/logical self with the secret/intuitive self in literary creation" (Wilson 1990: 61). Again in an autobiographical account, Fowles remarks about his profession that, "Inspiration, the muse experience, is like telepathy. Nowadays one hardly dares to say that inexplicable phenomena exist for fear of being kicked in the balls by the positivists and the behaviourists and the other hyperscientists. But there is a metatechnics that needs investigating" (1998: 7).

And Fowles himself investigates this particular point of view in the unique friendship, or more notably, in the love and hate relationship between the writer and his muse.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it should also be stated here that writing for Fowles, writing a novel for example, is also the final product of a bodily intercourse between the writer and the muse of poetry. In accordance with this situation, in a scene in his *Mantissa*, the novelist-protagonist of the novel is given his book by the nurse as his new-born baby.<sup>14</sup>

Among his later works, Fowles' *Mantissa* bears other resemblances to his previously published novels. The novel opens with a scene in which how a novelist first forms his work nowhere but in his mind is metaphorically described to the reader. The novelist's mind is pictured as an empty space where slowly but gradually the products of his imagination

<sup>10</sup> For the analogy between autobiographical and psychoanalytic interpretations see Leyla Kerim (2015).

<sup>11</sup> He lived between 535-475 BC; and he proposed idea that everything flows, and no man ever steps in the same river twice.

<sup>12</sup> This idea is widely discussed in Fowles' first published novel, *The Collector*.

<sup>13</sup> John Fowles, *Mantissa* (New York: American Library, 1982), 41.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

begin to appear (Fowles 1982: 3). Surprisingly this is just how Fowles describes the emergence of one of his most remarkable novels *The French Lieutenant's Woman*: "It started four or five months ago, as a visual image. A woman stands at the end of a deserted quay and stares out to sea. That was all. This image rose in my mind one morning when I was still in bed half asleep. It corresponded to no actual incident in my life ... that I can recall" (1998: 14).

### III. WRITING TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE THEORY

Fowles also contributed to the contemporary theory of the novel as a novelist. The following example was one of his responses to the discussions in literary circles about the unknown future of the novel as a genre. He especially points to the meaning of the word – the novel – and says, "You are not trying to write something one of the Victorian novelists forgot to write; but perhaps something one of them failed to write ... Remember the etymology of the word. A novel is something new. It must have relevance to the writer's now" (1998: 17). The spirit of the time in which Fowles felt himself obliged to respond to the pessimistic anticipation that the novel would have no future at all is well depicted in this commentary: "There is general agreement among critics and historians alike that the 1960s was a period of crisis, heralding a complex change of sensibility in the Western world at large" (Onega 1996: 30). Correspondingly, another observation of the time focuses on the future of the novel:

*In the decades following the Second World War the British novel appeared to be in serious decline, in need of innovation and redirection. John Barth, B. S. Johnson, and Bill Buford remarked, respectively, that the novel form was 'exhausted', that the role of the storyteller appeared to have been taken up by the cinema, and that British fiction variously appeared 'as a monotonously protracted, realistically rendered monologue [ . . . ] lack[ed] excitement, want[ed] drive, [and] provid[ed] comforts not challenges'.* (Buchberger 2012: 132)

Nevertheless, Fowles did not share many of the points made by the thinkers and the literary critics who argued that the novel genre would be obsolete during the coming decades. Fowles strongly asserts that he is an optimist:

*I should guess I'm more optimistic than most. I don't like the way pessimism – the black, absurdist view – has so often become fashionable – a supposed proof that the artist really understands the world – during this century. This isn't to dismiss its only too real and manifold cruelties and horrors, just to question whether the black view isn't being exploited because it's so much easier to maintain and defend than its opposite. Optimism, however slight, always relies on an element of the rational, of realism. I don't believe we shall ever achieve valid art through formlessness and unthinking hazard. We need less of would-be-all-comprehending vision, and more of honest craftsmanship.* (Vipond: 12-13)

Because of this particular assumption, Fowles blended conventional and experimental elements in his literary works. He believed that his writing, or more particularly the novel as a genre, could represent the spirit of the age in which it was constructed. Fowles wanted, specifically as a novelist, to respond to his time. This is quite obvious especially in his earlier works where he used, for example, multiple narrators, alternative viewpoints, and different endings as opposed to the traditional elements of narrative fiction.

In terms of the future of the novel, what was under discussion at those times, especially during the two decades after the end of the war, was the concept of realism in literature. Some postwar writers, as a reaction to the ideas of modernist movement and the philosophy of all those well-known British modernist novelists such as D. H. Lawrence, W. Woolf and J. Joyce, sought for a return to a social realism in their fictional works. On the

contrary, some other writers attempted to highlight the necessity and the significance of including experimental elements in their literary works like their modernist predecessors had done. But what was Fowles' own position among all those theoretical discussions about writing? His position becomes clear when he says referring to his first published novel that, "In *The Collector* I tried to write in terms of the strictest realism; to go straight back to that supreme master of the fake biography, Defoe, for the surface 'feel' of the book. To Jane Austen and Peacock for the girl. To Sartre and Camus for the 'climate'" (1998: 9).

The meaning of writing for Fowles, as it is stated in his non-fiction, was neither to pursue the tradition nor to get involved in experimentation. Because of this, Fowles' writing did not become a part of experimentalist movement emerging especially from the ideas of some French writers. Those French writers, Alain Robbe-Grillet, for example, argued that it was the end of the novel and therefore a new literary genre had to be invented instead of the novel. This theoretically influential claim, according to Fowles, was but a fallacy. Fowles instead believed that such an argument "reduces the purpose of the novel to the discovery of the new forms, whereas its other purposes – to entertain, to satirize, to describe new sensibilities, to record life, to improve life, and so on – are clearly just as viable and important" (1998: 18). In other words, as it is expressed elsewhere, what Fowles does here is that "Expressing his preoccupation with renewing the novel without sacrificing intelligibility and the old humanist values of classic realism, Fowles shows here the characteristic hesitation between the modernist "consolation of form" and the 'longing for the return to the traditional relish in story telling' that Hutcheon-as well as Barth and Lodge-considers to be the basic trait of contemporary fiction" (Onega 1996: 37). Furthermore, Fowles asks these questions "To what extent am I being a coward by writing inside the old tradition? To what extent am I being panicked into avant-gardism?" (1998: 18) in order to prove the vulnerability of blindly insisting upon tradition or innovation.

Although Fowles' *The Collector* – different from a conventional novel that has usually one single narrator – has two narrators whose accounts of the events are absolutely antithetical to each other, the novel as a whole is a realistic work, as Fowles claims, displaying almost no other experimental features than merely having multiple narrators. From characterisation to the structure of the events, and from time to place, for example, every single element of the novel is almost conventional. Especially the personally written reports, discovered during the later chapters, of the alternative narrator of the novel, Miranda, is structured in the form of a biography, or more specifically a fake biography in Fowles' remarks.

#### IV. WRITING AS FURTHER CONFESSIONS

Fowles' writing, especially in one of his most acclaimed novels, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, bears a number of elements of historiographic fiction. His writing in this work resembles the examples of history writing that document in great detail a certain period in history. Furthermore, this technique provides the reader with the opportunity of making a comparative reading between the two distinct periods of British life, the Victorian era and the twentieth-century. Fowles, however, especially stresses the fact that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is not a historical novel since, as a novelist, he is not interested in writing history (1998: 14). In addition to this, Fowles' description of the emergence of this novel for the first time in the writer's history as an idea in his mind is very much like the opening scene of his *Mantissa* where the novelist protagonist imagines the first letters, words and sentences of his forthcoming work.

Analogous to the unusually coincidental development of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in the writer's mind from a single image of an enigmatic woman,<sup>15</sup> Fowles started to formulate his first written novel, *The Magus*, from the image of a villa that he had seen on a Greek island, Spetsai, where he served as an English teacher at a boarding school in 1952.<sup>16</sup> These geographical and architectural images – the island and the building – were so influential and persistent in his mind that Fowles used these spaces as the setting of this remarkable novel. He acknowledges that “The Magus ... sprang from a very trivial visit to a villa on a Greek island; nothing in the least unusual happened. But in my unconscious I kept arriving at the place again and again; something wanted to happen there, something that had not happened to me at the time. Why it should have been at that villa, that one visit, among so many thousands of other possible launching pads, I do not know” (1998: 16).

In the above example, it was the novelist's unconscious that formed the special relationship between the writing and the space. The novelist, however, was unaware of the truth that lied beneath and shaped this relationship. As it is noticeable in *The Magus*, space becomes the central stimulus to writing the novel. This is valid not only for Fowles the novelist, but also for one of Fowles' characters, the magician, who prepares on the same island a special game played to the protagonist of the novel. Both the island and the villa become the stage where a play is directed, or a novel is written. Space was occasionally the source of magic and inspiration for Fowles. It necessarily stimulates his writing by forming in the writer's mind unforgettable images that Fowles then recollects and rearranges during the process of writing his fiction.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Fowles, in this novel, tells the reader the story of Sarah Woodruff.

<sup>16</sup> The island where the story of the novel mostly takes place becomes the stage where a game is played for the protagonist of the novel.

<sup>17</sup> The process of creation through recollection is prevalent in poetry as well. Similar to the relation between writing and space, poets too, “place or displace the characters into romantic or distressing atmospheres. Strangers and strange places cause not to a new discovery but to the remembrance of a human feeling forgotten in the hectic life style. The place stands as a symbol for expressing the notion of losing and realities of life” (Altunsoy 2010: 147).

## V. CONCLUSION

This study has specially concentrated on the most explicitly autobiographical of Fowles' non-fiction writing where the reader can discover the most confessional statements about what writing means to the novelist. Therefore, a comparative reading between Fowles' selected autobiographical essays collected and published in his *Wormholes* and some of his novels, *The Magus*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Mantissa* in particular, has been made. As a result, such a reading has provided an insight into the questions of the meanings and the significance of writing and the relationship between writing and different places – houses, schools and countries – for a particular writer.

However, it would still be misleading to conclude that Fowles as a novelist could write his works without any obstacles. On the contrary, it is argued in Fowles' autobiographical non-fiction that writing was never an easy enterprise for the novelist. Fowles even illustrates the activity of writing in terms of the myth of Pygmalion – the archetype of the artist who tragically falls in love with his own artistic creation – obviously referring not only to the emotional but also to the intellectual frustrations that he frequently had during the course of artistic creation – writing.

Writing was potentially painful for Fowles as he believed that there had to be truly love between the artist and the work – or the muse. And corresponding to this particular perception, Fowles rather bravely claims that a writer must be a narcissist who is, like the story of the myth of Pygmalion, in love with his own artistic achievement. According to Fowles, characters are like children or lover(s) of the writer. Therefore, characters naturally need constant attention. This means that the writer has to listen to, watch and admire the characters. After this honest remark, it becomes ironical enough to remember that Fowles wrote the first draft of *The Collector* in a period shorter than a month. Fowles was unquestionably an energetic writer.

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