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Engendered Edens: Postmodern Landscapes in Novels by John Fowles and Julian Barnes

Jill Elizabeth Wagner
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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ENGENDERED EDENS:
POSTMODERN LANDSCAPES IN NOVELS
BY JOHN FOWLES AND JULIAN BARNES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Jill Elizabeth Wagner

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania
The School of Graduate Studies and Research
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Jill Elizabeth Wagner

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Cheryl Wilson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English, Advisor

Christopher Orchard, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English

Mike Sell, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English

ACCEPTED

Michele S. Schwietz, Ph.D.
Assistant Dean for Research
The School of Graduate Studies and Research

Title: Engendered Edens: Postmodern Landscapes in Novels by John Fowles and Julian Barnes

Author: Jill E. Wagner

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Cheryl Wilson

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Christopher Orchard
Dr. Mike Sell

This study evaluates the ways gendered landscapes in postmodern novels by John Fowles and Julian Barnes challenge the reader-as-explorer's assumptions about gender's fluidity and craft what Sigmund Freud might call "polymorphous perversity." It examines how authors rely on Edenic images of landscape to shape the future and engender narratologically androgynous texts. Using ecofeminism and psychoanalysis as "lenses," I examine gendered geographical, national, and textual landscapes in several late-Victorian novels and contemporary British novels by John Fowles and Julian Barnes.

The earlier novels seem locked in a rigid understanding of masculine privilege as the heroes seek an impossible virgin/mother/lover figure in the form of an "other" landscape, while Fowles and Barnes's protagonists are immersed in an ageless "lost domain" before being humbled by its Edenic, womb-like and tomb-like characteristics. The geographical landscapes in *The Magus*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, and *Staring at the Sun* impress and cause psychological change by providing the viewer with a new perspective on time and the dangers of romantic idealization. Via national landscapes in Fowles's *Daniel Martin* and *The Magus* and Barnes's *England, England*, the authors embrace postmodern fragmentation, revealed via their protagonists' wavering attitudes toward Englishness, self-imposed departures from their homeland, and comparisons between "mother country" England and "other"

national landscapes. Reading *Mantissa*, *A Maggot*, *Flaubert's Parrot*, and *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* as textual landscapes, I show how Fowles and Barnes undermine gender categorization supported by “traditional” novelistic structure. The authors contest gender-specific narrative constructions with complex subjectivities, dually gendered narrative patterns, complicated climactic moments, temporal experimentation, and suggestive closure. The result is a new fluidly gendered narrative form.

An understanding of gendered landscapes in postmodern novels can enrich a reader's experience by forcing him or her to pay attention to details otherwise overlooked--details that better reveal the characters' motivations and psychological transformations on their narrative journeys. Via their sophisticated geographical, national, and textual landscapes, Fowles and Barnes leave a literary legacy: novels that, in postmodern fashion, create pleasure-seeking readers-as-explorers who celebrate the certainty of gender uncertainty.

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INTRODUCTION

On the beach of Bourani in Greece, young, idealistic Nicholas Urfe discovers a book left for him to read, with a cryptic passage marked by an as-yet unknown person--the magus himself:

We shall not cease from exploration

And the end of all our exploring

Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time.

The puzzling words are from section V of “Little Gidding” by T. S. Eliot, and neither Urfe nor the reader at that point in the novel has any idea of the truth the passage contains. Like Urfe, the reader is about to engage in a process of discovery that reshapes his or her thinking about the power and fluidity of gender. In true postmodern fashion, the reader’s exploration yields answers that in turn provide even more questions--queries that take the reader back to the beginning of the book for a new, richer, androgynous reading journey. This is also a metacritical comment on my own experience as both reader and writer.

Eliot’s passage raises a number of questions for Urfe and for the contemporary reader of the British novel: How can the understanding of gendered landscapes in postmodern novels enrich the reader’s experience, challenge his or her assumptions about gender and its fluidity, and craft what the “father of psychoanalysis” Sigmund Freud might call “polymorphous perversity” if he were to directly apply his theories of infantile sexuality to postmodern narrative? How do authors look to the past, relying on Edenic images of landscape to shape the future, engendering narratologically androgynous texts

and readers-as-explorers metaphorically in drag? My principle purpose is to answer these questions by unearthing gendered geographical, national, and textual landscapes in several contemporary British novels by John Fowles and Julian Barnes.

My study will rely on various definitions of gendered, especially feminized, landscapes and notions of postmodern nature and place. Ultimately, it will articulate Fowles and Barnes's ideal postmodern reader as "polymorphously perverse," or able to find pleasure in all parts of the textual body, and the authors' landscapes as postmodern engendered Edens--places birthed from the authors' creative minds, marked by androgyny via narrators' voices, and Edenic in their perfection of illustrating gender fluidity.

The word "landscape" throughout my textual examination should be read as a complex entity that continually shapes and is continually shaped by its user. It continues to be an active and powerful indicator of contemporary social attitudes, specifically about power. Who controls landscape and how is it controlled? Geographer and author Yi-Fu Tuan presents a historically enduring definition of the term's two parts, noting:

Land, the first part of the word landscape, has ancient roots that go back to the Middle Ages and beyond. Land is a geographical unit....To shape (that is, to modify and create) constitutes the second part of the word *landscape--scape* being a variant spelling of *shape*. What, then, is a landscape in its root meaning? It is a land shaped by a people, their institutions and customs. (qtd. in Olwig xiii-xiv)

Tuan indicates that landscape is acted upon (here, by authors who intentionally create it, characters and narrators who directly or indirectly describe it, and readers who analyze

it), but I contest that landscape can be just as active as those who view and cross it (or read it), providing intellectual pleasure or aggravation to them. It can shape them. “Landscape” then is an undeniably illuminating term in contemporary culture. In *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture*, Brian Jarvis claims that “Space/place/landscape is always represented in relation to cultural codes that are embedded in social power structures” (7). This continues to be the case. Thus, “reading” a landscape is a window into the way a world is structured--how land is perceived and used, who has authority to manipulate it, etc. The novelist’s creation and depiction of a particular landscape reveals much beyond the covers of the book in which it is enclosed.

Each of Fowles and Barnes’s books expands rather than limits the reader’s engagement with the text. Both authors blur the line between reader and character, so the reader encounters each novel and its geographical, national, and textual landscapes as a traveler greets undiscovered terrain, with curiosity and excitement. Both reader and character exit the world they know and move towards a mutual goal, the reader engaging with a narrative plot while the character crosses a geographical one. Both become explorers--a pleasurable problematic term that I especially negotiate with in the final chapter.

Because the term “explore,” like “landscape,” is foundational to my analysis, I must explain how its opposing connotations, which are deeply problematic, actually demonstrate the term’s helpfully divisive gender nuances. This is precisely because Fowles and Barnes’s literary experimentation with geographical, national, and, especially, textual landscapes is bound up in intermingled metaphors of finding pleasure in the

external environment and in the body. If the postmodern reader fully engages with the implications of using the terms “explore” and “reader-as-explorer,” Fowles and Barnes’s texts, which could be seen as problematically pleasurable from a biased narrative standpoint, invite what Freud might call polymorphously perverse readings instead.

To the reader both aware of and sensitive to postcolonial issues and the problems inherent in the pervasive nature/culture dualism, the word “explore” raises disturbing questions about sexuality and landscape. Controversial American gynecologist J. Marion Sims, referred to as the “Father of Gynecology,” writes in 1845 after inserting a rudimentary speculum into a human vagina, “I saw everything as no man had ever seen before....I felt like an explorer...who first views a new and important territory” (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 33). From the awe-filled perspective made evident by his telling remarks, as well as Sims’s control over the de-personalized body he “explores” in the name of science, it is clear that landscape can be strongly connected to definitions of femininity and the female body--and the power inherent in construction of those definitions. (It should also be noted that Sims’s patients and subjects of experimental surgeries were African-American slave women). The process of exploration is embedded in masculinist ideology and implies capturing, taking over, changing, and manipulating. Steven Adams and Anna Gruetzner Robins elaborate on the male explorer’s “rights”:

The idea of the male explorer, who enjoys tremendous adventures while traveling the globe, plundering and conquering Mother Nature, was once deeply embedded in modern consciousness. Until the impact of feminism and the environmental movement, the nether reaches and uncharted terrain of the globe continued to be the exclusive territory of the male hero as

personified in the endlessly mutating characters of adventure movies,
comic strips and television series set against a jungle background. (12)

When the landscape is feminized, as Adams and Robins stress it is in popular culture, the explorer, by simple implication, becomes a figure of destructive power--a rapist manipulating an "other" virgin environment at will. Gendering landscape divides the explorer and explored into categories of subject and object, setting up a clear power structure that elevates the explorer. In *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, Susan Griffin poetically describes the industrious explorer: "He feels undiscovered grasses tremble in wait for him, he imagines mysterious lakes glistening revelation, he knows there are meadows, ignorant of his being, which will open to him....Despite all dangers, he penetrates farther....He has pierced the veiling mountains, ridden the rivers, spanned the valley, measured the gorge: he has discovered" (48). If the reader takes into account Laura Mulvey's arguments about power asymmetry in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," demanding that the reader "explore" also terminologically forces the reader to adopt the epistemological position of a heterosexual male. Gillian Rose notes the phallogentrism of the geographic gaze (101). It forces the reader into a gendered role. "Exploring" also implies a unidirectional activity, further reinforcing a masculine reading as narratologically defined. For the reader-as-explorer, reading becomes a penetrative, suggestive act. It implies one climactic goal and building excitement leading to that goal.

However, if the reader focuses on the text as a body and other connotative possibilities of "explore," terming the reader an explorer proposes new theoretical possibilities. From a sensual perspective, to explore the body suggests *opposite* movement patterns and destinations of landscape exploration. Rather than setting up a

goal-oriented journey and clearly delineated power structure, the act of exploration invites the expression of feminine desire as defined narratologically as well as mutual erotic satisfaction. In this context, “to explore” is to touch repeatedly, for example to move the hand over the body, from one erogenous zone to another, and bring pleasure to both parties or the self. This mirrors feminine narratological reading patterns and counters the unidirectional motion described above. Instead, it suggests circular, repetitive, varying, non-climactic motility. As a type of reading, it parallels Hélène Cixous’s “feminine writing” as identified in “The Laugh of the Medusa”--writing that is more than an expressive mode but also a “space”--a landscape (249).

To call the reader of Fowles and Barnes an explorer is to engage with both diametrically opposed connotative possibilities of the term. For me to use the “explorer-reader” analogy is to mimic the techniques Fowles and Barnes use in shaping their geographical, national, and textual landscapes to engage more fully with issues of gender. I imply that the reader must embrace the term in its problematic glory and employ both connotations. First, to be a simultaneous reader and explorer, perusing a novel, means that, as the main character literally moves across the geographical landscape, the reader mentally accompanies him or her. The reader follows the plot; his or her eyes traverse the physical text. It also means that Fowles and Barnes encourage the reader to negotiate with the theoretical questions they set up with their postmodern gendered landscapes. The “reader-as-explorer,” then, becomes a polymorphously perverse reader; like a young child, according to Freud, he or she is able to find erotic pleasure in any part of the (textual) body (xlvi). He or she must be open to “literary arousal,” to discovering delight in the text in unexpected ways. While Fowles and Barnes’s postmodern novels

challenge notions of masculinity and femininity, my analogy between the reader and explorer similarly aims to create a critically-aware reader who is theoretically androgynous by choice.

In addition to clarification of terms such as “landscape” and “exploration,” elucidation of the theoretical constructs that underpin my analysis, primarily ecofeminism and psychoanalysis, is critical before turning to the texts themselves. Ecofeminism allows critics and readers to negotiate with issues of gendered power in place, biological essentialism, the nature/culture dichotomy, and the nature of nature--issues raised by gendering landscape, especially geographical. But to declare oneself an ecofeminist is not a simple answer to an incredibly complex theoretical problem about gender. Rather, it raises more questions with which ecofeminists such as Naomi Guttman, Lawrence Buell, and Ynestra King (and Fowles and Barnes) grapple: Should one argue that the patriarchal association between women and nature is limiting or empowering? Must embracing ecofeminism equate to rejecting science? Are women biologically, inherently, or culturally “closer” to nature than men are? What are the implications of ecofeminists striving for opposing goals under the same theoretical banner? The joy and dilemma of fiction is that it allows Fowles and Barnes (or their characters) to tackle issues of gender without having to explicitly articulate their answers or even consistently adhere to any specific ecofeminist or anti-ecofeminist position. I have discovered the wisdom of their conscious indecision as portrayed in their novels, for each position at present unfortunately is a limiting one that pushes women, men, and/or nature into a position of “other”--a move that merely redistributes power rather than equalizing the imbalance.

Ecocritics face the ramifications of associations among land, nature, and woman subconsciously “established” especially in the minds of western society as a result of historical treatment of landscape. The opposition of feminized nature and masculine culture, reason, and art has been similarly constructed. The latter three, after all, fall within the “privileged domain of the master...” (Plumwood 3)--note the gender of the one in control--and a significant number of Fowles and Barnes’s narrators and protagonists are “masters,” males who at least initially flaunt their affinity with aspects of culture and their superiority to their surroundings. They emerge from a well-established tradition of thought; hence their historical “right” to land. Rose claims the separation of a feminine Nature and (hu)man culture was determined in classical times (*Feminism* 68). This nearly unconscious division continues into the present. Again, a number of contemporary ecocritics note the nature/culture dualism and its endurance. Stacy Alaimo in *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* draws attention to the opposition between the two terms and how the theoretical conflict resonates in ongoing attempts to define “gender” (5). The problem endures in the western world (like the widely accepted belief in an inherent link between nature and woman), according to Val Plumwood in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*: “The association of women with nature and men with culture or reason *can still be seen* as providing much of the basis of the cultural elaboration of women’s oppression...” (11, emphasis added).

The division between feminized nature and masculinized culture, played out in geographical landscapes, raises a number of problems for feminists and ecocritics. Alaimo argues, “Defining woman as that which is mired in nature thrusts woman outside the domain of human subjectivity, rationality, and agency....Whereas men mark their own

transcendent subjectivity by separating themselves from the natural world, women, seen as the embodiment of nature, are doomed to immanence and otherness” (2-3). Such beliefs thrust both genders back into a limiting framework of biologically essentialist tenets. I show how Fowles and Barnes actively move outside this framework by engaging with the ongoing opposition between a feminized nature and masculine culture, especially within the geographical and national landscapes of their texts.

Throughout my study, from its emphasis on “polymorphous perversity” to its rejection of an Oedipal narrative model to its general interest in gender issues, psychoanalytic criticism plays a significant theoretical role similar to ecofeminism. The psychoanalytic process is itself a spatial one related to landscape; Freud compares it to excavation of ancient metropolises (Burden “Introduction” 20). Rose argues that “geography’s pleasure in landscape images can be interpreted through the psychoanalytic terms across with the gaze is made--loss, lack, desire and sexual difference” (*Feminism* 104). Freud’s theories regarding human sexuality and manifestation of hidden motivations, published around the turn of the twentieth century, specifically inform my analysis of the late-Victorian novels that form the counterpoint to Fowles and Barnes’s postmodern novels, especially the geographical landscapes that function as metaphorical wombs and tombs within the latter. In Fowles and Barnes’s novels, Freud’s influence, and that of neo-Freudians such as post-structuralist Jacques Lacan, inevitably reverberates. Lacan, combining Freudian psychoanalysis and structuralist linguistics, changed culture’s perception of identity, especially as it relates to desire (Gregson 5). In “The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason since Freud,” he writes, “what the psychoanalytic experience discovers in the unconscious is the whole structure of

language” (Lacan 147). In Fowles and Barnes’s novels, characters’ unarticulated desires coincide with idealized geographical descriptions as the characters project their romantic ideals and desire for or discovery of a return to the womb onto their surroundings. The landscape, revealed via language, becomes an impossibly-idealized woman, virginal, maternal, and sexual.

Arguably passé, the psychoanalytic dimension of my work is nevertheless a carefully used critical part because it remains relevant to discourses of gender and it illuminates the characters’ descriptions of landscape. Michael Kahn writes of Freud, “He is a deep explorer of the human condition in a tradition that goes back to Sophocles and Shakespeare...” (7). He was, and is, a powerful reader of culture. The psychoanalyst’s theories, despite limitations, continue to resonate a century after their pronouncement, and Fowles and Barnes are clearly “old-fashioned” and under the influence of Freud’s cultural resonance. I counter the central problem critics raise against psychoanalysis--its inattention to difference of culture or biology--by in a sense flaunting it, just as I do in my use of “explore” and just as Fowles and Barnes do with narratological divisions. Freud’s phallogocentrism becomes fodder for, not a stumbling block to, my study. Further, in Jerry Aline Flieger’s *Is Oedipus Online?: Siting Freud after Freud*, the author points out that Freud himself was fully aware of such shortcomings of his theories:

The ethical objections to Freud tend to overlook the fact that the most controversial issues in psychoanalysis...are raised in Freud’s own work.

As for the challenge from neurobiology, we need to recall that Freud himself believed that there was a somatic correlate to every psychic symptom he described; he fully expected psychoanalysis to be revised in

light of future medical findings....Freud always viewed psychoanalysis as a work in progress... (9, 265)

Susan Winnett, too, indicates that Freud was troubled by his own Oedipal model theory's admittedly unsatisfactory explanation of the female experience (506). It is clear that Freud looked forward to a future that revised, corrected, and updated his psychological explanations--a future which I believe Fowles and Barnes envision. (Neo-Freudian Lacan also celebrates the "paranoid structure of knowledge," exhibiting skepticism about *any* consistent theory [Jackson 143]). Psychoanalysis now allows a postmodernist to adopt certain insights and reject others.

In 1984, interviewer Carol M. Barnum asked Fowles about the strength of Freudian and Jungian psychology as devices for analyzing the psychopathology of the novel, and Fowles replied, "Freud and Jung were both very close to novelists themselves, or myth creators...but they provide very useful scales or maps. I have often found psychoanalytic and psychiatric investigations of books a great deal more fertile than purely literary (or classifying) ones" ("Interview" 109-10). It is notable that Fowles not only mentions his similarities to both Freud and a neo-Freudian but also uses words linked to landscape exploration ("maps") and sexuality ("fertile"). Barnes, too, offers a nod to Freudian thought when he employs abundant dream imagery throughout his works, even including a section entitled "Psychoanalysis" during the "examination" chapter in *Flaubert's Parrot*.

Psychoanalysis is also crucial because it shares many characteristics with postmodernism as it continues to be shaped and reshaped, viewed and reviewed. For example, Roger Horrocks in *Freud Revisited: Psychoanalytic Themes in the Postmodern*

Age points out that deconstruction of the stable human subject and “dethroning of rationality” are common themes to both psychoanalysis and postmodernism (9).

Horrocks provides one example: “It is possible for a contemporary feminist to reject Freud’s ‘phallogentric’ views on women and female sexuality while at the same time claiming the right to employ Freudian notions of the unconscious, repression, infantile sexuality, and so on” (19). This I believe is what both Fowles and Barnes aim to do within their postmodern novels.

I view Fowles and Barnes as both postmodern and postmodernist. All of their novels were published during what many critics consider the postmodern era, i.e. the historical period following World War II (1945 is one of the earliest of many contested dates designated as the birth of postmodernism), as well as during postmodernity, the concomitant period whose style of thought is self-consciously suspicious of classical notions--such as a feminized view of nature. Fowles and Barnes are also actively engaged with theoretical questions of place and space raised by postmodern culture, especially architectural and technological advances. Whether the reader identifies the advent of postmodernism as a definable cultural phenomenon, a style in art and architecture, a description of a historical era, a situation of knowledge, a theory of communication, or Charles Newman’s famous declaration of “vainglorious contemporary artists following circus elephants of Modernism with snow shovels,” Fowles and Barnes undeniably blend literary genres and styles and thus attempt to break free of modernist forms. The postmodern moment, if not embraced and blatantly evidenced by postmodernist stylistic features (as in Fowles’s intrusive author/narrator in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and Barnes’s evasion of genre classification in *A History of the*

World in 10 ½ Chapters), is inevitably injected into the novels. Distinguishing themselves from modernism's subjective construction of reality, Fowles and Barnes linguistically construct reality.

Using a term helpful to postcolonial criticism but deliberately removed from a postcolonial context ("explore"), ecofeminist controversy, and psychoanalytic suggestions as "lenses" through which I view Fowles and Barnes's postmodern texts to "read gender," and keeping Tuan's definition of landscape in mind, I define landscape broadly but specifically. Regarding the geographical landscape, I refer to a literal physical space or place, distinguishing between a "traditional" understanding of the term as a "natural" outdoor setting as nature fashions it (i.e. a garden, water body, mountain, cave, forest, etc.) and a humanly created place envisioned, constructed, and established before the present moment, before the central action of the plot, depicted in each novel. In *England, England*, Barnes molds another type of distinctly postmodern novelistic geographical landscape which I define as a "merged" place and elaborate upon in my discussion of gendered national landscapes. This type of landscape evades easy categorization and is neither wholly "natural" nor constructed by humans. Instead, it is fashioned when a primary character in a novel enters a hitherto "natural" place in the novel's present time, intentionally changing that place solely for human gain. Often, the natural landscape is irreversibly damaged as a result, and the destruction becomes a critical plot element fueling the narrative action. Notably, Barnes's "England, England" is the only type of "merged" landscape that fully fits my definition within the body of postmodern works I examine.

All three categories of geographical landscapes--natural, humanly fashioned, and merged--can be feminized by characters and narrators in a variety of intermingled ways. A “feminized landscape” as I use the terminology is a space or place that is overtly described as mirroring feminine features, is referred to with feminine pronouns (“she,” “her,” etc.), and/or exhibits building or landform features that suggest female anatomy, especially erotic or reproductive organs (breasts, genitals, womb, etc.). It may be specifically designed or designated for women or be a place that women traditionally inhabit. It can be closely associated with a woman and/or can be contrasted with “cultured” spaces by its chaotic aspects and power to arouse a subject’s intense emotions. The feminization of the geographical landscapes in the novels is often revealed by the narrators’ and/or protagonists’ combination of gendering techniques.

If feminized, in many instances the geographical landscapes in both turn-of-the-twentieth-century and turn-of-the-twenty-first-century novels paradoxically serve those who gender them as, impossibly, both representation of lack and disavowal of lack, both provocative “virgin territory” and reliable, fertile “Mother Nature” or “Mother Earth”--an observation that critics repeatedly elucidate. As a result of such problematic but pervasive labeling, nature and land(scape) were, and still are to a large extent in the western world, used interchangeably. In *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*, Rose says of early New World settlers leaving their old “mother country” England and finding themselves in a provocative new environment that both protects and titillates:

The [newly discovered] land was imagined as a mother, whose generosity and abundance were marvelous, Edenic, but which could overwhelm

settlers and corrupt their efforts at self-sufficiency. To distance themselves from this possibility, men continued to work the land, to explore it and to penetrate its mysteries, and this invoked another aspect of land-as-woman, the land as irresistible temptress. (105)

She adds, noting the subsequently personified natural world's manifestation of its "emotions": "The femininity of Nature invoked both the passive and nurturing Mother Nature of organic theories of the self and cosmos, as well as the tempestuous and uncontrollable wild Nature of storms, pestilence and wilderness..." (69). The settlers perceived the natural world's changeability, manifested in weather conditions and harvest prolificacy, as a direct example of its dually feminized character. Max Oelschlaeger, too, in *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* attests to the settlers' characterization of the land as both sensual and maternal when he speaks of "Lord Man" in both a "whore's" and "his mother's house" (311). His use of "Lord Man" is especially noteworthy, for it buttresses the second half of Tuan's definition of landscape; here again control is a central issue of negotiation with space. Although none of the characters within Fowles and Barnes's postmodern novels is an early American settler, the attitudes that Gillian Rose and Oelschlaeger note are evident within their novels (as Urfe traipses over a feminized and maternalized Greece, for example). Over and over again, the reader finds feminization of the same landscape as both caring maternal figure and sensually enticing virgin.

Regarding gendering of the national landscape, I refer primarily to Fowles and Barnes's characters' homeland and secondly to countries with which England is compared and contrasted. By national landscape, I mean the entirety of the country or

portions of it that are historically representative of it: in the case of England, these places include London, Oxford, Staffordshire, Devon, and the Undercliff, for example. A national landscape can exhibit any of a series of gendered features, including the characters' treatment of England as a "mother country" via their literal residence at the temporal beginning and ending of their novels. The main characters exhibit evident desire to return to a figurative womb--their homeland--as an idealized space after self-imposed exiles, or they relish the space's maternal qualities once they arrive. They also indicate distinct differences between civilized England and wild "other" foreign national landscapes that mark the former as masculine and the latter as feminine. According to the novels' narrators, the cultural habits of the English people also reveal England as a masculine national entity.

Besides interpreting geographical and national landscapes in Fowles and Barnes's postmodern novels, I deconstruct a third type of landscape. By "landscape," I mean reading language as land and therefore each postmodern text as a landscape. The textual landscape is dually gendered via complicated subjectivities and their relationship to and within the textual landscape, morphing (gender-bending) character identities, and interwoven male or female narrative patterns as conventionally defined. The novels complicate climax determination, closure, and chronological development patterns. They open themselves equally well to opposing narratological interpretations. Ultimately, they epitomize new fluidly gendered or androgynous narrative constructions rather than androcentric or feminist forms of narratological interpretation. Louise H. Westling decries the opposite possibility in *The Green Breast of the New World: Landscape, Gender, and American Fiction*: "The 'postmodern mind' cannot afford to fall back into

the destructive gender oppositions that we have seen to be central to American literature and to the long European/Mediterranean/Mesopotamian cultural tradition from which it descends...Concerted efforts must be made to shape new metaphors for the land that are neuter and non-anthropomorphic” (167). If the reader extends Westling’s use of specifically American “land” to mean textual landscape, Fowles and Barnes are doing just that--creating new, fluidly gendered narratological metaphors.

The postmodern textual landscapes of both Fowles and Barnes are carefully selected. I choose Fowles because gender’s interplay with place is so rich and multifaceted within his oeuvre. The role of his characters’ genders is a frequently criticized topic, and yet geography, Englishness, and narratology as manifestations of postmodern gender are largely overlooked. Despite his literary importance--Fowles’s first written (though second published) work *The Magus* is included on *Time* magazine’s “100 Best Novels” 2005 list and the Random House list of the best English-language novels of the twentieth century, for example--there are also less than a dozen full-length works of academic criticism written in English devoted solely to his writing, and several of them were published before Fowles released his later (and arguably most experimental and controversial) fictional works. In addition, with the exception of Thomas M. Wilson’s *The Recurrent Green Universe of John Fowles*, published in 2006, no single-authored work about Fowles’s elaborate attention to and treatment of natural place exists, and Wilson’s work mostly evades both discussion of gender and Fowles’s postmodern manipulation of form and subject matter. Editor James R. Aubrey’s 1999 collection of essays, *John Fowles and Nature: Fourteen Perspectives on Landscape*, also overlooks in-depth consideration of the intersection between gender, place, and postmodernism

across the spectrum of Fowles's novels. Further, there is only one published biography about Fowles, Eileen Warburton's 2004 *John Fowles: A Life in Two Worlds*. The relative lack of scholarly attention Fowles has received in the past is difficult to explain, especially given his acknowledged literary innovations, manifested in the frequency that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has on academic reading lists, the cult status of *The Magus*, popular media translation of *The Collector* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and expertise trying to achieve his goal of writing one text in every genre.

I choose Barnes because his textual experimentation is groundbreaking--like Fowles, none of his novels is like another in form or focus--and yet he remains comparatively obscure as a studied author. Though he is the recipient of the Somerset Maugham Award, two Booker Prize nominations, the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, E. M. Forster Award, Gutenberg Prize, Prix Femina, Shakespeare Prize, and Austrian State Prize for European Literature, among other literary accolades, there exists only a handful of book-length works of criticism about his novels. In fact, Barnes's official website's "resources and scholarship" section (<http://www.julianbarnes.com/resources/index.html>) lists only four: Merritt Moseley's *Understanding Julian Barnes*, Bruce Sesto's *Language, History, and Metanarrative in the Fiction of Julian Barnes*, Matthew Pateman's *Julian Barnes*, and Vanessa Guignery's *The Fiction of Julian Barnes*. Barnes is also an apt counterpart to Fowles for a study on gendered landscapes because he likewise experiments with techniques that mark national and textual landscapes as androgynous. Further, while Fowles tends to include far more traditional geographical landscapes than humanly fashioned places in his novels, Barnes presents the opposite kind of landscape in the form of postmodern quasi-amusement park/independent state

England, England in *England, England*. In this novel and others, his heroes are submerged in worlds of technology, even futuristic/postapocalyptic realms--worlds which nevertheless can reveal much about the heroes' attitudes toward gender and place but have been overlooked by critics who focus on Barnes's novelistic treatment of history. The problem with this limited approach is that a shift has occurred from the modern period to the postmodern period; postmodern literary forms manipulate chronologies, molding the reader's understanding of historical time. What critics tend to miss is that this shift is largely done through authorial redefinitions of place. "Place" and "space"--"landscape"--must be redefined. Modernist terrain becomes postmodern space as modern concentration on temporality becomes postmodern concentration on space.

The important connection between space and postmodernism specifically in novels in general has been overlooked. In *Sublime Desire: History and Post-1960s Fiction*, Amy J. Elias claims, "Many theorists linking postmodernism to spatiality have focused on poetry..." (115). Considerations of space tend to focus on specific postmodern places in the postmodern novel--futuristic cities and technologized locales, rather than consideration of a collective postmodern place *or* manipulations and descriptions of spaces and places in novels that are postmodern in form rather than subject (or postmodern in both). As the world continues to grow smaller in the twenty-first century due to an explosion of communication advancements, definitions of space must grow in importance. The earth's future is at stake.

Many of the published critical sources mentioning "gendered landscape," "feminized landscape," "feminine landscape," or "female landscape" in general focus on writing that lends itself to rich postcolonial readings because it features prominent

national landscapes, many of them English¹. Despite this wealth of information, or perhaps because of it, postcolonial analysis of landscape is not a focus of my study. The intersection between postcolonialism and landscape is a complex one that demands its own studies.

A study of specifically *postmodern* novels' gender sensitivity expressed via various landscapes is critical because, while attention has been given to literary depictions of woman-as-nature played out in landscapes within them, nature-as-woman has been largely overlooked except from a postcolonial perspective. Differently focused studies that have been done on feminized/feminine/female landscapes--on gendered landscapes in general--focus on novelistic works written many years prior to the

¹ For example, in Shakespeare's seventeenth-century play *Cymbeline*, England is portrayed as a feminine landscape to be surveyed, and Jeanne Addison Roberts notes the "Wild female eroticism" in Shakespeare's depictions of Africa and America (6, 8). I note several more of an extensive list of sources that discuss various intersections of gender and nation, especially in fiction, from a postcolonial perspective. Sara Mills' *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (1991) examines women's travel writing. Jill Heydt considers Jane Austen's mutual constructions of womanhood, national identity, and landscape in "Liberty, Connection, and Tyranny: The Novels of Jane Austen and the Aesthetic Movement of the Picturesque." In *Under English Eyes: Constructions of Europe in Early Twentieth-Century British Fiction* (2000), Jopi Nyman describes Erskine Childer's landscapes as explicitly gendered in his 1903 "invasion" novel *The Riddle of the Sands: A Record of Secret Service*; Nyman claims the landscape has "(stereotypically) feminine attributes signifying instability and change..." (87). Aijaz Ahmad's *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literature* (1992) explores gender issues in "Third World literature," and Laura E. Donaldson's *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender, and Empire Building* (1993) portrays woman as colonized and man as colonizer. Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994) explicitly links postmodernism and postcolonial theory. In *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing* (1995), author Deirdre David writes of England as "mother country" and Victorian women "writing the nation." Susan Morgan's *Place Matters: Gendered Geography in Victorian Women's Travel Books about Southeast Asia* (1996) indicates that "discourses are marked by gender" (3) and discusses a feminized "east," drawing from Edward Said's analysis of the sexual component of the Orient in *Orientalism*. Lastly, in *The Legacy of Boadicea: Gender and Nation in Early Modern England* (1998), Jodi Mikalachki depicts the relationship between male colonizer and feminized land, much like Donaldson's text.

postmodern moment, poetry, travel writing, and American literature, or they are brief. All of these studies are certainly helpful in creating a historical and theoretical context for the postmodern texts in this study, but none of those particular literary landscapes is my focus and none answer the questions that I pose about gender fluidity, polymorphous perversity, or the prospective portrayal of gendered landscapes in, specifically, contemporary and unwritten future *British novels*.

Past criticism of a few early British novels builds a historical and contextual foundation for my analysis of gendered landscape. For example, Daniel Defoe's 1719 novel *Robinson Crusoe* is the subject of several short studies of gendered landscape. Robyn Weigman analyzes Crusoe's fashioning of a feminized landscape in "Economies of the Body: Gendered Sites in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Roxana*" in *Criticism* 31.1 (1989). Similarly, Crusoe's inhabitation of a gendered landscape is discussed briefly in Susan Spencer, Margo Collins, Albert J. Rivero, and George Justice's *The Eighteenth-Century Novel* (2004). And in one chapter in *Masculinities without Men?: Female Masculinity in Twentieth-Century Fictions* (2004), Jean Bobby Noble describes a feminized landscape that mirrors character Anna's body in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, published in 1928.

Early poems are also sites for short studies of gendered landscape. Landscapes of poetry by John Donne and Samuel Taylor Coleridge receive scholarly mention, as does "Kubla Khan" in Alan Richardson's *British Romanticism and the Science of the Mind* (2001). Similarly, Inderpal Grewal in *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (1996) points out the similarities between William Wordsworth's

poetic landscapes and women--fertility, nurturing capacity, and servile purpose for the poet (33).

The most extensive scholarship on gendered landscapes that feature nature-as-woman is devoted to American nonfiction rather than British or world fiction, especially that of feminized descriptions of the frontier during westward expansion toward “Manifest Destiny.” Ecofeminist Annette Kolodny’s 1975 *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* helpfully exposes depictions of a feminine and feminized frontier in literature but is limited to American writers; also, it was published just prior to the spread of postmodernism throughout the arts (according to some definitions of the term, explained above) and therefore excludes the type of novels that are my predominant concern. There is no comparable recent extended study of contemporary British texts. I begin filling in this critical gap, employing sources such as Rose’s *Feminism and Geography*, Greg Garrard’s *Ecocriticism*, Kate Soper’s “Naturalized Woman and Feminized Nature” and *What Is Nature?: Culture, Politics, and the Non-Human*, and Plumwood’s *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* while highlighting the fluidity of gender in the postmodern moment.

I look to the foundational work of scholars, ecocritics, and psychoanalysts but also of narratologists to construct my own textual landscape. Several critics address restrictive types of narratology, such as that outlined in Peter Brooks’s *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, that link plot and desire in ways that ignore or exclude the female experience. They helpfully address the shortcomings of an Oedipal design but stop short of suggesting an androgynous narrative design which I argue both Fowles and Barnes employ. Ruth Page decries gender dichotomies of narrative design.

A. S. Anderson advocates a female orgasmic plot pattern, Winnett suggests use of birth and breastfeeding pleasure metaphors in narrative construction, and Cixous describes a type of writing characterized by biological processes of the female body. While their approaches are theoretical steps in the proverbial “right direction,” none quite describes what Fowles and Barnes accomplish. Rather than trading an old androcentric model for a newer feminist one, Fowles and Barnes rely on and intermingle both interpretive models to create an even newer narratological vision.

Besides the gaps in scholarship concerning first, geography, Englishness, and narratology as individual manifestations of postmodern gender; second, authorial redefinitions of gender-informed postmodern place and space; and third, depictions of place-(especially natural place)-as-woman, there is another gap that I address: evidence of linkages among gender, place, and postmodernism in the British novel. This has not been adequately identified, much less scrutinized at length. In *Gender, Identity, and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*, Linda McDowell looks at the construction of gendered spaces, such as the workplace and nation-state, but not those in literature. Similarly, Daphne Spain provides a helpful introduction to gendered spaces in her work of the same title, but her spaces are those outside of the literary world. Griffin’s “Place” in *The Eros of Everyday Life: Essays on Ecology, Gender and Society* and *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* link elements of the natural environment and sensuousness of the human body but lament Western culture’s rejection of any feeling of connectedness with the environment. In the beginning sections of “Landscape in Drag: The Paradox of Feminine Space in Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World*” in *The Greening of Literary Scholarship: Literature, Theory, and the Environment*, Andrea Blair

employs Julia Kristeva's theory of semiotics, Judith Butler's performativity theory, and Gillian Rose's theories and links gender and place. Kristeva defines the prelinguistic semiotic state as that in which an infant feels at one with space before the symbolic challenges a unified sense of self; thus the infant's first landscape is the maternal body. Butler counters Kristeva's biologism, arguing that ways of perceiving landscape can be learned and advocating "ruptures in the reiterative performance" that "mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity..." (Rose *Feminism* 115, Butler 111). I use aspects of Rose's resultant theoretical approach--imagining landscape in drag--to engage with the postmodern novels I have selected.

In chapter one, for comparison purposes, I examine gendered landscapes in British novels that are precursors to postmodern places and spaces. These turn-of-the-twentieth-century novels were popular during their initial publication, feature landscapes rich for literary analysis, and reveal otherwise hidden subtexts about gender. Richard Jefferies's *After London; or, Wild England* (1885), H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1886), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), W. H. Hudson's *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest* (1904), and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) provide a theoretical framework and standard against which I later compare Fowles and Barnes's gender experimentation in their novels; in the century-old British novels, masculinity and femininity are clearly illustrated and separated within the landscapes. In contrast, the late-twentieth- and turn-of-the-twenty-first-century novels mix gender delineations. I select the Victorian novels because each sports an abundance of gendered landscapes due not to postmodern skepticism of gender stability but rather to other concerns: dealing with complicated social issues such as women's rights, evolution, and

patriotism; marking divisions between the natural and constructed cosmopolitan worlds; articulating characters' unconscious desires; portraying England; and adhering to conventional narratological standards.

I examine in turn the geographical, national, and textual landscapes of each turn-of-the-twentieth-century novel. In each text, the protagonist embarks on a dangerous geographical quest, succumbing to the magic and mystery of the natural and presumably Edenic world apart from his or her everyday reality. In the four male-authored Victorian novels, the authors characterize the unconscious desires of their characters via both maternalized and sexualized landscapes. (Burnett does not sexualize Mary's secret garden). Their gendered landscapes that capture the impossible image of the perfect woman as both madonna and seductress include the water bodies of *She* and *Heart of Darkness*, Rima's mother's mountainside in *Green Mansions*, Ayesha's domain in *She*, and the African jungle in *Heart of Darkness*. Feminization of the natural landscape is accomplished via feminine pronouns connected to places, depictions of characters' strong emotional reactions to places, landscape features compared to female anatomy, and links between women and specific places. I then turn to gendered portrayals of the national landscape. Feminized, England functions as a maternal safe haven for the protagonists. Masculinized, the country serves as a symbol of cultural superiority and safety in contrast to wild "other" landscapes like that of Ayesha's nightmarish world in *She*. Finally, I read each text as a narratological landscape that reveals Victorian humanity's sense of mastery over the natural world. All five novels follow a male narrative pattern with a fixed chronology, explorers engaged in a quest, a marked climax near the plot's conclusion, definitive closure, and two male points-of-view (with the exception of a possibly female

omniscient narrator in *The Secret Garden*). In the first chapter, I set up my elucidation of contrast between the Victorian sense of masculine superiority deployed in various landscapes and Fowles and Barnes's postmodern employment of gender malleability.

In chapter two, I contrast the late nineteenth-century novels' questing protagonists' picture of their assumed control over nature as an alluring though dangerous feminized landscape with Fowles and Barnes's protagonists' portrayal of their growing humility and respect toward a feminized Edenic natural world after they stumble into it. Fowles and Barnes's protagonist is immersed in an ageless landscape, a "lost domain," before realizing its Edenic, womb-like (and sometimes tomb-like) characteristics. The landscape in *The Magus*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, and *Staring at the Sun* impresses and causes psychological change by providing the viewer with a new perspective on time, the dangers of romantic idealization, and the fragility of his or her authentic relationships. He or she feminizes the landscape by identifying it as a woman or parts of a woman, emphasizing the ability of a landscape to arouse intense emotions in its explorer or viewer, and making clear associations between a female character and a geographical place.

In chapter three, I show how Fowles and Barnes continue to create provocative masculinized and feminized portrayals of landscapes, here that of national landscapes in Fowles's *Daniel Martin* and *The Magus* and Barnes's *England, England*. The authors again embrace postmodern fragmentation, revealed via their protagonists' wavering attitudes toward England and its citizens, self-imposed departures from their homeland during the central chronological portion of each text, and comparisons between England and "other" gendered national landscapes. The narrators recount the characters' early

perceptions of Englishness, illuminate their psychological growth within foreign countries, and depict their return home to England as a desire to return to the “mother country,” a metaphorical womb. Throughout, I explain how Fowles and Barnes playfully experiment with the notion of nature/culture duality to undermine a unified gendered portrayal of England.

In chapter four, I illustrate the methods by which Fowles and Barnes suggest both awareness of and skepticism toward rigid gender classifications in their textual landscapes and therefore invite what Freud might call the creation of “polymorphously perverse” readers. Before delving into Fowles’s *Mantissa* and *A Maggot* and Barnes’s *Flaubert’s Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, I briefly reiterate my usage of “landscape” and “explore.” As a skeptical “reader-as-explorer” of postmodern textual landscapes, I read beyond a traditional realist or feminist narratological viewpoint and beyond a narratology based on an androcentric Oedipal model into a fluidly gendered or androgynous realm. My study shows how each of the four postmodern novels counters humanity’s sense of mastery typical of the Victorian novels of chapter one, accomplishing this primarily by undermining gender categorization supported by “traditional” predictable novelistic structure. Fowles and Barnes contest gender-specific narrative constructions in numerous ways: complex subjectivities, dually gendered narrative patterns, complicated climactic moments, temporal experimentation, and suggestive closure. The result is a new fluidly gendered narrative form that acknowledges, uses, and undermines traditionally-understood narratological principles.

Ultimately, my findings concerning geographical, national, and textual landscapes suggest broader claims about the significance of interwoven nature, place,

postmodernism, and gender in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century British novel. All of these issues are critical to a rich understanding of Fowles and Barnes's novels. All of them are "hot topics"--ecocritics, literary theorists, and feminists seek to enlarge conversation about each of them. But all of these are merely pieces of a puzzle, pieces of a larger picture. They must be put together, aligned properly, to give the reader a sense of, to borrow from Joyce Carol Oates, where the contemporary British novel is going and where it has been. Fowles and Barnes blur and redefine foundational terms that have oriented past readers and move the terms into the twenty-first century. By doing so, they are bending genre boundaries and refashioning old literary "spaces." They are creating polymorphously perverse readers. They are also creating a new type of landscape--a foundation for future British novels. Alaimo calls for the kind of action that Fowles and Barnes actively pursue, giving voice to the voiceless via their novels: "neither a feminist retreat into nature where we pose as 'angel[s] in the ecosystem,' nor a feminist flight from nature is the answer. Instead, *we must transform the gendered concepts--nature, culture, body, mind, object, subject, resource, agent, and others--that have been cultivated to denigrate and silence certain groups of humans as well as nonhuman life*" (13, emphasis added). Once Fowles and Barnes's innovations are fully recognized, they will finally receive the critical attention that they currently lack. Both Fowles and Barnes's novels' portrayals of consciously contradictory gendered landscapes in and of text contribute to each other in a circular fashion specific to the postmodern moment, and this intricate spatial structure and engagement with gender defines the authors' "Englishness" and will solidify their places in literary history.

CHAPTER 1

PRECURSORS TO POSTMODERN PLACE

Cultural phenomena, such as literature, music, art, and other modes of sophisticated entertainment, have always been marked as products of their historical moment. Novels are a telling and accessible example, and a study of the gendering of geographical, national, and textual landscapes in representative turn-of-the-twentieth-century British novels provides a window into the intersection of Victorian ideologies and popular fiction. In these novels, particular social ideologies intersect with intriguing landscapes. Couched within contextual clues and informed by recent ecocritical, feminist, and narratological insights, such a study of gendering overwhelmingly reveals otherwise hidden subtexts in late-nineteenth-century texts that confirm humanity's sense of mastery over the natural world. That world, however, is infused with life and liveliness and frequently thwarts humanity's attempts to control it--and humanity begins to realize its relative powerlessness. In Richard Jefferies's *After London; or, Wild England* (1885), H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1886), Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), W. H. Hudson's *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest* (1904), and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911), the postmodern understanding of gender's fluidity and the problems of binary gender construction are, predictably, nowhere to be found--unlike in Fowles and Barnes's works in which gender's fluidity is a central concern. Instead, in the "traditionally" plotted century-old British novel, masculinity and femininity are clearly demonstrated and deployed across the various landscapes, both British and abroad.

By gendering landscapes, the Victorian authors are able to engage with then-contemporary provocative topics, forcing their characters to negotiate the economic benefits and inhumanity of British colonialism and growing unrest among women striving for equal rights, for example. While responding to a broad sense of historical change and upheaval, the authors grapple with humanity's unstable position in the universe, an issue highlighted by English naturalist Charles Darwin and French philosopher and 1927 Nobel Prize recipient Henri Bergson. Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) elevates the human's position in the universe, while Bergson's theories of free will, time, and spatial representation articulate concerns that advances in science degrade the position of humanity as a central force. The novelists also wrote in the midst of Sigmund Freud's earliest publications on psychopathology and dream interpretations, with their groundbreaking implications for our understanding of human sexuality and motivations. The negotiation of all of these issues--national identity, equality, temporality, evolution, psychoanalysis--finds creative outlets via gendering of landscape.

Physical places of multiple types mark development of the subject's attitudes toward these critical issues and toward femininity on the narrative journey. I refer to outdoor settings that comprise the "natural" (i.e. nonhuman; places as nature creates them) landscape--gardens, forests, bodies of water, caves, mountains, beaches, etc. The feminization of the geographical landscapes in the novels is evident in a variety of oft-intermingled ways: feminine pronouns attached to specific places, the world, and Nature; a subject's intense emotional reaction to a landscape; buildings or landforms resembling female anatomy, especially reproductive organs; and ties between a female character and a geographical place.

These five authors who gender physical landscape embrace the allure and danger of the natural world. Especially in *Heart of Darkness*, *Green Mansions*, and *After London*, they draw attention to the natural world's ephemeral affinity with their imaginative constructions of past and future worlds. The unknown world actively entices the protagonist with what he imagines as wild Edenic perfection but might actually be perilous or even a horrific post-apocalyptic future reality. In *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence*, John Alcorn compares the active nature of geographical place in the turn-of-the-century novel with its predecessors, specifically those novels by Hardy which he considers representative: "Hardy's local spirit of place, which lay like a silent brooding reminder of the conflict between the world of nature and the world of man in society, was essential to the mood of irony in his novels. In the new novel that conflict remains, but the irony tends to disappear as physical place begins to win a victory over civilized society" (60). Alcorn's means of describing physical place as a triumphant warrior is apt, for the "wilderness" is not peaceful, predictable, or gentle. Returning to nature, looking to wild landscape as a way to experience the past or future, is not a simple retreat. Instead, heroes (and, in *The Secret Garden*, a heroine) venture forth from the safety of "civilization" into unknown, untamed geographic locales. Rose claims, "Wild and threatening landscapes haunted Victorian Europe..." (*Feminism* 106). The perilous quest across the landscape is characteristic of the turn-of-the-century British novel.

Alcorn provides this explanation:

the travel hero glosses the landscape for directional signals; his movement across the face of the earth becomes the key element in plot structure....The new novel...evokes spirit of place in terms of two

locations, representing two states of mind or ways of life. The purpose of the leading character is to move from one location to another...from the tight enclosures of England to the freedom of a kind of frontier world of nature. (64)

The protagonists escape, openly embracing potential peril on their quests to post-apocalyptic London, to the “womb of the earth” in Africa, to the jungle’s heart, to Riolama, and to the secret garden.

One of the principle temptations that the natural world offers is the opportunity to simulate going back in time to enter a landscape untouched by time’s inexorable march. This unblemished landscape is alluring but frightening. In *Heart of Darkness*, Charlie Marlow’s emotional response to the African jungle is a powerful example; he portrays the collective natural African world that he traverses on his quest for Congo Inner Station leader Kurtz as both terrifying and majestic. Nature is uncontrollable and overwhelming in its size and age. Marlow mentions “primeval mud” and “primeval forest” in close juxtaposition and ponders Kurtz’s impending burial in the “mould of primeval earth” (128, 176). In another situation, Marlow compares humanity’s smallness in the vast face of the jungle and the resultant complex emotion it spawns, as his boat makes its way through the water: “Trees, trees, millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high; and at their feet, hugging the bank against the stream, crept the little begrimed steamboat, like a sluggish beetle crawling on the floor of a lofty portico. It made you feel very small, very lost, and yet it was not altogether depressing that feeling...We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth...” (138). In its ability to overcome those who explore its face, this African Eden is more frightening than it is perfect.

By feminizing the Venezuelan landscape in *Green Mansions*, Hudson also depicts the allure of the natural world as a connection to an earlier time. Unlike Marlow's description of Africa, this early landscape is one of wonder and perfection--until Abel Guevez de Argensola disrupts its harmony. Elusive forest maiden Rima's forest is initially Edenic in a number of ways. Rima's beautiful voice is the first indication. During Abel's first encounter with Rima--with her remaining out of sight-- Abel is entranced by "a low strain of exquisite bird-melody, wonderfully pure and expressive, unlike any musical sound I had ever heard before" (Hudson 26). Alcorn dissects the sound, calling it "the spirit of Eden. Rima...is the breath and voice of a truth which transcends words because the truth is itself a place: paradise, Eden, Orinoco" (69). Rima's voice, an integral part of the forest landscape, lures Abel. Further, when Abel and Rima first meet in the forest, details of the setting are highly suggestive of the Garden of Eden--the most perfect but dangerous landscape. Only one male and one female are present, like Adam and Eve; Rini's tribe is afraid to visit or hunt for game in the mysterious forest, so no one else is there. Also, pride causes Abel's fall; he notices a beautiful but dangerous three-foot snake nearby and thinks to himself, "I admire you greatly, Sir Serpent...but it is dangerous...to leave an enemy or possible enemy in the rear; the person who does such a thing must be either a bad strategist or a genius, and I am neither" (Hudson 50). In this way, he personifies the snake, just as the serpent in Eden is a representation of the Biblical Satan. And forgetting the snake at the sight of Rima, despite his inward boast about his cautiousness, he advances and the snake bites his foot. Just as in Eden, Abel seeks for a leaf--not to cover himself but to provide medicinal relief, an antidote to the snake venom. And just as in Eden, the animal wounds the human with

devastating results. The snake bite forever links Abel and Rima by establishing their relationship which eventually leads to Rima's murder and the destruction of the forest's virginal status; after Rima's death, the forest is overrun by humans.

In feminizing the forest by associating Rima with it, Abel further reveals the Edenic allure of the natural world. Before meeting Rima, Adamic Abel views the forest as a female companion. He personifies nature's elusiveness and fertility, writing, "Nature is unapproachable with her green, airy canopy, a sun-impregnated cloud..." (Hudson 24). This could be a description of Rima herself: distant, ethereal, and elusive. In her biography of Hudson, Amy D. Ronner calls Rima a pre-Eve woman, a reminder of harmony that characterizes Eden before the fall (61). In fact, Rima is inextricable from nature. She "symbolizes place; Abel finds his location when he finds Rima" (Alcorn 69). She knows the forest's inhabitants, just as Adam and Eve supposedly knew Eden's animals, and she knows the terrain (as evidenced in her ability to rescue wounded Abel during the storm) so well that she practically *is* the forest. Besides sounding like a bird, she wears clothing apparently woven from spiderwebs. She lives in the forest whenever she can. She is its self-proclaimed guardian. Without her, the natives will--and eventually do--overrun her natural home. Also, Rima's early memories of playing with her lame mother looking on take place among the wild trees. When Abel and she play hide-and-seek around a giant mora tree, she seems to disappear, to melt into the leaves of the forest. Abel teasingly declares, within Rima's earshot, "There is no Rima now. She has faded away like a rainbow--like a drop of dew in the sun" (Hudson 74). He also refers to her as "a shadow in the shadow..." (77). Like a chimera, Rima fades out of view seemingly at will. Ronner claims that this ability is due to Rima's true

representation of nature, which changes constantly. Abel's similes and metaphors meld Rima with perfect, recurring but ephemeral aspects of the perfect Edenic world.

Like Marlow and Abel, Sir Felix Aquila in *After London* genders a previously unknown world that beckons him with what he hopes will be Edenic perfection--London before apocalypse and before cosmopolitanism. Also like Marlow and Abel, he finds a landscape much more sinister than he dreams. London is no blissful Eden that no one has yet discovered. Instead, it is the antithesis of paradise. After being drawn by London's mystery, by what H. S. Salt calls "the feeling of unrest and irresistible attraction that London exercises on all the surrounding districts" (58-9), Felix is repulsed by the former city's deadness: "The extreme desolation of the dark and barren ground repelled him; there was not a tree, bush, or living creature, not so much as a buzzing fly" (Jefferies II.22). While the narrator's portrayal of "after London" highlights both the savage wildness and beautiful rebirth of England, this place--the ruins of the city of London, Felix eventually realizes--is a place of wildness and death. The cause of the devastation remains a mystery, but the images of death are clear:

The sun had not sunk, but had disappeared as a disk. In its place was a billow of blood, for so it looked, a vast up-heaved billow of glowing blood surging on the horizon. Over it flickered a tint of palest blue, like that seen in fire. The black waters reflected the glow, and the yellow vapour around was suffused with it....The ground looked, indeed, as if it had been burnt....In the level plain the desolation was yet more marked; there was not a grass-blade or plant; the surface was hard, black, and burned,

resembling iron, and indeed in places it resounded to his feet, though he supposed that was the echo from hollow passages beneath. (II.23)

London is a hellish landscape. The sun looks like blood, there are impressions of bones on the ground, and fiery vapors overcome Felix. The place leaves Felix blackened with a mysterious substance that refuses to wash off in the Lake. He is understandably horrified by the London landscape.

The strange London landscape's dramatic emotional effect is the result of the author's experimentation with temporal conventions. Jefferies draws attention to the fluidity of time via London's weird position--temporally located in a future world but constructed of the literal remnants of the past. It is made of human flesh. The narrator describes the horrid black earth as "composed of the mouldered bodies of millions of men who had passed away in the centuries during which the city existed" (Jefferies II.23). In the entire "Wild England" setting, vicious, unchecked wild nature takes over what humanity has constructed and triumphs over humankind's efforts. This feminine landscape refuses to be manipulated by humanity--or was it manipulated in the past? The apocalypse's cause remains a mystery. Post-apocalyptic London now actively thwarts man's attempts to change nature for personal gains, Felix conveys:

Many scores of men have, I fear, perished in the attempt to enter this fearful place, carried on by their desire of gain....the moment anything be moved, whether it be a bush, or a willow, even a flag, if the ice be broken, the pestilence [noxious yellow vapor] rises yet stronger. Besides which, there are portions which never freeze, and which may be approached unawares, or a turn of the wind may drift the gas towards the explorer....In

the earlier times some bold and adventurous men did indeed succeed in getting a few jewels, but since then the marsh has become more dangerous, and its pestilent character, indeed, increases year by year, as the stagnant water penetrates deeper. So that now for very many years no such attempts have been made. (I.5)

London after the disaster is not quite a natural landscape, but neither is it what I term a “merged” landscape, which is neither entirely “natural” nor constructed by human hands. Instead, a “merged” place is one in which a human principle character enters a “natural” place in the novel’s present time, intentionally endeavoring to change that place solely for human gain. Frequently, this change involves harming the natural landscape--something neither the character nor the narrator recognizes, in many cases. Post-apocalyptic London is “the pestilent fen which is the sole remnant and residue of the former metropolis of the world” (Salt 58). Revengeful, it develops into a place harmful to humanity; it prevents explorers from approaching with its stench and geographical dangers. W. J. Keith draws attention to the unusualness of this reversal of human-nature mastery over the world (116). Where they formerly built and thrived, humans no longer have control over the changes that they make on the landscape. Felix changes the landscape of the strange island he discovers, though he does not intend to have the effects on it that he does. He leaves phosphorescent footprints and he crumbles walls of unknown material--salt? bricks? stone? manmade or natural? Felix doesn’t know, and the narrator doesn’t specify--with a simple touch of his fingers (Jefferies II.23). Looking for an alluring new landscape, Felix instead finds a decaying one and unintentionally

destroys what little is left. This portrayal of a future Eden is horribly distorted, its femininity frightfully disturbed by humanity's presence.

In addition to portraying the allure and danger of the natural world, largely through descriptions of Edenic landscapes with frightening undercurrents, the authors can more precisely and creatively characterize the unconscious desires of their characters by gendering geographical landscapes. This is especially true when the protagonist as narrator articulates his or her desires. After all, Jefferies, Haggard, Conrad, Hudson, and Burnett wrote in the midst of Freud's earliest publications on human sexuality and the manifestation of unconscious drives. Their characters project forbidden desires outward. According to Freud, unconscious factors frequently appear against the "screen" of an unstructured task (Doyle 467). In these novels, the tasks of exploration and discovery are inextricable from the landscapes in which they must be accomplished; Jefferies's, Haggard's, Conrad's, and Hudson's texts are projections of male characters' fantasies. Unarticulated desires dovetail with idealized geographical descriptions. Often literally or psychologically orphaned, the hero simultaneously projects both his romantic ideals and desire for a return to the womb onto the newly-discovered landscape. There he can safely express his complicated desires for an ideal "madonna/whore" female: a submissive, socially acceptable, diligent domestic "angel in the house" and a passionate, expressive lover. Traipsing across the land as a triumphant explorer, he can portray the land as an impossibly-idealized woman, virginal, maternal, and sexual. He can also describe the land as warm and inviting, welcoming an infant back to her bosom, or as terrifying and evil, a harbinger of death. He can articulate a land willingly adaptable to meet his present psychological needs.

The oceanic landscapes in both *She* and *Heart of Darkness* reflect the protagonists' unconscious sexual and maternal desires and in both cases, they appear as a provocative and victimized female figure. First, in *She*, unattractive loner Ludwig Horace Holly personifies and uses feminine pronouns to refer to the moon and ocean during and immediately after a horrific storm: "Out far across the torn *bosom* of the ocean shot the ragged arrows of *her* [the moon's] light....we were left floating on the waters, now only heaving like some troubled woman's *breast*....The moon went slowly down in loveliness; *she* departed into the depth of the horizon....Quieter and yet more quiet grew the sea, quiet as the soft mist that brooded on her *bosom*..." (42, 44, 45, emphasis added). The feminized ocean is now resting from an intense physical experience--either giving birth or metaphorically having sex with the men aboard Holly's and Leo Vincey's ship and, either way, the storm is the result of the men's interaction with the ocean. Using suggestive language, Holly also describes surviving the storm as a sexual experience and his triumphant masculine performance during it. He is understandably terrified for the lives of everyone on board the ship, but he is also titillated, overcome by "a couple of minutes of heart-breaking excitement such as I cannot hope to describe" (43). As the storm lessens and as the shipmates enter the breakers, Holly emits a "pious ejaculation" and notes that "In five minutes we were through..." (44), again using suggestive sexual terminology to refer to the storm. Finally, the result of the storm is birth: "the *advent* of the dawn declared itself in the *newborn* blue of heaven" (45, emphasis added). The men's rape of the sea is successful in that it yields a new day. Similarly, in *Heart of Darkness*, the sea acts as a virginal and maternal figure that reflects Marlow's and his crew's fears and desires. The narrator overtly

feminizes the sea only once, referring to it as the mistress of the seaman's existence (Conrad 105), but the sea serves as a female figure in other ways. According to Zohreh T. Sullivan, author of "Enclosure, Darkness, and the Body: Conrad's Landscape," the sea is a complex maternal figure: "Shining and beautiful on the surface, but sinister, mysterious and disorderly beneath the surface, the sea...is presented with all the radical ambivalence of both the nurturing and destructive maternal figure....terrible yet beneficent, a violated harlot yet an inviolable virgin, a seductive bringer of wisdom and truth" (61-2). The sea is the passageway by which the men return to the "heart of darkness," the center of the African jungle and itself a symbolic womb. They are essentially floating up a symbolic birth canal. The ocean is also like the impossibly idealized virginal woman, drawing them on toward an unspoken--and in Marlow's case, unspeakable--"truth." Marlow indeed discovers the bitter truth of Kurtz's identity--a fact that comes to light in the final scene. There, Marlow learns that the reality of Kurtz's life clashes with his fiancée's idealized vision of her beloved.

The ocean is a powerful but certainly not the only type of gendered geographical landscape that reveals characters' hidden desires. Frequently, mountains and valleys become symbolic breasts and vaginas via the authors' pens and the narrators' voices as the protagonists traverse the land. One especially sexualized landscape can be found in *Green Mansions* in the place in which Rima's guardian Nuflo discovers Rima's mother. She stands before a rift in the mountain, with its sides "clothed with thorny bushes" (Hudson 135). When she suddenly disappears, Nuflo alone climbs through the thorny mass toward a stream of rushing water at the bottom, until he hears Rima's mother moaning (136). Such details--a cleft in the landscape, with vegetation at its opening and

liquid deep inside, and with a woman moaning as a man enters the cleft--are highly suggestive of female reproductive anatomy. Therefore, Nuflo's rescue of Rima's mother involves another symbolic rape of the landscape in which she is supposedly trapped. This is not the only time the landscape is compared to female anatomy. Much later, when Nuflo, Rima, and Abel travel in search of Riolama and locate the same mountain rift, frustrated Abel calls it "a big, *barren* hill" (142, emphasis added), suggesting its thwarted capacity as a womb. Abel's description echoes Nuflo's and further bolsters my earlier interpretation of the landscape as a symbolic vaginal opening and uterus. Refusing to yield any geographical secrets--i.e. a view of the explorers' desired destination--the landscape is now deemed worthless and no longer a place of pleasure.

It is critically important to remember that the reader of *Green Mansions* "sees" the landscapes and the women with which they are associated only through Abel's eyes. In his biography of Hudson, John T. Frederick reminds us that "from first to last, we see Rima only through Abel's eyes" (54). The reader's perceptions are shaped by Abel. Even when Nuflo speaks, his words are channeled through Abel's memory. In this text especially the author ensures that the reader encounters the protagonist's outward projections of inner male fantasies.

Another feminized geographical landscape, that of Amahagger queen Ayesha's entire domain in *She*, reflects the representative male nineteenth-century protagonist's unconscious sexual and maternal desires. Like the place in which Nuflo finds Rima's mother, its description is indicative of the pleasurable and life-giving capacities of female reproductive anatomy. This description, the reader must remember, is Holly's; like Abel telling of Rima's forest, Holly is a man describing his geographical surroundings, and

“Haggard’s topography is feminised by a male heterosexual viewing eye...” (Stiebel 101). Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar describe the landscape of Kôr as “melodramatically sexual...” (14-5), and Norman Etherington notes, “The narrow passes between the beautiful shrubbery suggest the loins of a woman. The two extinct volcanic mountains where most of the action occurs suggest breasts standing up from the broad African plains. The ancient channel cut to drain the crater lake is most strongly reminiscent of the birth canal from which the waters burst at the moment of parturition” (xxxiv). Another detail that supports a reading of Ayesha’s domain as maternal is the means by which Holly, Vincey, and company enter this area, as they are carried on litters that sway pleasantly back and forth (Gilbert and Gubar 13). They are also blindfolded, blinded like some newborn animals and having to rely on others for safety and navigation. Carried and gently rocked, they are like unborn infants. Helplessly, they enter the “cup” of earth with its rocky, bushy sides and a center lush enough for goats to graze. The valley could be read as a landscape suggesting the entrance to the womb, a hint of the future feminized landscape in the heart of Kôr. Holly even suggests his “subsequent experience of this and a much larger, but otherwise similar, place, which I shall have occasion to describe by-and-by...” (Haggard 61).

The “much larger, but otherwise similar, place” of which Holly speaks, called the Place of Life, and the geography leading to it are the most explicitly sexualized and maternalized of any of the landscapes in the five turn-of-the-century novels. The trip to the womb melds the travelers’ sexual and natal urges, as the womb and its entrance are sites of physical desire and literal birth. Nandor Fodor explains the Freudian implications of their journey to the center of the earth: “The idea of re-entering the mother’s body is

frequently accompanied by sexual fantasies. This should cause no surprise, as birth cannot be divorced from its genital setting....The re-enactment of birth by return can easily stir up repressed sexual ideas” (243). By (re)entering the womb, the explorers are attempting to satisfy both romantic and natal desires.

Holly extensively anatomizes the treacherous landscape. To access the Fountain and the Heart of Life, the travelers must make their way back up a symbolic birth canal to the maternal womb of the earth where, as Ayesha tells them, they will be born anew. Like many natural deliveries, the explorers’ journey is long and arduous. First, Ayesha must lead Holly, Vincey, and Job across a treacherous landscape of rock. Then they climb a steep cliff. They walk a hidden ledge to a cave strewn with boulders--a cave not fashioned by ancient citizens of Kôr, Holly points out, but rather one probably created by a gas eruption in the mountain (Haggard 203). Following a winding path through the cavern’s interior, the group comes upon a giant phallic geographical setting:

Before us was a mighty chasm in the black rock, jagged, torn, and splintered through....The mouth of the cavern that we had been following gave on to a most curious and tremendous spur of rock, which jutted out through mid air into the gulf before us for a distance of some fifty yards, coming to a sharp point at its termination, and in shape resembling nothing that I can think of so much as the spur upon the leg of a cock. (204)

The company must cross the chasm via a wooden board that Job carries and Ayesha positions from the tip of the spur to a flat boulder tremulously balanced atop a cone jutting from the depths. They must also cross in a precise window of time, for the place is utterly dark until another phallic symbol flashes across the scene. It is a “great sword

of flame, a beam from the setting sun [that] pierced the Stygian gloom, and smote upon the point of rock..." (205-6). After a fearful crossing and the loss of the wooden plank into the depths beneath, the travelers continue through a cavern, down projecting rocky steps, to a fifty-year passage "so low and narrow that we were forced to stoop as we crept along it" (215). Next they reach a series of caves and tunnels until finally emerging into what Ayesha triumphantly declares the "'very womb of the Earth...'" (216).

The center of the earth is both a literal and figurative womb, but also Ayesha's tomb. In *Rule Britannia: Women, Empire, and Victorian Writing*, Deirdre David calls Ayesha's home a mausoleum *and* a body and reminds the reader that the womb of the earth is a literal womb in which Ayesha awaits impregnation by the flame (199). She patiently seeks the landscape's initiation of symbolic sex. Gilbert and Gubar call Ayesha's interaction "unholy intercourse with the phallic 'pillar of Life' ..." (19), for the flame itself is an "almost theatrically rich sexual symbol" (20). Its rhythmic emission of fire is reminiscent of ejaculation into the feminized landscape. After stepping into the flame, Ayesha does not find pleasure. Rather, she shrivels up and dies, to the apparent horror of the bystanders. The landscape swallows her, and Holly and Vincey escape alive. Thus, the entire narrative, if read as a quest fulfilled, further emphasizes the explorers' mastery of the feminine landscape. Despite Ayesha's commanding presence, she is killed by having intercourse with a masculine sexual symbol. Gilbert and Gubar agree, calling the pillar of fire in the earth's womb a "perpetually erect symbol of masculinity" and more than a "Freudian penis...a fiery signifier whose eternal thundering return speaks the inexorability of the patriarchal law" (qtd. in David 194). Ayesha dies

while the mysterious terrain remains and while the pillar of fire continues to emit its flame into eternity, Holly suggests.

Marlow's maternalization of the African jungle in *Heart of Darkness* is similar to Holly's overt and complex feminization of Ayesha's innermost domain. Conrad crafts images of anthropomorphized geographical features typical of the imperial novel set in Africa (Darby 71). The jungle acts toward man as a frighteningly possessive mother toward her child. Gary Adelman, author of *Heart of Darkness: Search for the Unconscious*, concurs, describing the jungle as a maternal body (98). This maternal body, like the maternal womb in Ayesha's domain, is actually destructive rather than nurturing. Conrad describes a beaten black man disappearing into the wilderness which takes him back into its bosom forevermore (Conrad 125); his description of the jungle at first suggests a mother rescuing a nursing child or a woman taking her lover back into a physical embrace. But later he describes the wilderness' tendency to cast a spell on its inhabitants, enticing victims "to its pitiless breast by the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts, by the memory of gratified and monstrous passions" (173). Again, a return to the maternal breast is invoked--here reminding Marlow's listeners of the inherent Freudian violence in suckling. The wilderness similarly clutches Kurtz to itself (herself?), as Marlow surmises when he first sees Kurtz's baldness: "The wilderness had patted him on the head...it had caressed him, got into his veins, consumed his flesh, and sealed his soul to its own by the inconceivable ceremonies of some devilish initiation" (153). Here, Conrad temporarily rejects a feminine pronoun, instead referring to the wilderness as possibly a neuter cannibalistic beast or demon that consumes its prey. Still, the natural world as a whole in the scene seems both female and frightening. Sullivan

views the wilderness as a monstrous mother in this scene, clutching her child to her but resorting to cannibalism and killing her child in the end (77). Finally, in a spine-tingling moment, Conrad again depicts the similarities between a woman and the natural world. Marlow tells of the jungle mirrored in an African native woman, “‘savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent...’”: “‘the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul’” (Conrad 168). Marlow adds that her brooding look is the same that the wilderness gives (168). Through various feminizing techniques, Marlow paints a portrait predominantly, if somewhat inconsistently, of a cannibalistic jungle mother.

Some critics argue that aspects of the Congo region, or its entirety, are feminized landscapes, both maternal *and* provocative, based on the effects the region has on those who travel through it. The way the explorers and natives conduct themselves in the jungle indicates the place’s mystical power over them. In “Introduction to the *Danse Macabre: Conrad’s Heart of Darkness*,” Frederick R. Karl says the river is “essentially a woman: dangerous, dark, mysterious, concealed, with the jungle also feminine, personified by Kurtz’s savage mistress” (133). Sullivan focuses on the river’s narrow mouth and Marlow’s destination at the heart of the jungle, or “the black and bestial womb of the devouring mother” (64) and sexually ambiguous Kurtz who is described as a sleeping princess (75). Entranced by the jungle’s seductive call, Marlow travels deep into the heart of the jungle. In a movement not unlike Holly’s and Vincey’s journey to the “womb of the earth,” Marlow’s tale is one of human regression. Marlow and his fellows are implicitly returning to the womb, according to Sullivan (69). In *The Fiction of*

Imperialism: Reading between International Relations and Postcolonialism, Phillip Darby indicates “the female presence is invoked through the very spirit of the land; it emanates from the earth, from the vegetation, from the figures in the landscape” (72). The Congo’s very atmosphere exudes sensuality that lures with its implicit promise of natal safety, intoxicates, and destroys its explorers.

While male protagonists in the male-authored novels in this chapter employ feminine pronouns, intense emotional reactions to landscape, references to female anatomy, and ties between a female character and a geographical place to maternalize *and* sexualize predominant landscapes, the narrator in *The Secret Garden* only maternalizes the title space--and in a far less frightening fashion. Here, it is Mary Lennox, a female child, entering the unknown, not a grown man intent on a symbolic return to the womb. Thus, the secret garden is portrayed as a much gentler, nurturing womb than Ayesha’s “Place of Life” or the African jungle interior, for example. Mary forms a complex relationship with the garden, emotionally and socially developing within its walls as a child grows, first physically in the womb, then in the home under its mother’s care. Mary does this, growing stronger and fatter with a rosier complexion. She develops psychologically and emotionally as well. For instance, she becomes far less selfish. She worries about others. She cares for others. The garden takes her in. Gardens were metaphors for female nurturing at the turn of the century (Bixler *Secret* 53), and the secret garden is an apt example.

The image of the garden that is the most suggestive as maternal can be found in the concluding passages of the novel. In *The Secret Garden: Nature’s Magic*, Bixler notes that “in the garden” is repeated no less than twelve times, drawing attention to the

garden's role in rebirth especially at that culminating point (*Secret* 70). In the final scene, the womb of the garden that birthed a new Mary now births a new Colin Craven: "The door to the garden is now 'flung wide open, the sheet of ivy swinging back'; 'the uncontrollable moment' has arrived; with 'quick strong young breathing,' 'a boy burst[s] through it at full speed and, without seeing,' dashes 'almost into his [father's] arms'" (Bixler "Gardens" 222). The garden is a willing, healthy womb, and the birth is successful.

The secret garden is also a childlike space, and Mary swaps roles with the garden as she matures within it. She becomes a maternal figure and begins to play an entirely different role in the landscape--she nurtures the garden. Because she is female and a child, Mary is portrayed as having no desire to dominate the landscape or convey a sense of domination to others. Rather, she wants to help the garden, and she requires the help of others to do so because she lacks gardening knowledge. In fact, the secret garden is the logical "natural" expansion of the first settings in which Mary attempts to manipulate and connect with nature. During the morning in which Mary is effectively abandoned by her parents and their servants, Mary wanders into a garden and tries to make a rudimentary flowerbed, placing "big scarlet hibiscus blossoms into little heaps of earth..." (Burnett 8). The narrator indicates that Mary does not know how to make a flowerbed but rather that she pretends (8). Still, the effort is a step in the right direction. In "Feminist Versions of Pastoral," Elizabeth Francis calls the primitive spot "a waste and infertile garden but a private construction nevertheless. It is a hypothesis about creation which experience will test and revise. This garden...is a forerunner of the garden Mary will transform with the help of Dickon and Colin" (8). Clearly, Mary seems to innately

desire to nurture the earth even before she discovers the secret garden, and she does learn how.

Burnett's image of the garden as both mother and child is typical of the time period, according to Bixler in "Gardens, Houses, and Nurturant Power in *The Secret Garden*." She mentions Michael Waters's survey of the garden image in Victorian literature which concluded that gardens are images of both motherhood and childhood (210). Thus, Mary's garden environment and Mary reflect each other throughout this period of growth. Gilbert and Gubar indicate that the garden when first discovered is a symbol of Mary because its locked walls are like the orphan's initial physical and psychological isolation (Bixler *Frances* 100). Francis calls the garden "in parallel to Mary's own first life--but gray and potent, a collection of dead boughs some of which contain green life" (9). As the garden grows, so does Mary. They reflect each other, mirroring expanding life and vigor.

Interestingly, in these turn-of-the-twentieth-century British novels, only natural, living landscapes are gendered. Collectively, the narrators and protagonists mention a multitude of "constructed" landscapes that are shaped by human hands in the past (rather than the present moment of the plot)--rooms, buildings, cities, etc.--but none receive their attention in nearly the same way. Most of the descriptions are summarily brief, and many emphasize a theme of death that bolsters their contrast with natural places. In *After London*, for example, the narrator condemns the new metropolises which structure the post-apocalyptic British society: "It is in the cities that cluster around the great central lake that all the life and civilization of our day are found; but there also begin those wars and social convulsions which cause so much suffering" (Jefferies I.4). The new

civilizations are catalysts of death. In *She*, the constructed places in the ruined city of Kôr, which greatly impress Holly, are the remains of the dead. Similarly, the constructed places that Marlow sees or enters throughout *Heart of Darkness* are portrayed as dead and boring. The Company's station sits in a scene of "'inhabited devastation'" next to an abandoned railway-truck that "'looked as dead as the carcass of some animal'" (Conrad 116). Death is also a principle characteristic of Kurtz's beloved's drawing-room. In this scene of despair, Kurtz's love is in mourning, dressed in black, and the grand piano in the corner resembles a sarcophagus (183). Dryly, matter-of-factly, Marlow also describes the Company's offices, the Central Station, a dismantled hut, and various vessels. Like the places Marlow describes, the numerous constructed places in *Green Mansions* do not capture Abel's imagination, his friend's poetic pen, or the reader's imagination in nearly the same way as the Venezuelan landscape. The first such place is intriguing because it is introduced on the first page of the narrative, before the reader knows anything about Abel, Rima, or the forest, but its description takes up only half a sentence; in contrast, when Abel describes the forest or the mountains on his sightseeing expeditions, his descriptions take up paragraphs if not pages. This first place is also a deathbed, containing the last remnants of Abel's life and Rima's body in an elaborate urn. Finally, there are a number of briefly described constructed places in *The Secret Garden* that contrast sharply with the lush, sprawling life of the secret garden. Mary's Indian home is invaded by cholera, and her nursery is so lonely that even a little snake slithering on the floor "seemed in a hurry to get out of the room" (Burnett 11). Further, the gloominess of Misselthwaite Manor, so empty and haunted with Craven's grief for his deceased wife, is palpable.

While the constructed places in *After London*, *She*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Green Mansions*, and *The Secret Garden* are so infused with death, the gendering of natural places in the novels emphasizes the life and vitality of the natural world. When the authors use gender to mark the spatial and temporal distinctions between conventional metropolitan and enticing natural worlds, they are highlighting the ability of nature to rebirth itself. They may also be referring back to the original source of life in the garden of Eden, that perfect and perpetually-producing natural landscape. When the authors employ gender markers to more precisely characterize and articulate their characters' desires, their references to sexuality and maternity again indicate life, conception, birth, and youthfulness. Their feminization of geographical landscapes reveals their sense of mastery over the natural world, albeit an inaccurate one. As they portray nature's harshness, they may also indicate the beginning of their recognition of their relative powerlessness in the face of nature.

In addition to attaching gender markers to geographical landscapes to negotiate with controversial social topics, to mark the spatial and temporal distinctions between conventional metropolitan and enticing natural worlds, and to better characterize and articulate their characters' desires, the turn-of-the-century authors in my study take a variety of complicated approaches to portray England. While England is not overtly gendered in any of these five novels in the same ways that geographical landscapes are gendered (i.e. via pronoun references, intense emotional reactions, references to female anatomy, and identification with female characters), the country serves as both a masculine and feminine national landscape. The authors set up a contrast between it and the variously feminized "other" landscapes, thereby inferring its gender as male.

Especially in *She*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Green Mansions*, the authors mark blatant differences between civilized, structured England and primitive, wild foreign places. But while they do not refer to England as their “mother country,” they nevertheless also bolster a positive image of England as a maternal safe haven to which they return. Their imperial fantasies cannot be fully realized because their expectations are idealized and their own identity is so bound up in their connection to England, their homeland.

Jefferies’s portrait of England in *After London* challenges the reader’s comprehension of the implications of Felix’s trek. The title of the novel instantly indicates the setting, and the reader is thrust into a post-apocalyptic world in which England is both embraced and rejected. The narrator in Part I emphasizes that England is something to protect from invaders. Speaking from the distant future of a less distant future, he mentions present constant fear of the encroaching Welsh and Irish, indicating that nothing has changed: “But still these nations are always upon the verge and margin of our world, and wait but an opportunity to rush in upon it” (Jefferies I.4). Wars continue. In fact, Salt, writing in 1894 and therefore Jefferies’s contemporary, says the title alone is offensive to the patriotic Englishman (58). Humankind’s lust for dominance reigns, and England is worthy of protection, he claims. However, much of the picture of England that remains is ugly. London is especially horrific. Everyone knows that outlying London is swampland (Jefferies I.5), and Felix (and the reader) discovers just how awful London really is. Culture has reverted. Most English writers are forgotten (II.10). Most technological advances are buried by time and rubble. In the wake of the unnamed apocalypse, England’s sense of justice is distorted. Felix finds this most horrifying. He observes the dusty, mangled bodies of three dead slaves dragged through

camp and left to be eaten by crows. Disgusted, he is shocked that no one else shares his horror because the sight is so ordinary to them (II.17). Similarly, he is upset when he sees a slave nailed to a tree and left to die because his master ceases liking him (II.18). Salt perceives this England as dead and Jefferies's novel a eulogy (58). If this is England, to be English is both a blessing and a curse.

Likewise, the strength and cultural health of England were very important to Haggard. Etherington reports that the author campaigned for parliament in the 1890s (xvi), and Laura Chrisman, in *Rereading the Imperial Romance: British Imperialism and South African Resistance in Haggard, Schreiner, and Plaatje*, notes that Haggard's devotion to England motivated most of his actions (239). Etherington charts Haggard's political sympathies evident in an early manuscript of *She*--and the changes he was encouraged to make due to the political climate in the late 1880s:

Leo Vincey is described as "a red hot conservative" who regards William Gladstone as a tyrant and a demagogue. The Liberal party is blamed for "plundering one class of a community to enrich the others." Ayesha delights Leo by proposing to resolve "the Irish problem" (once Holly has explained it to her) by killing all the Irish. Holly dreams that She, dressed in a ball gown, disposes of Gladstone by hot-potting. This sort of thing was doubtless fun for Haggard, but as Lang observed, it risked alienating that large body of readers who supported "the People's William" and his Liberal party.... A week after Haggard finished the manuscript Joseph Chamberlain resigned from the Cabinet because of Gladstone's plan to give Home Rule to Ireland, an event that destabilized the government and

led to the dissolution of Parliament on June 25, 1886, about the time Haggard was correcting galley proofs of the serialized version of the novel. (xx-xxi)

Gladstone was a staunch opponent of British imperialism and firm supporter of the Irish. Clearly, Vincey epitomizes the Conservative Englishman “worthy” of entering and exploring unknown African landscapes, and in his creation of Vincey, Haggard boldly reveals his country’s actual desires:

V. S. Pritchett...suggests that Haggard tapped the most hidden longings and appetites of the English people: “Mr. E. M. Forster once spoke of the novelist sending down a bucket into the unconscious; the author of *She* installed a suction pump. He drained the whole reservoir of the people’s secret desires....in an empire-building age, [he drew] on fantasies of absolute spiritual rule in secret cities”... (Katz 125)

Englishness is a reference point in *She*--a means of comparison between Holly’s and Vincey’s conventional, predictable academic world and Ayesha’s unexpected, oft-nightmarish world. The men in Haggard’s novel are “European nurtured individual[s]” entering a “‘primitive’ and totally other environment” (Maclennan and Christie qtd. in Stiebel 56). Holly points out the differences between England and Africa multiple times. On board the ship to Africa, Holly begins the fourth chapter with an exclamation of surprise and wonder: “How different is the scene whereof I have now to tell from that which has just been told! Gone are the quiet College rooms, gone the wind-swayed English elms, the cawing rooks, and the familiar volumes on the shelves, and in their place there rises a vision of the great calm ocean gleaming in shaded silver lights beneath

the beams of a full African moon” (Haggard 38). As the surviving travelers continue past the monument of the Head of the Ethiopian and up an East African river, again Holly notes the sharp contrast between the English and African domains. A buck stands in a swamp against a backdrop of the river and a haunting sunset that reminds Holly of a bloodstain, and Holly ponders, “three modern Englishmen in a modern English boat-- seeming to jar upon and be out of tone with that measureless desolation...” (51). He apparently views the situation as absurd and otherworldly.

At other times, Holly notes the Englishness of his companions and himself. Holly’s and his fellow explorers’ nationality indicates their superiority but also unfitness for the African landscape. For example, Holly refuses to crawl into Ayesha’s boudoir, despite Billali’s command, because he reflects, “I am an Englishman, and why...should I creep into the presence of some savage woman as though I were a monkey in fact as well as in name?” (Haggard 106). He refers to Billali’s nickname for him, “Baboon,” but the reference is also a reminder of Darwin’s then-recent theories of the human race’s superiority. Holly’s sense of pride prevails. Yet he also comments on Job’s appearance on board ship near the Eastern shore of Central Africa as obviously English (39), suggesting he is comical as an explorer at best and unsuitable as an explorer at worst. The best example of Haggard’s complex portrayal of English identity in an African landscape is Vincey. Holly declares him a “sturdy young Englishman...one of the most English-looking men I ever saw” (160). As such, he is the spitting image of Kallikrates and therefore the epitome of superiority in Ayesha’s eyes, not to mention his good looks make him desirable in England. Yet he, too, is ultimately unfit for Ayesha’s world.

A further experience highlights England's safety in comparison to Africa's violence, as the explorers observe a lion fighting with a crocodile. Holly compares the battle to what "one sees in a pond in England when a pike takes a little fish, only a thousand times fiercer and larger..." (Haggard 53). It seems that many of Holly's experiences in Africa are greatly intensified versions of similar ones in England. Holly's sense of vast distance between two places, each with its own people, flora, and fauna, recurs as Holly moves across the African landscape before returning to Cambridge. The movement is from the familiar to the unfamiliar (and back).

Cambridge is both the starting point and ending point of the narrative. As the epitome of England, old and venerated, it is the setting that "frames" the narrative. It reminds the reader of Holly's and Vincey's unwavering gender identification; David refers to the "male coziness of their Oxford [sic] digs..." (199). It also indicates the past, present, and future of Holly's and Vincey's relationship; significant events happen in that room at multiple stages. Before Holly and Vincey are forever tied together in an adoption, Holly's Cambridge room is that in which Vincey's father approaches Holly with his adoption request. The first chapter opens with Holly writing in this room at Cambridge. Two years after the first chapter's present, as Holly "writes" the final chapter of the quest in *She*, he and Vincey are again in Vincey's old room in Cambridge. At this point in the narrative, it is a welcome site of safety away from the chaos of Ayesha's domain. Cambridge is also Holly's reference point of normality. Accepting Vincey's decision to follow the trail of clues left by his father and travel to Zanzibar, Holly wryly suggests that his agreement is insane and could make him the future laughing-stock of the university (Haggard 38).

More so than in *She* or any of the other novels, the theme of national power in *Heart of Darkness* has made the novel controversial, to say the least. Critics largely focus on Conrad's treatment of the colonial experience in Africa. It is important to note that Marlow's report concerns not only England but much of Victorian Europe's exploration, colonization, and exploitation away from its home shores. Nevertheless, from the very beginning of the tale, via his narrator, Conrad links landscape with Englishness to deplore the evils of colonialism. Adelman argues that the image of darkness settling over London just before Marlow speaks is ironic, following the narrator's self-congratulatory tribute to British imperialism (86). It calls into question whether Africa--or England--is the real "heart of darkness."

Englishness and England are mentioned specifically only a few times. In the first instance, Marlow reports that the examining doctor tells him he's the first English patient he has ever had, and Marlow quickly assures the doctor that he is atypical (Conrad 112). He strives to dissociate himself from ordinary Englishmen. On the Congo, the manager reports that Englishness is no safeguard against getting into trouble (142). Again, Englishness is no benefit for the traveler in the African landscape with a purpose like Kurtz's, who the reader and Marlow learns has English roots. Marlow learns that Kurtz has some English blood; his mother is half-English. Also, Kurtz has some English schooling (154). Finally, Kurtz's youthful admirer is delighted to smoke a pipe of Marlow's English tobacco (159).

As in *Heart of Darkness*, the concept of Englishness in *Green Mansions* is limited--primarily a catalyst for Abel's quest to Venezuela. In 1875, Abel arrives in Georgetown, capital of British Guiana, after a disastrous revolutionary attempt in

Venezuela and the forest adventure he will subsequently recount. In 1887, as the narrator begins his tale, Venezuela cut its diplomatic ties with the British colony over a border dispute. Due to his residence in Georgetown, Abel holds a precarious position in society. Abel's friendly disposition makes him likable, but he is still considered both an alien and "one of that turbulent people on our border whom the colonists have always looked on as their natural enemies" (Hudson 3). The narrator of the prologue sympathizes with his friend Abel but calls him a "nervous olive-skinned Hispano-American of the tropics..." (5). Abel's Englishness is questionable at best. He considers himself a Venezuelan.

Nevertheless, Abel's limited Englishness is equated with cultural superiority. Throughout his adventures, Abel shows disdain for the tribes he encounters, specifically Runi's "primitive" tribe. For example, Abel calls them "savages, with ways that were not mine; and however friendly they might be towards one of a superior race, there was always in their relations with him a low cunning..." (Hudson 36). Though he is grateful for Runi's grudging help, he voices his disdain often to the reader. This is not a feeling he has; he conveys it as if it were fact. His classification of the tribe intensifies after he leaves them and must lie about his whereabouts when he returns, and it reaches its climax, crystallizing into hatred, when Abel realizes his former friends murdered Rima by burning her alive. He calls Runi his "mortal enemy" (179) and entertaining Cla-cla "my old savage hostess" (90). Likewise, early in the novel, Abel calls his friend Panta "a kind of savage beast...for we know that even cruel savage brutes and evil men have at times sweet, beneficent impulses, during which they act in a way contrary to their natures..." (11). Thus, Panta is not even considered a man; instead, he is an animal, in Abel's eyes. Even the Managa tribe, who aid Abel in his revenge, simultaneously disgust Abel with

their violence while pleasing him with their eventual willingness to destroy Runi and his village. This is ironic, for Abel himself becomes a bloodthirsty creature, even killing his former friend Kua-Kó. Throughout his journey in the primeval forests of Venezuela, Abel's nationality and sense of self forge a barrier between him and the people he encounters. His sense of superiority poisons his relationships with the tribes he meets. On an extratextual level, Hudson's identification with the English allowed him to write and publish *Green Mansions*. Hudson became a British subject in 1900, and thereafter England provided him with all that he needed. Ronner reports that Hudson hardly ever left England and pursued his political and social interests in that country, but his new identity also provided him with "the necessary distance from South America which enabled him to interweave past and present most effectively" (38).

Especially in *She*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Green Mansions*, national identity locates the "comfort zone" for English people only within England. It is a place of safe retreat after forays into the unknown. The male characters see in England a maternal safe haven. Their imperial fantasies cannot be fully realized because their expectations are idealized and their own identity is so bound up in their connection to England, their homeland, which in turn contrasts so sharply with the "other" foreign places they explore. In *The Secret Garden*, Mary comes to see the secret garden, as a microcosm of England, in a similar way. While she does not project male fantasies onto the national landscape, she eventually finds comfort and a true home there--something she as an irritable, lonely child lacked in India.

Broadly considered, in *The Secret Garden* England can be read as a nurturing force based on what happens to Mary once she reaches its shores. However, there is no

overt reference to England as a “mother country” or Mary thinking of it in those terms. She is English, and she moves to England out of necessity; thus England becomes a setting, merely a backdrop to the plot.

Burnett uses nationality as a means of comparison and contrast between Mary’s residences in India and England. Neither England initially nor India seem like Mary’s home. She finds Indian weather distasteful, making her always “too hot and too languid and weak to care much about anything...” (Burnett 63). She is pale and often tired and sick. The atmosphere stifles her, and she understandably doesn’t seem to miss her birthplace after leaving it. She flatly tells Mr. Craven she never liked it in India (104). Yet she doesn’t really “belong” at Misselthwaite Manor either; the servants warn her to keep to herself so she is not underfoot, and she is clearly underfoot in India. In addition, she has little knowledge of her “home.” Basil Crawford belittles Mary when she asks where home is (14). The seven-year-old smirks, ““It’s England, *of course*”” (14, emphasis added). Mary’s lack of interest in her homeland, and more importantly her focus on the microcosm of the secret garden inside the larger domain of Misselthwaite Manor rather than on the macrocosm of the country, indicate that Mary’s nationality is only a piece of a much larger puzzle.

Several male characters besides the unlikable Basil shape Mary’s and the reader’s perceptions of England in *The Secret Garden*. First, Mary’s father is in the English government and is frequently busy and ill (Burnett 7); whether or not the author intends to make a connection between his nationality, employment, and health is debatable. Nevertheless, Mary’s father remains absent, first by apparent occupational necessity and then by death. The narrator does not mention any emotional connection between Mary

and her father. Second, the first man whom Mary hears talking about the cholera outbreak in India is a young officer from England. The extent of his connection with Mrs. Lennox is questionable. He is both fair and boyish, and he offers advice to Mary's mother who clutches his arm at the sound of wailing (9). Their physical closeness may suggest indiscretion--or no impropriety of any sort. The third Englishman that Mary encounters is a clergyman who temporarily takes her in. He is poor and not in control of his household; his bungalow is messy and his five children "were always quarreling and snatching toys from each other" (14). None of these figures leaves positive impressions on Mary.

While the gendering of geographical and national landscapes in the turn-of-the-century British novel marks characters' attitudes toward femininity on the narrative journey, textual landscapes further reveal Victorian humanity's sense of mastery over the natural world. From a feminist narratological perspective, most of the novels follow male narrative patterns, proceeding chronologically, having traditional quest plots with the climax near the end of the story, and revealing definitively closed endings. Also, except for *The Secret Garden*, in which there is one ostensibly female narrative voice, two male points-of-view dominate each of the other turn-of-the-century novels. Thus, the authors presume a male readership. Males are understood to be the ones exploring the landscapes with Felix, Holly and Vincey, Marlow, and Abel.

All of the main characters in the turn-of-the-century British novels in this study are explorers in the sense that they encounter a previously unknown territory and move across its geographical face in search of new knowledge: Felix explores post-apocalyptic England, Holly and Vincey explore Ayesha's domain, Marlow explores the Congo River

region, Abel explores Rima's forest, and Mary explores Misselthwaite Manor and the secret garden. The attentive reader is an explorer as well in this sense, finding pleasure or disgust in the newly-encountered landscapes. The reader mentally traverses the same landscapes that the characters do, and his or her eyes traverse the physical text. The reader can also look deeply into the text, dissecting it as a means of gaining knowledge. This is not the same as deconstructing a text; the reading process also involves constructing a text from the words that the author, via the focalizer, provides.

Thus, point-of-view is a significant aspect of the textual landscape; the focalizer's tendency to embrace or keep distant from the reader affects the reading journey. It forges the relationship between the reader and the hero/heroine/explorer. The reader can be excluded from the action, pushed to read as from afar and be a sort of voyeur (especially in a third-person point-of-view) or metaphorically pulled into the story as from a second-person point-of-view, characteristic of many postmodern literary texts. The involved reader is presented with a variety of images, and, according to Roderick McGillis, writer of "'Secrets' and 'Sequence' in Children's Stories," he or she must construct his or her own meaning by focusing on one image and following it like the thread of a web (39). Point-of-view determines the images presented to the reader.

The reader can also look at the text as a physical object, applying narratological principles to understand its effects. This involves a number of interrelated concepts: the external structure of the text itself (size, length, and number of constituent parts such as chapters) and the internal structure of the story. It also includes "mapping" the novel on two axes. Along the horizontal axis, the reader can chart the temporal arrangement of the text, taking note of temporal, spatial, and descriptive breaks. Along the vertical axis, the

reader can examine competing issues that affect a reading, such as historical context or psychoanalytical terminology, both of which the focalizer may mention. The latter frequently appears in criticism of these selected texts or the fictions themselves, often with references to the unconscious and its corresponding landscape. *After London's* otherworldly setting reflects Jefferies's concerns with a "dream-world...[that] is generally more important and more central than the [real world]" (Keith 100). Also, Keith claims that tale "is too close to the patterns of his [Jefferies's] own subconscious" (122). Regarding *She*, Chrisman notes the speed with which Haggard wrote, as if he was hypnotized (103), which suggests a dream-like level of consciousness. In *Rider Haggard: His Life and Works*, Morton N. Cohen also connects Haggard's landscapes to his unconscious. He writes, "The hero's journey through wilderness and swamps, along precipices, over gorges, through ravines, to find the source of love and everlasting life in a huge cave city, is an obvious expression of the author's unconscious fears and desires" (114). Freud himself was apparently intrigued by Haggard's novel and recommended it to one of his patients, calling it "[a] strange book, but full of hidden meaning" (qtd. in Etherington xxxvi). *Heart of Darkness* also resembles a dream ripe for psychoanalytic analysis. Adelman notes that Marlow himself calls his tale a dream (98). Bixler indicates that *The Secret Garden* has been psychoanalyzed, too (*Secret* 19).

Gender specifically enters the theoretical picture of the textual landscape in the formation of plot. The "traditional" questing plot, with the hero's journey of romance ending in marriage or death, is steeped in ideology that excludes the authentic feminine experience. It also reflects the male sexual experience in that its narrative typically can be plotted to show gradually rising action, climax, and a rapid denouement. The ending

is usually blunt, often ending in marriage or death. In *Imagining Africa: Landscape in H. Rider Haggard's African Romances*, Lindy Stiebel explains the reasons for these two authorial options: "Because desire and anxiety are so finely balanced in the quest romance, the happy ending often embraces a denial of fulfillment, a 'happy pessimism' whereby though 'man seeks a distant, passionately desired ideal: often, he is happiest when he fails to find it'" (Fisher qtd. 45). In contrast, the feminine plot, as elucidated by feminist narratology, rejects these rigid textual structures. Instead, its plot is lyric, even circular, and can be said to reflect feminine bodily processes like lactation or the female sexual experience in its repetition and cyclical nature. The reader's experience can match that of the main character, as the reader "gets caught up" in the story, with his or her emotional response rising and falling in intensity with the rising and falling action. The feminine plot also frequently avoids definitive closure, favoring an open or inconclusive ending or multiple "endings."

It is critical to remember that postmodern discourse has revealed that male and female categories are not either/or, dual biologically-determined statuses. Gender is fluid and culturally constructed. Also, feminism continues to be embraced by men. Though criticism tends to focus on female authors, male authors can feminize a text.

The point-of-view throughout *After London*, especially in the first of two parts, is masculine. The first part seems almost detached, despite its first-person speaker who mentions "I" for the first time in the fifteenth paragraph and continues throughout that section. As a homodiegetic narrator, the narrating figure is a part of the story (if Part I can be considered "story" as opposed to largely extraneous background). For example, the narrator mentions personally seeing the population explosion of red and fallow deer

in Wild England over the years (Jefferies I.2). This experienced “I” provides no direct clues about his or her gender identification, but the reader can infer that the narrator is male, based on the conjunction of the setting (or what the reader imagines the setting to be at this early stage in the novel) and the subjects on which he focuses mostly (hunters, nobles, “men of the woods,” and men in general in the post-apocalyptic England society). The narrator vanishes in Part II, so the reader can only speculate that the same focalizing figure continues providing the first-person perspective. Keith does not distinguish between the narrating voices of parts one and two, calling them (or rather, him) “a clear-minded and responsible chronicler of a future time” (Keith 116) and gendering him male. The “I” who remains never refers to the narratee, addressing the reader directly, and never refers to himself or his experiences again. As a now-heterodiegetic narrator who essentially effaces himself, he “tells” the story of Part II.

After London consists of these two parts, the first with only five chapters and the second with twenty-eight chapters. Flipping to the table of contents, the reader can guess that the first part will provide only background information before the hero’s story begins. Titled “The Relapse into Barbarism” with chapters titled “The Great Forest,” “Wild Animals,” “Men of the Woods,” “The Invaders,” and “The Lake,” Part I prepares the reader for an inevitable history lesson. In contrast, Part II, “Wild England” with its affinity with the novel title projects the “real” beginning of the narrative action. The first chapter of Part II is titled “Sir Felix,” a hint that the main character will not be introduced until that point. The reader might be tempted to skip the first part (unnecessary foreplay?) entirely.

Part I could be considered a framing device, but only a limited one. There is no counterpart concluding the internal structure of the story. While Part I does provide fictional historical context to better help the reader understand Felix's societal frustrations, his tale could still be easily understood without the first part. The first part of the novel to the reader, then, is similar to Felix's childhood in that what he knows about his surroundings before Part II begins is what the reader knows as well.

As this knowledge is conveyed to the reader via written language, so is knowledge conveyed to Felix via text. Jefferies places unusual emphasis on reading and writing in post-apocalyptic England. For example, in Part I, the narrator points out the shortcomings of information passed along but not written down:

So far as this, all that I have stated has been clear, and there can be no doubt that what has been thus handed down from mouth to mouth is for the most part correct. When I pass from trees and animals to men, however, the thing is different, for nothing is certain and everything confused. None of the accounts agree, nor can they be altogether reconciled with present facts or with reasonable supposition; yet it is not so long since but a few memories, added one to the other, can bridge the time, and, though not many, there are some written notes still to be found. I must attribute the discrepancy to the wars and hatreds which sprang up and divided the people, so that one would not listen to what the others wished to say, and the truth was lost. Besides which, in the conflagration which consumed the towns, most of the records were destroyed, and are no longer to be referred to. And it may be that even when they were

proceeding, the causes of the change were not understood. Therefore, what I am now about to describe is not to be regarded as the ultimate truth, but as the nearest to which I could attain after comparing the various traditions. (Jefferies I.3)

He also frequently refers to a historian and philosopher named Silvester who does write; he is the author of *The Unknown Orb* and *The Book of Natural Things*. However, Silvester is not reliable. None of the historians is reliable. Keith points out that even they rely on the speculation of others (116). In Part I, the narrator indicates that writing is a sign of nobility in Wild England, but no one wants books (Jefferies I.4)--perhaps because books do not contain the sought-after truth. The truth of Silvester's written words, after all, are debatable. No one wants books except Felix and Aurora, anyway. The reader learns that Aurora prizes writing; she gives Felix a book and she arranges for writings about her faith to be recorded (II.11). Also, the first mention of her in *After London* is via her letters, which the narrator notes are Felix's most prized possessions (II.1). None of that romantic or religious writing is offered for the reader's eyes, but the fact that a female deems both important in a familial and social environment that is disdainful at best and hostile at worst should be noted.

Charted along the horizontal narratological axis, *After London*'s second part strictly follows a conventional temporal arrangement. Except for very brief forays into the past to explain the present action, there are no extensive temporal breaks. The scene opens on a May morning at five o'clock with Felix asleep in his bed, the reader follows him in his quest to and from London's ruins, and the novel ends with Felix heading westward home to Aurora. There are no large breaks of time in the narrative. Instead,

the story--the sequence of events that make up the plot--matches the narrative discourse--how that story is conveyed.

A charting of the story, of Felix's journey to and from London, does not clearly match either the traditional male quest model or a lyric female storyline. From the beginning, Jefferies both creates a mystery that governs the plot of the novel and unsettles the reader by playing with conventional temporal construction. In Part I, the surviving narrator, in the distant future, looks back at a less distant future that resembles a distant past. Jefferies experiments with passages of time with Felix's exploration, too. Felix has a singular goal: to make something of himself. He does not return home without having achieved that goal, and his greatest achievement occurs in chapter twenty-six, just a few pages shy of the end of the novel. Felix, having only found disappointment and fear in London's ruins, successfully saves the shepherds from the encroaching gypsies with his bow and arrow. He also builds a fort for the shepherds at Wolfstead, and "when this was finished, Felix had a sense of mastership..." (Jefferies II.26). If one follows Felix in his journey from his home to Wolfstead, viewing this achievement as the climax of the story and the final two chapters as denouement, the plot does seem male: extensive rising action to a climax near the end and then a rapid dropping-off of the action. Several chapter titles even hint of a singular quest and singular forward movement in time and space: "The Forest Track" (chapter six), "Night in the Forest" (chapter twelve), "Sailing Away" (chapter thirteen), "Sailing Onwards" (chapter fifteen), and "Discoveries" (chapter twenty-two). However, there are a number of other significant unrelated conflicts throughout the story that seem just as important in Felix's development, if not more so, than the gipsy battle. These also could have made Felix achieve his goal and

return home sooner. Among these are Felix's attempt to impress the army camp leader and his exploration of the London ruins for definitive new knowledge. He fails at both. This frequent rise and fall in tension aligns the text with other female plots.

Jefferies's ending also evades clear gender classification. If the "choices" in a traditional male narrative plot are the hero's marriage to his love interest or her death, either is a possibility beyond the final page of the novel. The ending is inconclusive. Does Felix get Aurora's hand in marriage? Does he return to the shepherds and build? The ending seems appropriate, even hopeful, to some readers. For instance, George Miller and Hugo Matthews report that the *Pall Mall Gazette* review of *After London* deemed its ending just right and only "dull people" would not be satisfied with it (440), but in my reading, doom pervades the landscape and overshadows a "happy" ending for Felix. The sun is sinking as he enters the "immense forest" (Jefferies II.28)--a sharp contrast to the opening image of the sun rising and Felix safe in his bed. Also, a number of important questions related to the quest are left unanswered. Felix proves to himself what he is capable of doing, but his return home might be cut short for any number of reasons. Even if he returns home safely, his family may not believe him. Aurora may reject him. Her family may reject him. All may have been in vain. The quest to London and beyond may be only the first of which Felix is compelled to make to prove himself.

The reader finds two male points-of-view in the early parts of *She*. The first is the editor's, who writes the very brief introduction to the remainder of the story. He addresses the reader (imagining the reader as male) and invites him to interpret the narrative that follows the conclusion of his own remarks: "Well, that is all I have to say. Of the history itself the reader must judge. I give it to him..." (Haggard 5). The editor

receives a letter from Holly asking him to published the enclosed manuscript. The second point-of-view in the story is Holly's, as the reader reads the manuscript and Holly "tells" the rest of the story and refers to himself throughout the narrative in the first-person. As early as the second sentence of the first chapter, Holly refers to himself as "I," and in the second paragraph, he reveals his name to the reader. As an autodiegetic narrator, Holly embraces the reader as narratee in the first sentence of chapter one, lumping himself with his reading audience: "There are some events of which each circumstance and surrounding detail seem to be graven on the memory in such fashion that *we* cannot forget them" (7, emphasis added). He speaks of common human experiences in and beyond the text--experiences common to both character and reader. In this way, he identifies the similarities between himself and those learning his story. In so many words, he invites the reader to explore Ayesha's domain with him. In fact, Chrisman notes that early reviewers "characterize Haggard's fiction as a kind of land into which the reader is transported. The land combines terrestrial realism and an extra-terrestrial marvellousness" (29). Only male explorers are presumed, however; like the editor, he imagines only a male audience. And like the editor, he also directly addresses the reader while translating the documents left for Holly. For example, Holly presumes the reader's judgment of the English translation of the potsherd's description is the same as his own (Haggard 28). In the twelfth chapter, he questions the reader's memory of the scarab ring Vincey wears when Holly finds it on the rocky floor of one of Ayesha's caves (105). In a footnote, Holly resists telling the reader about horrific sculptures in the cave of torture (133). In one more instance, Holly mentions the reader. He asks the reader to

ponder Vincey's and Kallikrates's relationship, concluding, "The reader must form his own opinion on these as on many other matters" (238).

Much like *After London*, *She* is composed of two parts, the second much longer than the first. The brief introduction precedes a second part of twenty-eight chapters. Considering the narratological horizontal axis--the temporal arrangement of the story--*She* proceeds chronologically, with the exception of the introduction which chronologically follows the rest of the narrative but precedes it textually. Like *After London*, each chapter of the main narrative charts Holly's and Vincey's adventures with Ayesha as they happen. Thus, the reader follows the explorers from Holly's Cambridge room as Holly speaks with the dying elder Vincey, to London on the younger Vincey's twenty-fifth birthday to open the mysterious chest, to Central Africa where most of the action takes place, and finally back to England. The entire round-trip journey takes two years. Most of the narrative focuses on small passages of time--days or even hours--except for a few notable variations. The first occurs in the short second chapter, "The Years Roll By," in which young Vincey grows to manhood. Holly even says, "The remorseless years flew by..." (Haggard 17). The end of the fourth chapter recounts the passage of three months in a sentence, between the men's decision to obey the elder Vincey's quest and their departure for Zanzibar. A final rapid passage of time occurs in the final chapter, as the men leave Ayesha's domain for their return home. Here, more than six months pass in a paragraph's description. The men are captured by a savage tribe, wander with a Portuguese elephant hunter, and catch a steamboat--all of which seem like incredible adventures--but Vincey explains that this is all "of no public interest, resembling as it does the experience of more than one Central African traveller" (237).

Despite this conventional treatment of time on the surface of the narrative, Haggard does play with temporal constructions via the plot itself which is essentially a quest for the proverbial fountain of youth. This is clear from the third chapter, in which the sherd's mysteries are opened to Holly's and Vincey's scrutiny. The message on the sherd is presented in Greek in the novel and then translated into medieval Latin, Old English, and modern English. Etherington also points out that the sherd is engraved with the lineage of one family that successively lived in Egypt, Greece, Rome, France, and England--and that the pottery "thus presents the essence of world history as it was commonly and complacently believed by Haggard's contemporaries" (xviii). He adds that Holly and Vincey move in the opposite temporal direction, backward through evolutionary and geological time on their journey, as they leave their university, "the epitome of high civilization..." for a pre-Pharaonic Egypt civilization, and leave modern England for the ancient center of the earth (xviii). They are also symbolically moving backward in time as they return to a landscape resembling a womb--and then forward in time as it becomes Ayesha's tomb. Because twenty-five-year-old Vincey's hair turns white after his experience in Africa, and because this "Greek god" is identical to his supposed ancient ancestor Kallikrates before his experience, his identity is an example of temporal experimentation. Is he a twin? A reincarnation? Something else? These questions are left unanswered, even by Ayesha. Ayesha herself defies conventional time and is said to be thousands of years old. It is also significant that she moves both forward and backward in time as she dies, resembling a beautiful woman, then a decrepit hag, then a monkey. In fact, the central landscape of the Ayesha and the Amahagger people, according to David, is an "uncolonized time warp..." (198). In Ayesha's caves especially,

time stands still (Stiebel 85). And finally, Holly draws the reader's attention to what he discovers about the fluidity of time on the final page, as he stares "into the blackness of unborn time...": "Here ends this history so far as it concerns science and the outside world. What its end will be as regards Leo and myself is more than I can guess. But we feel that is not reached yet. A story that began more than two thousand years ago may stretch a long way into the dim and distant future" (Haggard 238).

Otherwise, *She*'s plot matches the charting of the male sexual experience, with a slow building of intensity to an explosive climax and a rapid descent in the action. The climax occurs in the twenty-sixth chapter, with Ayesha's dissolution and death shortly before the close of the relatively long novel. Several chapter titles leading up to that pinnacle chapter, entitled "What We Saw," indicate the rising action of the romance: "An Early Christian Ceremony" (chapter six), suggestive of a wedding; "Ustane Sings" (chapter seven), suggestive of a wedding singer, and her song is of love, the reader discovers, with an opening line of "Thou art my chosen--I have waited for thee from the beginning!" (Haggard 71); "The Feast, and After!" (chapter eight), hinting of a wedding reception and the sexual consummation to follow--note the exclamation point; "'She'" (chapter twelve); "Ayesha Unveils" (chapter thirteen); "Triumph" (chapter twenty); and "The Spirit of Life" (chapter twenty-five).

The structures suggested by *She* are also complexly arranged, and each discovery of a clue or a new landscape is made only after uncovering it from layers of other clues or trudging through a multitude of landscapes. After the authorial layering, the convoluted "Chinese box" structure of the contents of Vincey's mysterious chest, opened in the third chapter, "The Sherd of Amenartas," is the most obvious example of Haggard's layering.

Etherington explains the layering of the pottery shard: “wrapped in yellow linen, under an old parchment, under ‘some brown shredded material,’ in a locked silver casket decorated with sphinxes, which is contained in a locked ebony box inside a rusty iron chest inside the vault of a bank” (xvii). He also notes other layers which both the novel’s characters and readers must unwrap or unravel to gain full meaning of the text: authorial voices, the trip to Ayesha’s world, enclosed courts and tombs, the journey to the earth’s womb, and Ayesha herself in her multiple veils (xvii-xviii). The reader is constantly stripping away layers of information, reaching for other sources of information.

Reader becomes both explorer and voyeur in *She*, for Ayesha’s process of unveiling unfolds like the text. Her physical and emotional unveilings span the entire novel and is like an extended striptease. When Holly first glimpses her, she oozes sexual unattainability and attraction. She slowly emerges from her curtained boudoir, appendage by appendage, revealing “a most beautiful white hand, white as snow, and with long tapering fingers, ending in the pinkest nails” and then her entirely swathed body (Haggard 107). As she allows the men to get physically closer to her throughout *She*, she also reveals more of her hidden past to them. By the end of the novel, she is naked in the “womb of the earth” as she stands before Holly and Vincey.

The ending of *She* is conventional and closed. Ayesha’s mysteriousness makes marriage impossible. Haggard’s only other Victorian choice for her is death--and that is precisely what happens. No matter how horrific, everything after that point--Job’s death from shock, escape from the womb/tomb under peril of death, departure from Kôr--is anticlimactic.

Like *After London* and *She*, the point-of-view in *Heart of Darkness* is male at all times. The story is told by one of four seamen on the *Nellie*, though the voice that the reader remembers most is sailor Marlow's. This dual voicing is necessary for the story's provocative effect: "The use of a first-person narrative, through the agency of Marlow, was necessary so that Conrad could gain aesthetic distance and the reader could identify with an average man thrown into an abnormal situation....Lacking the narrator, the story would appear too distant from the immediate experience--as though it had happened and was now over, like ancient history" (Karl 134). The men--and the reader--sit aboard the yacht, meditating, until Marlow breaks the silence. The first anonymous seaman occasionally comments (to the reader) on his fellow sailors' reaction to Marlow's words, but the story becomes Marlow's. The first man indicates when Marlow pauses or breaks off (Conrad 106, 107, 129, 152) and when another listener berates Marlow's brusqueness (137). These instances are so rare, and the reader becomes so absorbed in Marlow's eerie tale, that breaks in Marlow's narrative are jolting. They are sudden reminders that Marlow is aboard ship telling his tale after surviving his voyage, not still deep in the jungle where the reader's mind is. In "Preserving and Keeping Order by Killing Time in *Heart of Darkness*," Brook Thomas explains, "By interrupting the flow of Marlow's narrative Conrad establishes contact with his readers, momentarily freeing them from the shackles of a linear narrative and throwing them back on their own imaginations" (249). The sailor-narrator also breaks in at the end, as Marlow stops talking (Conrad 186). Otherwise, Marlow takes control of the tale. It becomes exclusively his account of his exploratory journey on the Congo River to the mysterious Kurtz. He essentially

appropriates the first man's role as homodiegetic narrator, and he becomes an autodiegetic narrator.

Heart of Darkness is composed of three untitled sections, each of approximately equal length. Charted along the horizontal narratological axis, each of the three sections of *Heart of Darkness* proceeds chronologically, after the initial narrating sailor sets the scene. This framing situation occurs in the present; Marlow's adventure up the Congo is in the past. The temporal situation is not difficult for the reader to follow, however, as references to the present are few and far between. While the time period encompassing the framing situation is not long--just long enough for Marlow to tell his tale--the time period of Marlow's trip is much longer. It takes Marlow fifteen days to journey to the Central Station.

On the surface, the plot line of *Heart of Darkness* may seem to follow an ideal male sexual pattern of rising action, climax, and rapid falling action. In fact, the central quest which incorporates the majority of the literal text does. The pinnacle of the action is Marlow's encounter with Kurtz. Everything before that is Marlow's preparation for the meeting and the aid for the reader's understanding of Marlow's character and motivations for locating the elusive and enigmatic trader. However, the closed ending of the novel points back to the beginning of the novel and the overall circular structure of it. The framing device "adds to the novel's density and turns the reader's attention to its metaphysical significance. It is in the frame story that the moral effect of Marlow's African experience is apparent. We see the man he has become before we hear him describe the experience that made him that man" (Adelman 85). Marlow begins and ends on the *Nellie*, and his attitudes toward imperialism and human nature do not apparently

change. Adelman notes that “even after his experience with the ugliness of imperialism, he still embraces the colonial idea, provided the colonies are British” (86). Conrad’s decision to frame the novel this way is significant; Marlow’s story takes on new meaning when the reader is essentially invited to sit down with the sailors and listen to Marlow’s tale, too. He or she becomes like a member of the jury, casting judgment on Marlow who Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan appropriately terms “a witness haunted by his own failure to testify” (56). The reader has the final say regarding Marlow’s guilt or innocence.

The ending of the novel is closed in several ways that incorporate both marriage and death, although the novel is not a conventional romance. The first way is that the chronological end of the novel is structurally its beginning, as noted above. Kurtz, the central aspect of the novel, the man who drives the narrative, dies. With his death, his Intended’s hopes for marriage to Kurtz also end decisively, and the reader’s possible desire for some kind of satisfactory, hopeful conclusion ceases as well. Marlow’s attitude toward imperialism and human nature has apparently not changed, and Kurtz’s beloved remains deluded.

Like *She* and *Heart of Darkness*, *Green Mansions* speaks from two male points-of-view, the first in a short prologue and the second for the remainder of the novel. The first is neither really a heterodiegetic nor homodiegetic narrator, for he knows Abel the protagonist but does not play a part in Abel’s quest to Guayana. His relationship with Abel forms after Abel’s Venezuelan adventures, and he does not learn about them until years later after much urging (and a disagreement). The transition between the two narrators is smooth, for the friend announces that “the time had now come for him [Abel]

to speak” (Hudson 6), and chapter one immediately begins, “Now that we are cool, he said, and regret that we hurt each other, I am not sorry that it happened” (7). That single unpunctuated “he said” is the bridge between Abel’s friend’s written account and Abel’s spoken one. It is the last reminder that Abel’s textual story has a preface and chronological story has a future; Abel’s friend looks back on Abel’s experiences in Guayana, indicating that Abel survived them and grew old. Neither Abel nor his friend addresses the narratee or seems to presume a male readership, except for one instance in which Abel addresses the reader as “you, my friend” before lamenting the limitations of words in describing Rima’s beauty (52-3). And although Alcorn argues that “Abel’s point of view is eccentric, peripheral: he is trying to see life from Rima’s point of view. It is her vision, not Abel’s, that is the focal point of the novel” (69), it is Abel’s words, ruminations, and speculations, not hers, that the reader must use to navigate his tale.

After the prologue, *Green Mansions* consists of twenty-two untitled chapters of approximately equal length. Thus, there are no external structural clues about the internal structure of the story. There are no hints of what may happen between Abel and Rima, as there are tantalizing glimpses of the narrative future in *She* via a quick scan of the table of contents. The reader will discover the forest and Rima’s secrets in the same order as Abel’s prologue-writing friend.

Drawn along the horizontal narratological axis, Abel’s tale mostly follows a conventional temporal arrangement. Except for short references to the past to explain Abel’s thoughts in the present, there is only one extensive temporal break. In fact, Abel and the reader become so much a part of the present and the wild forest world so far from “civilization” that anything beyond Rima’s surroundings seems unbelievable, rather than

vice versa. The scene of chapter one begins with Abel recounting how he comes to Guayana initially--via political rebellion gone sour, escape toward the Orinoco, journey to the River Meta, feverish illness at the Manapuri settlement, recovery with the Maquiritari tribe, and a failed quest for gold in the mountains. Abel relays all this--wanderings of several months--in a matter of pages. When he finally reaches Runi's tribe, his account of the passage of time slows considerably, and he ruminates at length especially over descriptions of nature scenes in what could be called spatial breaks or what Alcorn terms "relaxing of the formal pressures of plot unity, an episodic freedom, a delight in digression" (71). After this early point midway through chapter one, there is only one fairly large break of time in the narrative. This occurs in chapter fifteen, as Nuflo finally tells Abel of Rima's origins. In a few pages, Nuflo reflects back seventeen years to his discovery and rescue of Rima's mother.

Predictably, Hudson's Victorian tale, subtitled "A Romance of the Tropical Forest," has a clear male plot with a long build-up to an explosive climax, brief denouement, and definitive ending. The emotional pinnacle of the story arguably comes in one of two places. In chapter seventeen, Abel kisses unconscious Rima, finally verbally pledging his love for her, and she awakens like a sleeping princess to her prince, pledges her own love, and leaves Abel behind to return home and make her wedding garments. In chapter nineteen, Abel hears of Rima's murder and is devastated. Either point could be considered the novel's climax, and there is little that happens between the two events. Rima's evasiveness and Abel's difficulties negotiating his friendships between mortal enemies, Rima and Runi's tribe, pave the way for both possible climaxes. As in *She*, death at the end is the only option for the idealized heroine; mysterious,

provocative, powerful Rima is not fully human, so marriage is not an option in this romance. Abel loses all joy in life after confirming Rima's death, and the story descends into revenge and grief.

While aspects of *Green Mansions* indicate its masculinist plot patterning, Hudson explores the power and frustration of feminine language usage. Throughout, Abel is entranced by Rima's bird-sounds which Rima uses to call to him in the forest and to pray to her deceased mother. He ponders the difficulties of communicating with her, and Rima laments that Abel will never be able to learn the language that she shares with her mother. Perhaps this is a nod to the difficulties of communication between the sexes or between humanity and the rest of the natural world. Or perhaps it is something deeper. Abel's desire to understand but inability to do so is interesting in that perhaps Hudson is referring to *écriture féminine*--here a language of undeniable power but limited as a form of communication. Ironically, it is the break-down of communication throughout the story that leads to its horrors--to Abel's and Rima's frustrated relationship, but also to war between tribes, to their fear of the "daughter of the Didi," to Abel's refusal to be completely honest with Runi. When Runi tells Abel, "'Your words are good words'" (Hudson 168), the reader knows the truth. Abel's communication with the reader may be the truest, least limited narrative channel. Even that has its limits. Ronner reports that Hudson repeatedly admitted frustration with the limits of language (3).

Written language also helps frame the novel, largely in the prologue, just like written accounts of history in *After London* and the textual layering in Vincey's chest in *She*. It draws attention to the significance of written accounts. For example, before Abel relates his history to his friend, he is saddened that "*His* life was a closed and clasped

volume to me” (Hudson 6). Here, Abel’s life is equated to a physical text. When the reader peruses the narrative that follows, he or she is literally becoming involved in Abel’s life. When Abel’s journal manuscript is ruined by rain at Manapuri, the reader has an even greater understanding of Abel’s dismay. Ironically, Abel’s friend Panta does not comprehend Abel’s disappointment and tells him that if he desires to write a book for “stay-at-homes” he could invent much more interesting lies (11).

Regarding gender in point-of-view, *The Secret Garden* differs from the texts discussed above. First, the text does not include introductory material provided by a male voice distinct from the protagonist’s. There is no preface. Also, the heterodiegetic omniscient narrator may be female. The largest audience when the novel was published was young girls. The point-of-view is also aimed at a different type of audience than the other turn-of-the-century novels under consideration, though ironically it was not received that way. *The Secret Garden* was first published as a serial in 1910 in *American Magazine*, a literary magazine for adults, and therefore was perceived as adult fiction although Burnett intended it to be read as a children’s novel. Only once is the intended reader, male or female, addressed, as the narrator gets caught up in the amazing “good Magic” in the garden: “If you have never had a garden, you cannot understand, and if you have had a garden you will know that it would take a whole book to describe all that came to pass there” (Burnett 204).

Structured by twenty-seven titled chapters of approximately equal length and spanning roughly equal lengths of time, the novel proceeds straightforwardly on the horizontal narratological axis. The opening phrase, “When Mary Lennox was sent to Misselthwaite Manor...” (Burnett 7), indicates that the narrator is stepping back in time,

and the narrative begins in India but does not stay there long. Mary and the reader are transported quickly to England. On the way there, the reader travels with Mary in that no knowledge about Mary's destination is offered; like Mary, the reader is left in the dark about what will happen. The narrator proceeds chronologically with Mary's adventures and development from selfish, disagreeable child to mature, likeable mother-figure.

Burnett also charts Colin's similar growth in *The Secret Garden*, as Bixler points out:

She uses eight chapters (1-8) to establish Mary's character and get her inside the secret garden and another eight (13-20) to introduce Colin and bring him to the garden. Moreover, each group of eight chapters is followed by a similarly parallel group of four (9-12 and 21-24) depicting first Mary's and then Colin's transformations within the garden. The book's final three chapters (25-27) can be seen as a coda that recapitulates this theme through an abbreviated depiction of Mr. Craven's transformation and at the same time pulls together various earlier patterns of imagery, especially those related to parental nurturance. (*Secret* 62)

Whether the reader focuses on Mary's or Colin's interpersonal and intrapersonal growth, the novel is carefully structured around one central environment common to both children. With the brief exception of part of the final chapter in which Archibald Craven meanders aimlessly through Europe, the narrative's action takes place at Misselthwaite.

Arguably, the reader finds a plot structured around the female sexual experience. There are multiple climactic moments throughout the narrative. While Colin's father's rediscovery of the secret garden and first sight of his strengthened son in the final moments of the novel might be considered the climax, there is a problem with such a

simplistic reading, especially if the reader considers Mary the central figure. I contend that there are multiple equally significant narrative moments, all hinging on Mary's discoveries: locating the garden, meeting Dickon Sowerby, finding Colin, and rejoicing with Colin's delighted announcement, "'I shall get well! And I shall live forever and ever and ever!'" (Burnett 185). High points in Mary's psychological growth are equally evident in all of these instances, as she learns what it means to discover treasure, guard secrets, make friends, and find joy in someone else's triumph.

It is difficult to characterize the ending as gendered in the same way as the above novels because *The Secret Garden* differs so greatly in its treatment of love. The main characters are children and thus display no romantic attachment. No male character idealizes Mary; in fact, it is Mary who glorifies a male character, Dickon. An ending of marriage or death would not fit this "children's novel"--though the reader can imagine marriage in the children's future. Still, the ending is closed and conclusive. The secret garden is a secret no longer, and Mary, Colin, Dickon, their families, Ben Weatherstaff--and the reader--can revel in it as never before.

Reading landscapes of and in *After London*, *She*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest*, and *The Secret Garden* is akin to entering a secret garden like Mary's--so close and full of mysteries yet tantalizingly out of reach until a key is provided. In my study, the key is attention to gender. In these novels, British authors gender geographical, national, and textual landscapes in ways that situate them in relation to societal norms. These three types of landscape are units that shape and are shaped by external forces, according to Tuan's definition as I expand it above. Besides these two similarities--that all three types of space are gendered and are distinct

morphing units--geographical, national, and textual landscapes share a number of other parallels. First, they are prominent within each text. *After London* is about post-apocalyptic London, Ayesha's domain is central to the adventure story *She*, the "heart of darkness" dominates Conrad's tale, and Abel's green mansions and Mary's garden are so important as to constitute each novel's title. It is impossible to ignore the places of each novel. Second, the three types of landscapes lend themselves readily to analysis of hidden gendered subtexts. Further, as defended above, the implications of gendering all three kinds of landscape have been overlooked in a way that diminishes a rich reading of each novel. Most interestingly, engagement with multiple types of landscape, especially geographical and textual, involve similar brain activity, according to James R. Aubrey; parallel biochemical occurrences happen when someone reads a story, writes a story, or takes a walk through nature ("Introduction" 23).

Besides their similarities which make them apt for a comparative study, gendered geographical, national, and textual landscapes in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century British novels intersect with and illuminate each other and the protagonists who wander across and within each. They bolster each other and the overarching theme of control over nature that resonates throughout the novels. For example, in *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is tempted by the African jungle's terrifying majesty. The natural world seems to offer the chance to simulate reverse chronological movement into a perfect landscape, however frighteningly overwhelming. This is exactly how Marlow responds to the African jungle as he maternalizes it. He also feminizes the water body that leads him there as both a virginal and maternal figure, thereby reflecting his own and his crew's desires. He projects what he wishes the environment to be onto his physical surroundings. Via the

narrator and Marlow's fellow seaman, Conrad pits the powerful English landscape against its colonial counterpart in Africa. The ambiguity of the "heart of darkness" allows the reader to presume that Marlow finds a sense of personal power in self-identification with the national landscape. Regarding the textual landscape, *Heart of Darkness* maintains a male point of view at all times, whether the narrative voice is that of the seaman or, more often, Marlow. Its closed ending also reflects male domination on a narratological level. All three landscapes reinforce the central theme of humanity's desire for mastery over environment; Marlow feminizes his surroundings at will to grapple with nature's awesomeness, his colonial situation allows him to attempt to glean from the jungle what he wants--an impossibly idealized female figure, and the form of his tale reflects his experience in masculine terms for a masculine audience.

If novels truly are products of their historical moment, the reader can predict that texts written a hundred years later will be gendered in ways that similarly reflect societal issues of the postmodern era. Again, gendered landscapes dovetail to create a revised vision of humanity's relationship to its surroundings and to fellow humanity. Then and now, British novelists gender geographical, national, and textual landscapes in precise ways and position themselves in ways that clearly mark society's definition of gender norms. Their means of attaching gender markers to places, and their possible reasons for doing so, have changed and will undoubtedly continue to do so. While postmodernism emphasizes the malleability of gender, the Victorian period seems locked in a rigid understanding of masculine privilege projected onto the landscape.

CHAPTER 2

RELATIONSHIPS AND GENDERED PLACES IN FOWLES AND BARNES

The late nineteenth-century novels' protagonists examined in chapter one paint a fairly consistent picture of their assumed control over nature as an alluring though dangerous feminized landscape. With the exception of child Mary Lennox who only maternalizes the garden landscape in *The Secret Garden*, the protagonists in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century novels are orphaned adult male heroes who project both romantic ideals and the desire for metaphorical return to the safety of the womb onto the landscape, thereby feminizing it; Carol M. Barnum aptly compares landscape to a hero's unconscious (*Fiction 5*). The heroes actively seek an impossible virgin/mother/lover figure who can satisfy their varied fantasies in the form of an "other" landscape. Anticipating what they imagine will be an untouched Edenic geographical location--a stark contrast to conventional reality--they embark on a deliberate quest, embracing inevitable perils along the way. Often, however, they find the opposite of paradise: Felix's post-apocalyptic fiery London swamp or Ayesha's tomb, for example.

While the late Victorian novelists use gendered geographical landscapes to characterize, reflect, and articulate these questing and typically male characters' desires for romantic ideals and gestational bliss in order to ultimately reveal their sense of mastery over the natural world, Fowles and Barnes accomplish the opposite goal: gendering landscape to show their protagonists' reverence for the dignified passivity of their wild surroundings. Their protagonists express less volition as explorers; the heroes or heroines do not engage in a specific goal-oriented quest toward something so much as they move away from a specific conventional landscape. Each protagonist finds himself

or herself “wrenched out of his [or her] daily existence and forced to look at the shallowness of his [or her] life. The action or event places him [or her] on the path of potential discovery...” (Barnum “Nature” 89). He or she frequently genders natural geographical landscapes as feminine and Edenic but shows growing sensitivity toward the complexity of his or her surroundings. At last, humanity at least momentarily accepts its relative insignificance in the universe.

The natural world and humanity’s reaction to it in selected postmodern novels by Fowles and Barnes are like that of title character Maurice Conchis’s response to the remote forested region of Seidevarre in remote Norway (no such place exists today) in *The Magus*: ““It was a place where nature was triumphant over man. Not savagely triumphant...But calmly, nobly triumphant. It is sentimental to talk of a landscape having a soul, but that one possessed a stronger character than any other I have seen, before or since. It ignored man. Man was nothing in it”” (299). Many of the major characters from *The Magus*, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, and *Staring at the Sun* come to demonstrate peaceful acknowledgment of their relative helplessness in the face of the natural world; mastery, though ostensibly desirable, is simply not possible in a postmodern world inhabited by enigmatic magi, invasive time-traveling narrators, and eloquently satirical woodworm all negotiating with powerful landscapes. While nature in these novels arguably is not vengeful and does not control humanity, there is a power dynamic set up between nature and humanity which yields to or complies with nature.

Early in their respective novels, Fowles and Barnes’s narrators depict natural settings as idealized women who challenge the corporeal females within the narrators’

worlds for the narrators' time and attention. They try to assert control over dirt, water, and trees as though the natural world is manipulable human flesh subject to their whims. The same figures, though, quickly lose that sense of power as they exhibit honest and intense emotional reactions to the natural world; they are overcome and at a loss for words when faced with huge mountains, indescribable Mediterranean weather, or the unruly flora of the Undercliff, for example. This type of dramatic reaction is especially significant in the case of self-proclaimed poet and writer narrators such as Nicholas Urfe who pride themselves on their prowess with words. The landscapes they gender in order to flaunt power actually overpower them.

While overwhelming geographical landscapes force the explorer in the postmodern novel to recognize his or her relative insignificance, they also reflect humanity's fight against relentless time and striving toward attempted mental return to an imaginative blissful state of ultimate contentment, of oblivion like that psychoanalysts describe as found in the womb. Thus, the same narrators silenced by nature find in landscape a metaphorical return to the original mythic timeless space, the womb of humanity, and that pervasive and powerful cultural metaphor: the Garden of Eden. According to Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva in *Ecofeminism*, "wild nature" and "nostalgia for childhood" are counterparts (140). In Fowles and Barnes's novels, the idealized Edenic landscape combines these two desires, if the reader allows childhood to encompass the prenatal period of growth. While the narrators feminize "perfect" landscapes as wombs, Fowles and Barnes connect landscapes with Edenic imagery possibly to force their characters into greater reverence for fleeting moments, for the preciousness of every earthly experience due to their own temporality. No natural

landscape now, once entered, can truly be Edenic or allow the explorer to freeze time. Human nature pollutes by its very presence; biology informs us that even the most conscientious, environmentally-aware naturalists disturb the ecocritical balance of every place they enter. Also, time manipulation continues to evade us. Timelines are simply human constructs to help humanity deal with something out of its control. As Conchis speaks from the pages of *The Magus*, ““All that is past possesses our present”” (*Magus* 311). His point is that history repeats itself--or the characters try to make it function repetitively, but they can never succeed. The power of Edenic landscapes is that they can temporarily provide that happy illusion.

In some cases, because this return to Edenic innocence is impossible and unhealthy if the characters view it as prolonged escapism, and because the natural world is such a powerful force, the authors infuse womb imagery with references to death. Nandor Fodor reminds the reader, “We cannot, with impunity, become a-sociates of the womb” (391). In other words, attempted return to the womb entails negative retribution from somewhere or something. On a much larger scale, collective rather than personal, the past not only should not but cannot be recovered: “Perhaps modern people cannot go home again, since at least ten thousand years of cultural history separate us from intuitive awareness of the *Magna Mater*, the natural, organic process including soil and sun that created *Homo sapiens* and all other life-forms on earth” (Oelschlaeger 2). Just as Adam and Eve and all future generations are barred from the Garden of Eden which is guarded by a heavenly-appointed angel with a flaming sword, the protagonists are prevented from acting out their return to the womb for any significant length of time.

The dangers of yearning for Eden as a return to the womb manifest themselves in the characters' abundant gendering of natural places, especially water bodies, mountains, and caves, as both wombs and tombs. Fowles and Barnes have their characters relate to these places as uterine enclosures in which they experience psychological rebirth, but Barnes complicates this feminizing by making several of these sites of rebirth also sites of literal and obvious physical death. While his characters may feminize the natural landscape and therefore seemingly lock it into a subservient position, he infuses symbolic wombs with power by turning them into burial places--or vice versa. In doing so, he further emphasizes the contemporary realization that nature triumphs over humanity.

In all four novels, revelations of humility, contented helplessness, and longing for the past in the face of magnificent, feminized geographical landscapes come from a variety of sources. They are not always from the characters who undergo epiphanies. Nor are they always from characters who desire Edenic landscapes or embrace the past when they metaphorically stumble into these landscapes. While the voicing of discovery closely accompanies the act of discovery, the source of the voice and its temporal relationship to the experiences it describes in these postmodern novels vary. Though this is often overlooked by both readers and critics, the reader should imagine *The Magus* as though it is written by a wiser, older Urfe, a secondary magus to the reader, after Urfe gains geographical and temporal distance from the godgame on Bourani; Mahmoud Salami writes that Urfe becomes a magician with mastery over his own life and then refashions his experiences into *The Magus* (104). Hence its tense. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is narrated not by Charles Smithson but by an intelligent contemporary figure who apparently knows much, though not all--and the reader outside

the text of course recognizes Fowles's role in the creation of the narrator. A similarly wise focalizer reports Jean Serjeant's thoughts and actions in *Staring at the Sun*, while various characters in the plots and narrators external to the narrative action--a woodworm, (delusional?) Kath Ferris, enraged actor Charlie, unnamed narrators, etc.--recount epiphanic moments in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*. The ninth chapter, "Project Ararat," even begins and ends with "you" as the main character in the present, merging Spike Tiggler's dramatic story told in past tense with the reader's present: "It is a fine afternoon and you are driving the Outer Banks of North Carolina....[much later] You come out on deck [of a ferry]....One hundred miles to the west, in the Moondust Diner, Spike Tiggler, holding aloft a plastic bottle of water from a stream that flows uphill, is announcing the launch of the second Project Ararat" (*History* 247, 278). The point here is that each pivotal moment's significance in the four novels outweighs the means of its transmission.

By gendering geographical landscape, Fowles and Barnes are able to negotiate with the changing academic mindset toward and increasing attention given to both gender roles and landscape's literary significance. While they play with time periods--setting their characters in the earliest years of earth after the Biblical flood in "The Stowaway," in a dreamworld/afterworld in "The Dream," in a mechanized, computerized future in the final pages of *Staring at the Sun*, or in a stereotypical version of Victorian England in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, for example--they can use the benefit of contemporary sensitivity and knowledge to newly represent humanity's continuing struggle to form a healthy relationship with its surroundings. Critically aware of environmentalism and biological essentialism as "hot button" issues, Fowles and Barnes use literature to both

challenge and entertain their readers and to encourage the novelistic creation of future landscapes that resist stale, strict gender roles.

As do the late Victorian authors, Fowles and Barnes primarily gender natural, living geographical landscapes, as opposed to human-constructed places, and they gender them as female. These “nonhuman” outdoor places predominantly include water bodies and mountains but also beaches, caves, gardens, forests, plains, etc., and both the postmodern and the late-nineteenth-century authors use a varied combination of strategies to gender them: depictions of geographical landscape as a woman or parts of a woman, emphasis on the ability of a landscape to arouse intense emotions in its explorer or viewer, and clear associations between a character and a geographical place. However, Fowles and Barnes rely less on direct means of gender identification, such as using feminine pronouns to refer to landscape, than complicated means of gendering that force the reader-as-explorer to read “between the lines,” make connections, and continually question the narrators’ and authors’ intentions when they depict geographical landscapes.

Constructed landscapes--places formed by human hands before the present moment of the plot--are those of the real, conventional world. Simply put, they lack vitality or mystery. They do not inspire or provoke notable reactions. They are not gendered, much less personified. Like the “dead” Company’s station in *Heart of Darkness* or sinister Misselthwaite Manor’s locked rooms in *The Secret Garden*, they pale in comparison to the magic of natural places. For example, the narrator of *Staring at the Sun* reports protagonist Serjeant’s disappointment at constructed places in Egypt: “she had always imagined that the Sphinx skulked among the shifting sand, and that the Great Pyramid rose distantly like a mirage from some dangerous moonscape of desert.

But it took only a coach ride through the suburbs of Cairo to discover them. One of the world's Seven Wonders had turned out to be day-tripper material" (88). The Egyptian desert upon which the Sphinx and Great Pyramid rest is itself a dry, *dying* place, the reader will remember. (Notably, just a few pages earlier, childless Serjeant worries about her own womb's barrenness which makes her think of a desert landscape [72]). The same narrator, contrasting the Grand Canyon with the body of constructed places protagonist Serjeant visits during her midlife travels, articulates natural magic perfectly: "Reason, and man's ingenuity, had erected the first Six Wonders of the World that Jean had visited. Nature had thrown up the seventh, and it was the seventh which had thrown up the questions" (*Staring* 101). The narrator here refers to broad questions about the purpose of life and the inevitability of death that Serjeant begins to ponder.

The Magus provides another significant example of the difference between natural and constructed places' effects on the characters (and readers) who encounter them: frustrated teacher Nicholas Urfe writes, "the northern side of the island [of Phraxos] seemed oppressed and banal in comparison [to Bourani's landscape]" (71). (Bourani is Conchis's home). Specifically, the Lord Byron School has a "claustrophobic ambience" (*Magus* 51). The school sits prominently on the northern side of Phraxos. It brings to mind "repressed boys and sour masters, the unendurable lack of femininity and natural sexuality in its life" (349). Urfe personifies the boys' school and contrasts it with the sensuality of the feminized Phraxos landscape. As a result, Urfe tends to flee the northern side for Conchis's domain, and the reader might hurry toward the pages in which Urfe is at Bourani, too. Urfe's experiences there are far more exciting, at least

during the reader's first encounter with *The Magus*. The reader, like Urfe, is trying to solve the mysteries that Conchis embodies.

Constructed landscapes throughout Fowles and Barnes's postmodern novels also receive far less attention and ink than natural places do--another indication of feminizing the natural world. They inspire little emotion. Abel sparsely describes the many constructed places in *Green Mansions*. The narrator of *The Secret Garden*, too, pares descriptive language about constructed places to the bare minimum. Similarly, in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* nearly all of the narrative action takes place in the wild Undercliff, and the humanly fashioned buildings receive little of gentleman scientist Charles's or the postmodern narrator's notice. Mrs. Poulteney's drawing room, Ernestina Freeman's bedroom, and Sarah Woodruff's (as Roughwood's) room in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's house, for example, are hardly described and serve as little more than backdrop to narrative action. The same can be said for constructed places in *The Magus*; the reader "sees" much more of the natural world than either England or Greece beyond Conchis's domain. In most of the chapters/stories of *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters*, too, constructed places are mentioned only within their larger natural setting. In more than half of the novel's individual narrative "situations"--nine out of fourteen, if the reader considers the two sections of the fifth chapter and three sections of the seventh chapter individually--important action takes place on a boat or raft, a constructed place, but Barnes points out that that vessel is continually subject to natural elements of wind and wave. The ocean is the larger setting.

The reader might question why Fowles and Barnes generally resist gendering constructed places. I argue that their resistance is linked to intermingled issues of

control, gaze, and pleasure. Control over a constructed landscape is inevitable by definition; for a constructed place as I define it to exist, a human must design it. He or she must architecturally craft it, build it, and prescribe its purpose. All of these details of usage are outlined and prescribed. The natural landscape, on the other hand, resists human control. This is why examination of the gendering of natural landscape especially is so critical to understanding characters' motivations and idealizing tendencies. To gender a constructed place seems redundant--restating an obvious fact that humans can and do manipulate the spaces they fashion--and a constructed place as I use the term is a landscape that cannot reveal characters' desires in the same way because it exists prior to the novel's present moment of the plot.

I characterize many of the natural places that Fowles and Barnes's characters stumble or sail across as examples of the archetypal *domaine perdu*, the lost domain, a space antithetical to constructed places. In "New Worlds: Lost Domains as Transforming Enclosures in Selected Fiction of John Fowles," I classify a lost domain as an outdoor space set apart from the rest of society and uncontrolled by humans. It functions as a wilderness, both psychologically and literally. John Neary asserts that, according to Fowles, connecting with the wildness of landscape is a critical part of maintaining sanity (24). Hence, the protagonist who enters the wild lost domain engages in a richly rewarding humanizing demythologization before returning to his or her original setting. Jonathan Noakes and Margaret Reynolds add another characteristic of the lost domain that helpfully applies to so many of Fowles and Barnes's natural landscapes: its connection to a motherland, "a place from which one is exiled, a scene of origin" to which one can recover only in dreams or fiction (10). In *Wormholes*, Fowles

himself calls the lost domain a re-creation of the “magical-sensual world of extreme infancy” (139). From the Undercliff to Bourani to the English Channel to the Grand Canyon, the gendered lost domain model surprises and tantalizes the protagonists of Fowles and Barnes’s postmodern novels.

Fowles employs the clearest means of feminizing lost domains, having his characters and narrators depict specific settings as women, in both *The Magus* and *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*. In *The Magus*, for example, Urfe as narrator overtly feminizes aspects of the Greek landscape in emotional expression and in action. Early in the novel, he directly, even boldly, refers to Greece as a woman with whom he is having an affair (*Magus* 39). This is especially significant because Urfe’s attraction to women is a central issue of the novel. Urfe is overwhelmingly preoccupied with romantic relationships. His boastful admission occurs while Urfe is living with gritty girlfriend Alison Kelly and still physically in England, so his statement directly pits Alison against a foreign landscape and the mysterious characters that he will soon associate with it. Barnum interprets Urfe’s move to Greece as a deliberate choice to leave a “flawed” woman for an imagined perfect landscape: “As Alison represents reality (and Nicholas prefers the imaginative to the real), he flees from Alison into the land of myth, which Greece represents” (*Fiction* 11). Urfe must, and does, choose between Alison and Greece, selecting the latter at the beginning of the novel.

Urfe’s manipulative treatment of landscape-as-woman intensifies on Greek shores. Early in his stay in Greece before meeting Conchis and believing himself to be afflicted with syphilis after carousing at a brothel, Urfe begins to “rape the island” of Phraxos (*Magus* 63). His possessive attitude manifests itself first in domineering

language that locks the landscape into presumably feminine subservience, then second in perversely suggestive activity. One can imagine his relationship to the land when days later on the beach he “turned on my stomach and made love to the memory of Alison, like an animal, without guilt or shame, a mere machine for sensation spreadeagled on the earth” (77). While recalling his current but absent love interest, if she can still be called that after Urfe essentially abandons her, he uses the land as a female substitute as he satiates his lust.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the narrator feminizes aspects of the landscape by setting up a similar dichotomy between Ernestina and the Undercliff, just as Urfe chooses between Alison and a feminized version of Greece. Charles weighs one desire (or obligation) against the other. While the two dovetail--after browsing for tests in the Undercliff he can bring Ernestina a prize specimen, for example, as a sign of his prowess as a scientist *and* devotion to his fiancée--he often chooses one over the other. For example, when Ernestina has a headache one afternoon, he embraces his unexpectedly free day (*French* 111). Had she been well he would have been obligated to stay away from the Undercliff. Social codes also prohibit Ernestina from exploring for tests with Charles. This division--Ernestina can never be with, in, or a part of the natural landscape that Charles finds so fascinating--further sets them up as foes for Charles's attention.

Beyond their depictions of the geographical landscape as a woman or parts of a woman, one of the principle ways in which the postmodern protagonists aid the authors in feminizing the natural landscapes that surround them is by articulating their intense emotional reactions to seeing them and being a part of them. The landscapes are

contrasted with “cultured” spaces by their instigative power. The protagonists’ early reactions to various geographical landscapes are initial evidence of their sense of a relationship with nature, either their smallness and inadequacy in the face of nature or their feeling of mastery over it. The protagonists’ attitudes vary. Eventually, however, they are all at least momentarily overcome by the landscape--shocked, delighted, dwarfed, dumbfounded, and unworthy, or a heady combination of these emotions. If the reader reads the landscape as feminized in a new way, the protagonists’ reactions also set up a gender dynamic counter to that set up by the Victorians--the feminized landscape is ultimately in control of those who cross it rather than vice versa, the victorious explorer conquering newly discovered land.

For Urfe especially, the landscape unlocks an intense emotional outpouring that he finds difficult to articulate. Greece is overwhelming. Clinging to pretensions of being a skilled poet, he offers his first sight of the island of Phraxos in the following passage, parts of which could easily be used to describe a breathtaking woman:

Phraxos was beautiful. There was no other adjective; it was not just pretty, picturesque, charming-- it was simply and effortlessly beautiful. It took my breath away when I first saw it, floating under Venus like a majestic black whale in an amethyst evening sea, and it still takes my breath away when I shut my eyes now and remember it. Its beauty was rare even in the Aegean... (Magus 50, emphasis added)

The reader can imagine Urfe glorifying Alison or any of a number of “conquests” in the same way. On the island, “landscape and light are so beautiful, so all-present, so intense, so wild, that the relationship [between self and place] is immediately love-hatred, one of

passion” (49). Again, Urfe seems overcome by his surroundings, and his words drip with exaggerated sensual delight. Relishing Greece’s newfound beauty, Urfe compares himself to a voyager into space and to Victorian fairy tale girl Alice from *Alice in Wonderland*, “gladly and expectantly disorientated...” (49, 50). He is clearly smitten, like a young man overwhelmed by his first sight of an unexpectedly ravishing beauty. Despite Urfe’s smug worldliness and travels in England and abroad, no landscape prior to this even remotely resembles Phraxos in length or kind of description. It is as though Urfe’s attention to landscape awakens only in Greece--a sentiment he admits soon after: “With no company but my own boredom, I began for the first time in my life to look at nature...” (52). Flora, fauna, weather, and land that he would have earlier taken little notice of now preoccupy him.

Any early sense of domination over the exotic Greek landscapes is short-lived. Urfe’s self-proclaimed role as heroic lover begins to evaporate. Urfe’s self-characterization as a jealous lover who “owns” the land starts to dissolve as he realizes his own shortcomings as a poet, teacher, and man. Robert Huffaker states, “The unignorable landscape finally undermines his literary persona, forces him to confront reality, and makes him see the truth: his own art--*not reality*--is banal” (54). Shortly before Christmas, Urfe realizes that the “unflawed natural world became intimidating. I seemed to have no place in it, I could not use it and I was not made for it” (*Magus* 56). He is both poet and English teacher, presumably skillful with words, and yet looking at nature in a new way he admits that “I knew its language as little as I knew Greek” (52). In late May, months after Urfe’s arrival in Greece, he still expresses intense emotion when immersed in the foreign feminized landscape. Again he resorts to glowing

adjectives. As he wanders the goat paths on Phraxos shortly after nearly committing suicide, he writes approvingly of the geographical landscape, “It was an azure world, stupendously pure, and as always when I stood on the central ridge of the island and saw it before me, I forgot most of my troubles” (67). He is still in awe of his surroundings, and the landscape’s positive power is evident since it allows him to disregard many of his troubles which are significant--restlessness in his teaching job, sores diagnosed falsely as symptoms of syphilis (though he is as of yet unaware that the diagnosis is incorrect), deep emotional distress over a lack of prospects, and loneliness without Alison or any other woman, to mention a few.

While Phraxos and its beauty serves as a microcosm of Greece, Bourani serves as an idealized microcosm of Phraxos and is feminized similarly to the whole of Greece. Urfe presents a pleased description of Conchis’s mysterious domain (at which most of the plot’s action takes place--outdoors among the trees or on the beach, forcing Urfe to immerse himself in the natural world) that echoes his earlier descriptions. Seeing the villa and its surroundings from afar, he describes them glowingly, “The sea and the mountains floated in the steady evening sunshine. It was all peace, elements and void, golden air and mute blue distances, like a Claude...” (*Magus* 71). Urfe is probably referring to light-filled works by famous seventeenth-century classical French landscape painter Claude Lorrain. Conchis apparently feels similarly to Urfe about the landscape, for his first words to Urfe are not an introduction but rather a question as he surveys the landscape that he calls home; he asks his bewildered visitor, perhaps rhetorically, ““I chose well?”” (79). Like a proud father, appreciative of the surroundings he is blessed with, he shows them off to a naïve, appreciative audience.

Mount Parnassus is another specific landscape that Urfe feminizes--and one that dwarfs him. The literal pinnacle of *The Magus* in many ways, it is the central landscape of the novel, the central setting highlighting Urfe and Alison's relationship, and the landscape perhaps most overtly feminized by Urfe's reaction to it. Urfe describes Lykeri, the highest peak, and the incredible feeling of reaching its precipitous edge with Alison after hours of exhausting and exhilarating climbing:

We seemed to stand immeasurably high, where land and substance drew up to a narrow zenith, remote from all towns, all society, all drought and defect. Purged....The peak reached up into a world both literally and metaphorically of light. It didn't touch the emotions; it was too vast, too inhuman, too serene; and it came to me like a shock, a delicious intellectual joy marrying and completing the physical one, that the reality of the place was as beautiful, as calm, as ideal, as so many poets had always dreamed it to be. (*Magus* 258)

Nearly halfway through the novel, the passage exemplifies both Urfe's tendency to feminize the geographical landscape with elaborate description--the sight reaches beyond emotions to another realm, he claims--and his full awareness of his own bodily insignificance. The peak is steep and difficult to climb and allows Urfe and Alison to look for a hundred miles in every direction. Urfe is merely a tiny speck of existence in a much larger geographical realm.

Serjeant, central character of *Staring at the Sun*, feminizes the most significant geographical landscape and one of the only natural landscapes in the novel in a similarly grandiose way. For the first time, she stares out at the majestic sight of the Grand

Canyon, which like Parnassus appears halfway through the textual narrative (and halfway through the center section), as well as roughly halfway through Serjeant's life. Serjeant, via the narrator, tries to depict what she sees but ultimately lacks the words to capture the scene:

A foot of snow lay on the ground and the sun, now almost level with the horizon, had thrown a firm-wristed sweep of orange across the mountains opposite. The sun's kingdom began exactly at the snow line: above, the orange mountain crests had orange snow beneath indolent orange clouds; drop below the line and everything changed into dry browns and buffs and umbers, while far, far down, some murky greens enclosed a trickle of silver....what she saw didn't have to be translated into words, to be reported, discussed, annotated. The extravagant fish-eye view was bigger, deeper, wider, grander, savager, more beautiful and more frightening than she had thought possible; but even this alignment of excited adjectives failed her. (*Staring* 99)

She adds, "This was a place beyond words, beyond human noise, beyond interpretation" (100). She is overcome just as Urfe is overwhelmed by the sight from Parnassus. While he interprets his reaction as beyond emotion, her reaction is beyond words. Both result in a temporary loss of accessible language.

The narrator reveals that Charles's initial reaction to the natural world in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is, unlike Urfe's and Serjeant's, one of love but also pride in his ability to use it for his own gain, though that feeling will change. He admires its beauty and wildness but lacks healthy respect for it at the beginning of the novel, perhaps

because he deems himself a scientist and a proponent of Darwinian evolution which he hardly understands if his conversations with mentor Dr. Grogan are any indication and if the reader is to believe the narrator. When Charles wakes one morning early in the novel, the narrator describes the morning's weather as rare and mild, "ravishing fragments of Mediterranean warmth and luminosity" (*French* 36). Charles's reaction is to tell his servant Sam that he contemplates leaving the city of London for good on such a gorgeous day (37). If he were to do so, he would undoubtedly spend the remainder of his days wandering the Undercliff in pursuit of elusive tests.

Both narrator and Charles feminize the Undercliff with their emotional reactions to it. After a glorious morning on the cliffs, Charles gushes to Ernestina, "It is a most fascinating wilderness, the Undercliff. I had no idea such places existed in England" (*French* 75)--an odd reaction since the reader is led to believe that Charles spends much of his time wandering the hills. The narrator describes the Undercliff as a wild, unruly jungle landscape filled with impressive plants: "wild arbutus and ilex and other trees rarely seen growing in England; its enormous ashes and beeches; its green Brazilian chasms choked with ivy and the liana of wild clematis; its bracken that grows seven, eight feet tall; its flowers that bloom a month earlier than anywhere else in the district" (59). H. W. Fawkner calls it "the almost subtropical Undercliff with its luscious vegetation, [in which] Charles finds himself enveloped in a sensuous nonhuman world of beautiful organic life. The atmosphere is mysteriously pantheistic, charged with the green energy of unspoiled life, of nature itself" (75). The area also contains dangerous places "where a man with a broken leg could shout all week and not be heard" (*French* 59). Yet Charles is delighted but strangely not intimidated by his surroundings at this

early stage in the plot. He is instead tantalized, lured temporarily out of his scientific mindset.

Midway through the novel, Charles, though retaining his admiration for his natural surroundings, gradually loses his sense of mastery over them. Among a collection of gigantic ash trees, for example, Charles is “dwarfed, pleasantly dwarfed...” (*French* 112). On a later visit among the same trees, he begins to question his self-proclaimed right to collect tests, to take from nature whatever he wants. Deep in the Edenic Undercliff, he is overwhelmed by the landscape that the narrator glowingly describes:

Each grass-blade was pearled with vapor. On the slopes above his path the trunks of the ashes and sycamores, a honey gold in the oblique sunlight, erected their dewy green vaults of young leaves; there was something mysteriously religious about them, but of a religion before religion; a druid balm, a green sweetness over all...and such infinity of greens, some almost black in the further recesses of the foliage; from the most intense emerald to the palest pomona....Charles felt himself walking through the pages of a bestiary, and one of such beauty, such minute distinctness, that every leaf in it, each small bird, each song it uttered, came from a perfect world. (191)

The landscape is without flaw, and, for possibly the first time, Charles senses that he is an intruder in it rather than a master over it (191). Effectively “excommunicated,” Charles “could stand here in Eden, but not enjoy it...” (192). In “Class Consciousness, Critter Collecting, and Climatic Conditions: Post-Victorian Existentialism in the ‘Morphing’ Victorian Scientist,” I conclude that “Among the trees, Smithson’s sense of superiority

over his surroundings, his belief in his privileged position on an evolutionary pinnacle, is shaken. The roles of human as god and natural environment as subject are inverted....he begins to view his place in the world as rightly much more insignificant” (44).

If impressive geographical landscapes, though awe-inspiring, force the explorer into recognition of his or her inadequacy and powerlessness over a natural force, the reader might question the protagonists’ defining of geographical landscapes as Edenic. The struggle of humanity against the relentless passage of time is a recurring theme that resonates throughout Fowles and Barnes’s novels and partly explains their protagonists’ discovery and subsequent depiction of perfect natural landscapes. To enter a beautiful natural landscape and idealize it as such might mean to embrace feelings of personal imperfection and unworthiness. But it is also to surround oneself with miracles of science and/or faith and to willingly divorce oneself from the hustle and bustle of the relentless technologized world--in short, to re-enter Eden is to symbolically return to a state of eternal perfection. It is to leave behind a tarnished world for one without blemish. To return to Eden is to enter a state of purity that the Biblical Adam and Eve lived in before eating the forbidden fruit and that prenatal babies embody. To find oneself in a paradisiacal locale is comparable to dwelling in a pre-linguistic communicative space like the Lacanian pre-Imaginary, pre-Symbolic, pre-mirror stage, pre-Law of the Father, Real--a space in which understanding is intuitive rather than struggled for; Serjeant at the Grand Canyon and Urfe on Parnassus depict this feeling above. The power of experiential rather than expressed linguistic knowledge is a common thread of such Edenic experiences between Serjeant and Urfe. According to Genesis, God knew Adam and Eve’s every thought and action without them having to say

a word, just as Serjeant and Urfe try to communicate their reactions of speechlessness by using speech. In the Biblical account, to be in Eden is also to be in perfect harmony with one's surroundings and to not be master over something but to be in perfect harmony with a God who is master, just as a character is subject to the whims of the author who creates him or her (despite Fowles's narrator's tongue-in-cheek objections to authorial control in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*).

Perhaps the central purpose of linking landscapes with Eden in Fowles and Barnes's postmodern texts is to re-introduce the characters to timelessness and fuller appreciation of the unrecoverable past. This is a theme that reverberates throughout all four postmodern novels, especially in *Staring at the Sun*. For example, the focus of the entire third section, and arguably of Serjeant's entire life, is the inevitability of the aging process. The narrator frequently notes Serjeant lamenting the physical changes that time causes. Married for a few years, she suddenly realizes her brown hair lacks its touches of yellow she had as a child (*Staring* 65). In her late thirties, the flesh of her face begins to soften (75). After she leaves her husband Michael and gives birth, she admittedly "lets herself go," allowing strands of her hair to turn gray (83). Her knuckles swell alarmingly, resembling "Short pieces of rope threaded with hazelnuts..." (157). In her final years, her "second childhood," Serjeant lives increasingly inside her memories, inside her head (143, 142). She ponders the aging process: "You never did age instantly; you never did have a sharp memory for comparison...You grew old first not in your own eyes, but in other people's eyes; then, slowly, you agreed with their opinion of you. It wasn't that you couldn't walk as far as you used to, it was that other people didn't expect you to; and if they didn't, then it needed vain obstinacy to persist" (141). The narrator often notes her

age and the bittersweet feeling she has when her own encroaching elderliness--the novel concludes with Serjeant on the eve of her one-hundredth birthday--allows her to watch her son Gregory age, too.

Characters throughout *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* also long for a simpler time from history than their seemingly inescapable present situations. The eighteen-year-old unnamed narrator of the first story in “Three Simple Stories,” the novel’s seventh chapter, dwells on time’s unflinching damage to humanity, specifically on the aged founder of the prep school at which he teaches. He anticipates his own future in the founder. This “oldest man I had ever met,” Lawrence Beesley, invokes the narrator’s intense distaste: “His age and status induced in me the normal mixture of deference, fear and cheek. His decrepitude--the historically stained clothes, that dangle of egg-white slobber from the chin--set off in me a general adolescent anger against life and its inevitable valedictory condition; a feeling which smoothly translated itself into hatred of the person undergoing that condition” (*History* 172). Ironically, Beesley must be spoon-fed baby food as he nears the end of his life, the farthest chronological point from babyhood. The narrator fears his own humanity inevitably will lead him to the same embarrassing point and total reliance on others.

Fowles’s characters similarly battle the inevitable encroachment of time, as illustrated in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and *The Magus*. For example, Charles wants the irrecoverable innocence of life before meeting Sarah, and “Time is played against timelessness all through the book” (Tarbox 79). Urfe is initially locked in the “timebound flux of everyday life” (Cooper 56). In the latter part of *The Magus* as he

becomes more sensitive to and appreciative of his geographical surroundings, he wants Alison and a past without Lily de Seitas/Julie's deception.

Conchis wants Urfe to desire his past situation in England with Alison and to better understand the value of time--that each moment is precious. Hence his elaborate godgame scheme at Bourani that includes the staged sudden death of Alison and immerses Urfe in what Pamela Cooper refers to as the "rarefied, *timeless* world of the *domaine*" (55-6, emphasis added). Huffaker also refers to the island's "mythic timelessness" (45). Conchis's disintoxication of Urfe, for example, makes him desire to then struggle "back through time to seize Alison..." after thinking she commits suicide and after having lost all sense of time for five consecutive days when Conchis drugs him (*Magus* 493, 490). Much earlier, in another example of Urfe's elaborate descriptions, Urfe delights in "the *infinitesimal* lap of the transparent blue water on the stones, the waiting trees, the *myriad* dynamos of the insects, and the enormous landscape of silence....the *agelessness*, the absolute dissociation of wild Greece" (77, emphasis added). His passage is cluttered with vocabulary suggesting infinity tantalizingly beyond the human's grasp.

Conchis's large-scale experiment with Urfe as unwitting guinea pig centers on the joys of manipulating chronology, and Urfe plays into his hand. The protagonist "is attracted to Bourani in much the same way that fairy-tale children are attracted to the witch's chocolate house..." (Onega 49). For a while, Urfe is willing to suspend disbelief. And like a myth in an imaginary world, Conchis evades time constraints by dabbling in hypnosis during which all sense of "real time" temporarily vanishes. He lives, though he has a tombstone claiming his death. Lily, his dead love of the past, "reappears" in the

flesh as Lily/Julie, a figure of myth who “exists only in the Bourani world as a figure of romance enveloped in a supernatural glow of mystery, culture, wealth, and unattainability” (McSweeney 124). The entire masque or godgame employs re-creation of historical events in the plot’s present as well as mythic figures with symbolic meanings that prevail. Conchis calls Seidevarre ““a place I do not want time to touch”” (*Magus* 310), and his own villa appears unaffected by the passage of time; he apparently orchestrates a similar godgame every summer. He too understands the power and pleasure of escaping time constraints.

The jungle setting of “Upstream!” in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* is, in many ways, a surreal Edenic one that also conveys the appeals of a greater appreciation of time. Its inhabitants appear to lack the concerns that plague “advanced” Charlie. On the trip upstream, Charlie gushes, “We were puttering upriver late in the afternoon and the sun was beginning to go down over these huge trees and a flight of big birds, herons or something, were taking off like pink seaplanes as someone said and the second assistant suddenly stood up and yelled out This is paradise, this is fucking paradise” (*History* 194). (This is before the company is plagued by biting flies). Though he is upset without girlfriend Pippa’s company and with egotistical co-star Matt, he is still overcome by the magical otherworldliness of the movie shooting site. In his third letter to Pippa, he writes about the “greatest day of my life” and encountering a new (to his sensibilities) but incredibly old civilization: “They were just there, suddenly, as we came over a hill and saw a river below us. The lost river and the lost people side by side-- amazing” (198). Charlie recognizes that the natives are not jaded by social mores and technological advances that plague his own society. Rather, they are the fathers and

mothers of their own kind of “post-acting civilization, maybe the first one on the earth” (203). He writes admiringly in his fourth letter, “They’re so open, so direct. There they are, not a stitch on them, they say what they mean, do what they want, eat when they’re hungry, make love as if it’s the most natural thing in the world, and lie down to die when they reach the end of their lives” (199). Charlie clearly is in awe of the natives’ Edenic lifestyle.

In ways beyond their general attitude toward life, the people seem to have rejected the restrictive chronology that Charlie understands. Charlie experiences the jungle setting of “Upstream!” as a means of return to an earlier time. He dwells at length on the incredible feeling of being both in the beautiful natural landscape and among its people:

It’s not just distance lends enchantment or whatever. It’s something about being *here*. You remember the American astronauts, how they went to the moon and came back totally changed by looking at the earth and seeing it like just any old planet all small and a long way away? Some of them got religious or went barmy I seem to remember, but the point is they were all different when they came back. It’s a bit like that with me, except that instead of going into the technological future I had to go back in time.

(History 200)

He emphatically connects the feeling of movement backwards in time with the geographical landscape. Charlie continues on to clarify that while the crew categorizes the Indians as primitive, he views them as advanced in a different way (200, 203). He immediately notices that the tribe lacks any elderly people, though he initially does not know why or where they are if they exist (198). (He later learns that for an unknown

reason they generally die around age thirty-five [205]). When an Indian falls off a raft during filming and dies, Charlie notes, puzzled, that the Indians continue to rehearse and neither cry nor hold any sort of funeral ceremony (203). He surmises that they make no distinction between life and death. The tragedy of the final filmed scene--capsized raft, Matt's drowning--solidifies Charlie's surmising. Trying to understand the Indians' motivations, he compares the Indians' actions to Hastings' inhabitants in 2066 being paid to reenact the Battle of Hastings (217). He concludes that their sense of time is skewed and their understanding of history repeating itself is far more literal than his own.

While Charlie connects the feeling of reverse chronological movement with the jungle landscape, he equates movement in the opposite direction, away from the movie set, with the "real world." That world of technology is defined by time and humanity's obsessive but ultimately fruitless attempts to control it. For instance, his very first message to Pippa, after the salutation, is "Just time for a card--we leave in half an hour..." (*History* 191). The next communication begins, "Just spent 24 hours on a bus..." (191). Explaining his temporal location is his first concern or, maybe, what he believes is Pippa's. Near the conclusion of the chapter/story, he laments being stuck in the jungle for a week after the disaster (218). Charlie pleads with Pippa not to "throw away five years" (218). He recognizes that his message is urgent and speed is of the essence; hence his P.S. messages about "expressing" the mail and his telegrams to Pippa. He claims he needs both time and space to reconsider their relationship (219). All of these temporal markers in his communication to his girlfriend bolster the differences between his attitudes toward time in and out of the Edenic jungle landscape.

The setting of “Project Ararat” in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* is also a surreal natural landscape that, as Edenic and set apart from the hubbub of the technologized world, entices with its supposed access to the past. Former astronaut Spike “Touchdown” Tiggler falls willingly into its trap. It boasts twin Turkish mountains that Spike refers to as like the Garden of Eden’s original human pair. Further, it is a “land of miracles” (*History* 269, 271); both Spike and the narrator emphasize this point. Before making this statement of wonder for the first time, Spike dismisses scientific interpretations for water’s ability to flow uphill, and the narrator lauds the sky’s changing colors as the party climbs Ararat as evidence of the landscape’s abundance of miracles (271). The Edenic setting is a sharp contrast to the conventional constructed world that Spike leaves behind. His home, Wadesville, North Carolina, is tiny and ordinary, sporting one bank, a gas station that doubles as a liquor store, hairdresser Shear Pleasure, and a greasy spoon diner. Even the incredible lunar landscape that astronaut Spike crosses as a young astronaut--the landscape that brings him fame--pales in comparison to Ararat, as the narrator refers to the moon’s deadness and Spike’s perception of the surface’s roughness and dirtiness (253).

As the legendary site of Noah’s Ark, Mount Ararat allows Spike to project his impossible vision of present perfect harmony with the past, of freezing time, upon it. The juxtaposition of “The Mountain” with “Project Ararat” provides the reader with information that Spike lacks--the bones that he discovers on the holy mountain are not those of the Biblical Noah but rather of, presumably, explorer Miss Amanda Fergusson from a (textually and chronologically) earlier story in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*. Without this definitive scientific evidence, Spike can reject the others’ doubts

about the body's authenticity. The skeleton's amazing preservation, its surviving clothing tatters, even the results of laboratory analysis that date it at approximately one-hundred-and-fifty years old and indicate its biological femininity--none of these dissuade him from announcing a second Project Ararat at the conclusion of the chapter. The first excursion, and the second that he proposes, allow Spike to connect with his past. As he tells his skeptical wife, "'You come back to where you started from'" (*History* 257). He means returning to earth after his trip to the moon, returning to Kitty Hawk as a child with his father after Spike reaches adulthood, and returning to something else that is difficult to pinpoint: childhood wonder, untouched civilization, faith in audible guidance, and enduring mysteries.

In Fowles's novels, landscapes that mirror the protagonist's imaginative portrayal of Eden in both time and space are equally prominent. First, the entirety of Conchis's domain is like Eden. Urfe compares leaving it for school, his "dull, daily penal colony on the far side of the dream..." to Adam leaving Eden (*Magus* 356). Urfe characterizes Conchis's otherworldly domain as Eden, and when Alison describes the waterfall landscape encountered on their descent from Parnassus as Eden, Urfe echoes the metaphor. Alison calls the waterfall setting on the descent from Parnassus "'like Eden'" (*Magus* 268). Urfe does not disagree. The final setting of the novel, Regent's Park, also uses the Garden of Eden motif. The smell of burning leaves permeates the air as Alison and Urfe share their last recorded verbal exchange. Barnum indicates that the leaves symbolize the fire outside Eden as the couple find themselves magically back together in their original setting, London, at last (*Fiction* 30-1).

The fertile Undercliff, especially the eastern part, Ware Commons, in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is similarly an Edenic place in which all sense of time's passage is lost. While the narrator specifically refers to it more than once as Eden, a host of critics note its paradisiacal qualities. Peter Conradi calls it "an Edenic a-historical realm of both ethical and botanic 'joyous indiscipline', a place of mythic release" (64), and Neary terms it "a kind of sensual Garden of Eden, the sort of organic, romantic, mysterious paradise that Fowles celebrates throughout his writings..." (169-70). In *The Timescapes of John Fowles*, Fawcner notes the "sublime eternal now of the *natural* underworld of the Undercliff..." (125). Simon Loveday adds, "The Undercliff, that Eden-like world...must surely stand for Nature and Life against the dead world of social convention" (52). It is an "English Garden of Eden" never worked by man, without inhabitants, and full of mystery and danger (*French* 59, 192). Within its tangle of undergrowth, wanderers are easily lost for hours (58). Sarah's presence in the Undercliff aids the narrator's presentation of it as an otherworldly spot that transcends chronology of conventional reality, for Sarah herself evades time markers. Though a grown woman in Mrs. Poulteney's house and Rossetti's house, in the Undercliff she is connected to both childhood and death, two opposing ends of a human lifetime. Charles, coming upon her suddenly as she sleeps, both notes her childlike arrangement of limbs and at first believes she is a corpse (61). These tiny details, added together, help characterize Charles's mindset.

Narrators defining characters as Adam or Eve archetypes (or Adam- or Eve-like) or characters labeling themselves in this fashion in both Fowles and Barnes's novels further support interpretations of particular landscapes as Edenic settings. For instance,

the narrator of “The Dream,” arguably in an Edenic setting because he can mold his surroundings into his version of perfection (i.e. whatever he wants), pretends he is both the first and last person alive on earth as part of his fantasies (*History* 297). Wandering alone on a hidden beach, Urfe relishes “the lovely illusion that one was the very first man that had ever stood on it, that had ever had eyes, that had ever existed, the very first man” (*Magus* 68). There he also compares himself to the famously solitary Robinson Crusoe (67) (although Crusoe’s shipwreck provided him with man-made modern materials and the knowledge of fellow humanity somewhere that Adam certainly lacked, at least initially) and delights in the complete worldwide peacefulness that he imagines on what he calls “‘my’ desert island...” (85). While Urfe imagines himself as a figurative Adam (the sole human on earth before Eve’s creation), both Lily/Julie and Alison are Eve figures in his eyes. On Parnassus, Urfe idealizes Alison as “Eve glimpsed through ten thousand generations” (269), a timeless representation of the perfect woman, perfect lover, and perfect mother and a throwback to the impossibly “perfect” Victorian woman. After finally making love to Julie, Urfe claims he and she “lay in the silence of Eden regained” (487), implying that he and she belong together just as Adam and Eve were literally made for each other. Back in England and searching for answers while unable to be with either woman, he still refers to himself as “Adam after the fall...” (576). He is effectively banished from the Gardens of Eden that are Alison and Lily/Julie’s company, Bourani, Parnassus, and Greece in its entirety. Barnum points out that Urfe compares the loss of Alison to the loss of a limb, and that this is a veiled reference to the Biblical Adam’s rib in Eve’s body (*Fiction* 24). Urfe is missing a part of himself. Charles, too, is an Adamic figure, though a post-apocalyptic one. Immediately after making love to

Sarah, Charles is “like a city struck out of a quiet sky by an atom bomb” and “the last man alive, infinitely isolated...” (*French* 275). His counterpart, of course, is Sarah who he has persistently idealized as “Eve personified, all mystery and love and profundity...” (336). Huffaker claims she is like “that ancestral seductress” from the Biblical Garden of Eden (110). A further detail that supports interpretations of Sarah as Eve-like and the Undercliff as Edenic is the frequency of (almost) falls: Sarah’s napping place on a precarious ledge, her fall during her second meeting with Charles, and her description of herself once duped by Varguennes as someone who had thrown herself off a cliff, among other examples (Beatty “Undercliff” 174-5).

While feminized descriptions of Edenic landscapes are expressions of the protagonists’ growing sense of insignificance and their desire to subvert chronology, other prominent gendered landscapes similarly echo their desire for timelessness in birthing imagery. Images of water bodies are frequently feminized as womb-like, sometimes compounded by their significance as geographical sites of psychological rebirth. These watery uterine enclosures can prefigure attempted return to an imaginative blissful state of oblivion like that of before birth. Gilbert J. Rose calls the ocean an “arch-symbol of birth” (168). Writing about the feminized image of the American frontier in her groundbreaking *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*, Annette Kolodny refers to the “resurrection of the lost state of innocence that the adult abandons when he joins the world of competitive self-assertion...regression from the cares of adult life and a return to the primal warmth of womb or breast in a feminine landscape” (6); I argue that several of Fowles and Barnes’s protagonists experience the same nostalgia within watery wonderlands.

The French Lieutenant's Woman opens with a famous scene as its trio of main characters creates a tableau against the watery landscape of Lyme Bay and the Cobb, a wall stretching along it. The narrator describes the setting with adjectives that, like Urfe's words about Greece depicted by artist Lorrain, are often used to idealize an attractive woman and paint her as both sensual and sophisticated: "it is quite simply the *most beautiful* sea rampart on the south coast of England....*Primitive yet complex*, elephantine but *delicate*; as *full of subtle curves* and volumes as a Henry Moore or a Michelangelo..." (*French* 9-10, emphasis added). One of the three figures in the picture, whom Charles will learn is Sarah, is like an image from another world and creating a bridge between that world and Charles's reality; she stands against a cannon barrel, "like a living memorial to the drowned, a figure from myth..." (11). On its tip, as Charles and Ernestina face silent Sarah, Charles's world is turned upside down though he does not realize it. Katherine Tarbox uses the water image as metaphor to explain Charles's predicament: "Charles is torn in many ways between what he is and what he feels might be wrong with himself. He is, in effect, safe and dry on the beach, but he can't help sticking a foot into that strange water" (64). Charles's first encounter with Sarah in a landscape closely identified with her throughout the novel is the first of several that will ultimately challenge his preconceptions about women and his attitude of mastery over nature.

The Lyme Bay setting as a womb-like environment for Charles is one half of a complex framing device that Fowles employs in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* to reveal the protagonist's emerging sense of insignificance and his desire to subvert chronology. Like everyone else, Charles is subject to social and biological evolution. In

the end, having seen Sarah Woodruff-turned-Sarah Roughwood (and in one proposed ending, a little girl named Lalage under her care as governess), he stands on the edge of the gray river near her house. If the reader embraces the latter ending as the “true” one, Charles discovers that Lalage means “to babble like a brook” in Greek, and she is his own child (*French* 359). Lalage is both the result of literal birth and the symbol of Charles’s psychological rebirth. Her name can be read as a throwback to Charles’s initial sighting of Sarah along Lyme Bay. As Charles stands in the final setting along the river, the narrator uses descriptive language of rebirth: “The river of life, of mysterious laws and mysterious choice, flows past a deserted embankment....He [Charles] walks towards an imminent, self-given death? I think not; for he has at last found an atom of faith in himself, a true uniqueness, on which to build...” (366). This is proof of his final realization that he cannot control Sarah or the world around him. In “Class Consciousness,” I note that Charles finally realizes he cannot “collect” any woman or fossil to satisfy himself, and the dramatic transformation of his possessive attitude (and self-realization of it) takes place against a prominent natural backdrop (38-9, 43).

The Moutsa seaside is a prominent watery scene of retreat for Urfe throughout the majority of *The Magus*. First, it is a temporary escape from Conchis’s devilish unanswerable questions. Thoroughly frustrated by Conchis’s contradictory layers of stories and spit upon by the twins’ “guardian,” Urfe “*had* to be outside the domaine” (*Magus* 321, emphasis added). There he plunges into the sea for an invigorating swim. The sea is personified as “alive with phosphorescent diatoms...” and later as the only living entity during ugly, oppressively hot weather (321, 382). Urfe floats on his back as the ocean water “cooled, calmed, silked round my genitals” (322). Like a baby enclosed

in its mother's womb and defined as yet only by its biology, he expresses a feeling of complete and much-needed safety and seclusion "out of their reach, all their reaches" in the "blue relief" of the water (322, 382). Alone in the aqueous environment, he is refreshed. Later, he visits the same beach with the twins. Feeling camaraderie with them as they swim together in silence, he indicates his sense of peace: "We were alone in the world, in the cool blue water, three heads; and again I felt a near-absolute happiness, a being poised, not sure how all this would turn out, but also not wanting to know, totally identified with the moment: with Greece, this lost place, these two real-life nymphs" (349). Again, the reader sees Urfe's glorification of landscape, momentary sense of timeless escape from reality, and his idealization of his female companions as sex objects about whom he knows relatively little. On another visit to the beach at Moutsas, he accompanies Julie for a night swim and their most erotic encounter up to that point in the narrative. Their combined sexual excitement is compounded by the watery environment which marks the beginning of their physical relationship: "it was a kind of discovery, or rediscovery, of her own latent sexuality, through the satisfaction of mine--and through the night, the warmth, the old magic of wild Greece" (370). In all these situations, the liquid wild environment possesses a mystical power that washes over Urfe.

Petrocaravi, meaning the "ship of stone" and actually a deserted islet surrounded by huge boulders near Phraxos's western tip, is another significant early womb-like place that Urfe encounters in Greece. Literally hidden away from tourists, its underwater world, according to Urfe, is "Like a dream" and according to Conchis, "Like humanity. But in the vocabulary of millions of years ago" (*Magus* 139). As Conchis lures an octopus from the water with only a strip of white cloth for bait and easily slaughters the

creature, Urfe is introduced to Conchis's central lesson for him, though he fails to embrace it or even understand it: "reality is not necessary [to catch the octopus]. Even the octopus prefers the ideal" (138). Huffaker says Conchis "demonstrates that various ideals arising from the unconscious cannot be trusted, despite their attractiveness" (64). Conchis is of course identifying Urfe's most significant flaws.

Urfe and Alison's trek from Parnassus, too, involves a pivotal moment both recollecting birth and prompting a painful rebirth of sorts for Urfe on the edge of a feminized water body. The couple is drawn simultaneously to a pool of water by the sound of water. The setting is Edenic, enclosed, secluded, and beautiful, as noted above: "At one end [of a clearing] was a waterfall some ten feet or so high. A pool of limpid water had formed beneath it. The clearing was dense with flowers and butterflies, a tiny trough of green-gold luxuriance after the dark forest we had been walking through....No one could have been there since summer began" (*Magus* 268). After Alison strips and wades into the water, Urfe adds, "The water was jade-green, melted snow, and it made my heart jolt with shock when I plunged in beside her. And yet it was beautiful, the shadow of the trees, the sunlight on the glade, the white roar of the little fall, the iciness, the solitude, the laughing, the nakedness; moments one knows only death will obliterate" (268). Urfe relishes the atmosphere and is overcome by the sight of Alison, finally admitting to her that he loves her and that he does not have syphilis. His excuse for physical distance from her is a lie. The environment instigates his partial purge of dishonesty which leads to his admission of a relationship with Lily/Julie. This angers Alison who vehemently rejects idealization pushed upon her; she cries, "I am crude. I think crude. I talk crude. I *am* crude" (271). This bittersweet series of events sparked

by Urfe and Alison's discovery of a tiny, idyllic water body ultimately leads to death, or so Urfe believes--Alison's supposed suicide--and the eventual rebirth of their relationship.

Though Urfe only hears of Seidevarre in a remote area of northern Norway, its landscape echoes those of Moutsa, Petrocaravi, and Parnassus in importance and description. Conchis makes it clear that the landscape is an ageless, mysterious, otherworldly one as he reverently recalls and recounts (if the reader is to believe his "autobiographical" stories), "Endless forest. Huge, dark firs for mile after mile after mile. The river as broad and silent as a lake in a fairy-tale. Like a mirror unlooked-in since time began" (*Magus* 297). He uses an apt image for his reflection on a past epiphanic moment that also reflects his state of mind at the time. Conchis watches Henrik Nygaard, insane hermetic brother of Conchis's host Gustav, standing alone in the river Pasvik and crying out to God. The experience is a harsh rebuke to Conchis who recognizes the shortcomings of his classifying, scientific, reasoning way of life; his science would never allow him to comprehend the machinations of Henrik's brain (308). James Acheson claims the story is about the process of seeking one's own identity, which is exactly what Conchis claims to do and what he wants his captive audience to do (23). Conchis's tale of Henrik communing with his maker in his watery womb and set apart from everyone is an intended rebuke of Urfe's own classifying and idealizing--a recurring theme in Fowles's novels due to his abhorrence of classifying and collecting lifestyles.

When Conchis hypnotizes Urfe, the state he enters is similar to the watery womb-like environments that Urfe glowingly describes and physically enters at other points in the narrative. In page after page, Urfe tries to express the strange sensations he

undergoes. He enters a state I can only describe as being aware of being unaware, of being knowledgeable of lacking knowledge:

No good, no evil; no beauty, no ugliness. No sympathy, no antipathy. But simply interaction. The endless solitude of the one, its total enislement from all else, seemed the same thing as the total inter-relationship of the all....Knowing, willing, being wise, being good, education, information, classification, knowledge of all kinds, sensibility, sexuality, these things seemed superficial. I had no desire to state or define or analyse this interaction, I simply wished to constitute it--not even "wished to"--I constituted it. I was volitionless. There was no meaning. Only being....A condition of acute physical and intellectual pleasure, a floating suspension, a being perfectly adjusted and *related*... (*Magus* 235-6)

Conchis turns back the clock, causing Urfe as a "floating suspension" to imagine himself in a situation only an unborn baby can inhabit. And once again, the reader finds another landscape, here a drug-induced, expertly conjured one, that defies verbalization like Parnassus will shortly after for Urfe and the Grand Canyon does for Serjeant in *Staring at the Sun*.

While feminized descriptions of Edenic landscapes can function in these postmodern novels as expressions of the protagonists' description of timeless spaces like the womb, Barnes especially undercuts this interpretation by having many of the water bodies that signal longing for innocence and epiphanic moments of rebirth also function as sites of literal death in *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* and *Staring at the Sun* --and there are a multitude of water bodies in the novels. In *Language, History, and*

Metanarrative in the Fiction of Julian Barnes, Bruce Sesto notes that seven of the fourteen stories in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* have oceanic settings and the other seven have off-water settings (54). The aqueous geographical environments exemplify what Bourani in *The Magus* means and etymologically melds, according to Conchis; historically, Bourani is slang for skull or gourd and means ““Death and water”” (*Magus* 83). While the natural landscape can be Edenic, inducing feelings of bliss in those who encounter it, it can also turn quickly on humanity. In a moment, the womb becomes a tomb. After all, Rose reminds the reader, “Recapturing a sense of fusion with the mother of infancy can only provide temporary safety; prolonged, it is psychological death” (“*French*” 170). Madelon Sprengnether concurs in *The Spectral Mother: Freud, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis*, “Because the desire to return to an inorganic state is first associated with the body of the mother, she, in turn, becomes identified with death” (219). Prolonged immersion in a womb-like lost domain prevents the protagonist from returning to face the world which is a primary goal of immersion in the lost domain. Once again, the authors also remind the reader and the characters that nature cannot be controlled.

This move greatly complicates the power dynamics between the landscape being gendered and the person applying gender markers to the landscape. Initially, feminizing a landscape results in associating women with landscape and relegating them to a “lesser” position. Imagined as a womb, the landscape can serve to fulfill hidden male desires. As men “fabricate a sense of nostalgia for this first and ultimate dwelling-place” which results in what Luce Irigaray terms “the endless construction of substitutes for his prenatal home” (170), it appears that the maternalized landscape once again is being

locked into a role of passive servitude. Honor McKittrick Wallace praises the maternalized landscape but quickly points out its failings: “The pre-narrative Eden of the mother-child dyad bestows a sort of completion and an experience that can never be co-opted by patriarchal systems because it is exclusively female; at the same time, however, it romanticizes and thus glosses over the degradation, boredom and futility that often characterize women’s existence (and even, sometimes, women’s desire)” (183).

However, the reader has seen how, frequently, gendering a natural landscape as female can result in the empowerment of landscape and the emerging humility of the explorer. Further, many of Barnes’s narrators and characters (and readers) are women who presumably do not share the private desires of their male companions. Lastly, when a womb-like natural place is also, paradoxically, a place of potential or actual death, it takes on greater power, albeit arguably negative, over those who enter it.

From the beginning of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, Barnes makes it clear that water will play a significant role in his version of the world’s history. While the narrator’s identity remains unclear until the end of “The Stowaway,” the second paragraph indicates that the narrator and a host of animals reside on the Ark which the reader knows was afloat on the largest water body ever known to humanity. Despite the narrating woodworm’s heavily sarcastic voice, the woodworm understands the complicated role of the water as both womb and tomb. Literally, the water body allows those aboard Noah’s flotilla of eight ships to survive; it carries the “womb of the world”--the only survivors of the flood--upon it. God purges the world and begins anew, essentially birthing a new creation after the disappointment of the first.

In “The Stowaway,” the water is also an undeniably powerful force over which neither Noah nor the animals have any control. The woodworm recounts its violent arrival:

Water sluiced down from a bilious sky to purge the wicked world. Big drops exploded on the deck like pigeons’ eggs....The rain fell and fell, occasionally shifting to hail and rattling on the timbers. Sometimes we could hear the crack of thunder from outside, and often the lamentations of abandoned beasts. After a while these cries grew less frequent: we knew that the waters had begun to rise. (*History* 9)

Those left behind, locked out of the ark, will inevitably die. The water is also no match for Noah, God’s chosen one. The woodworm reports that Noah, although he survives the flood, “wasn’t any good in a storm, and he wasn’t much better when the seas were calm” (19). The worldwide water body swallows the eighth and most mysterious of Noah’s ships. The woodworm speculates that other wives of Noah’s sons, apparently unrecorded in history, carouse aboard that ship and die in a squall (5). The stores ship is lost, too--and its lookouts. The water takes the hospital ship, too, and whoever is upon it. Noah loses a fourth ship sometime during the flood as well (30). Though Noah survives, it is obvious that nature, or God’s control of nature, permits it. His survival is not demonstration of human mastery over his environment.

Barnes’s “The Survivor” places its main character Ferris in the same boat--more literally than metaphorically--and blurs geographical movement with temporal movement. While the woodworm, Noah’s family, and the “chosen ones” aboard the flotilla leave behind a landscape that they know but which is changed forever by

encroaching water in “The Stowaway,” Ferris flees a post-apocalyptic environment that has become foreign to her, setting out on a boat into the Arafura sea with only adopted cats Paul and Linda for company. She views the sea as the starting place of civilization, asking the reader rhetorically, “We all crawled out of the sea once, didn’t we?...Now we’re going back to it” (*History* 94). She allows the wind to control her movements, acknowledging both that she leaves the world as she defines it behind and that “You only followed where you were going if you wanted to get back to where you had started from, and she knew that was impossible” (91). While she refers to her intentional aimlessness, she is in another sense voicing frustration that movement away from civilization does not equate to movement toward a more innocent time characterized by childhood memories of flying reindeer on Christmas cards, not radioactive reindeer carcasses buried six feet under the ground. She attempts to, rejecting constraints of time: “I don’t keep count of the days. There isn’t any point, is there? We aren’t going to measure things in days any more....We’ll have to go back to some older cycle, sunrise to sunset for a start, and the moon will come into it, and the seasons, and the weather...” (93). Her hopeful rejection of time, however, becomes an inability to distinguish time’s passage or reality in general, as she is plagued by fever, nightmares, heat, peeling skin, thirst, and finally being locked away by male doctors who poke, prod, and question her--or so she tells the reader. She revokes her earlier declaration about the impossibility of returning to one’s origins: “Begin at the beginning. People said you couldn’t turn the clock back, but you could. The future was in the past” (104). Her success, however, is questionable.

Ferris’s watery destination wavers between protective womb and metaphorical tomb. First, Barnes’s multi-voiced presentation of Ferris’s self-imposed voyage makes it

plausible to believe that Ferris does not triumph and begin anew on an uninhabited island but rather slips toward insanity in a mental hospital as she engages in what the doctors call “fabulation.” As the third-person narrator, presumably an omniscient voice external to the story, and first-person narrator Ferris relate opposing versions of the same events, it becomes increasingly more difficult for the reader to sort reality from Ferris’s imagination (or delusion). Also, the water itself on Ferris’s (imaginary?) island turns on her; she fears being poisoned and believes something might be wrong with the water she drinks to quench her thirst (*History* 102). And yet the story ends with a scene of hope: the narrator declares that Ferris awakens on her island to discover that her cat Linda gives birth to five kittens. If the reader is led to believe that Ferris’s trip across the water is a destructive one, mentally or physically, he or she is left with a final image of birth, of Ferris’s potential rebirth (“She felt such happiness! Such hope!” [111]), instead of the image of Ferris mutilating her own body and losing her mind.

“Shipwreck” presents a similarly complicated picture of a water body as both a site of beginning and ending. Near the Arguin reef, the frigate from a four-vessel expedition for Senegal in 1816 runs aground and is hopelessly lost. Its passengers build a raft, but plans go hopelessly awry. Like the residents of Noah’s ark, the final fifteen survivors are a fraction of the original passengers. Floating helplessly on the water, they are reduced to their primal instincts for survival, resorting to fighting with knives, biting each other, consuming parts of the corpses, trying to eat excrement, and executing the sickest among them. Despite their predicament, they realize that the water is their only means of survival as it alone can transport their rickety craft to safety and civilization. It is their solitary hope.

This image of a return to water as a womb-like environment is bitterly ironic, for it breaks all expectations of innocence. The men who are stripped of everything return not to a state of innocence but are pushed by the threat of death to the opposite extreme--to murder and cannibalism. The sea water itself is a disastrous force. It ruins a cask of wine the men need for nourishment (*History* 118). It washes over the raft and forces the passengers to be continually partly submerged (120). The reader can only imagine the torture of this and its harmful effect on human skin. The water tantalizes the thirsty with its easy accessibility but undrinkability. The waters near the Arguin reef are filled with horror, not hope.

Throughout the voyage, the water's connection with death increases. The first night aboard the raft, its anguished passengers recognize the literal proximity of death as water surrounds their flimsy craft. The narrator writes, "By daybreak the air was filled with lamentable cries, vows which could never be fulfilled were offered up to Heaven, and all prepared themselves for imminent death" (*History* 118). Three men "convinced that there was no escape from death, bade farewell to their companions and willingly embraced the sea" (118). On the seventh day, the weakest survivors are thrown into the sea to die. The narrator equates the personified water with death as it becomes their tomb.

Water serves only as tomb in "Upstream!" In his fifth letter to Pippa, Charlie recounts the choppy water swallowing an Indian who fell off a raft during filming (*History* 203). The water also contains a fish that supposedly attacks unsuspecting men peeing in the river--what Charlie thinks is just a joke until an Indian indicates otherwise after he sees the sound man relieving himself (202). Comedy becomes potential tragedy.

In the end, the water is a literal tomb for Matt. The noise of its rushing prevents Matt and Charlie's shouts from being heard on shore when their guide rope breaks. It capsizes the raft and sweeps Matt away forever. His death, accompanied by the Indians' disappearance with Charlie's company's food and supplies, marks the death of the film project as well. It also sets off a series of events that marks the sudden death of Charlie's relationship with Pippa.

Staring at the Sun also revolves around a watery image of birth and death that, like the image of water "framing" *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and Charles's transformation, sports an introductory image that intentionally parallels the concluding image. In the prologue, R.A.F. fighter pilot Sergeant Tommy Prosser's airplane flies east over the English Channel during the Battle of Britain, and due to his rapid descent he sees the sun appear to rise twice at the break of dawn. Later the reader learns that Serjeant as a child is fascinated by the pilot's story. The final setting is a nearly identical one to that of the prologue, but this time near-centenarian Serjeant (another "sergeant") as passenger in an airplane watches the sun *set* twice. What sparks Serjeant's childhood curiosity now marks the demise, or satisfaction, of her desire to know what Prosser experienced and to be close to death. Merritt Moseley describes Serjeant's reaction to the sight: "Jean looks at the sun a bit, as the clouds make fingers in front of it; she comforts the crying Gregory [her son] and then, all clouds gone, looks steadily into the sun before the plane turns to its descent. Looking at the sun, this book has suggested before, is like looking at death, something people cannot do. But Jean does it here..." (103). He adds that this moment symbolically marks Serjeant's death (103).

Throughout her story, Serjeant merges ideas of sexuality, maternity, and death in watery images that even affect her son. Preparing for her wedding night, she reads a poetic but laughable tome *Our Ostriches* that is some sort of sex advice manual. According to its author, sex is similar to the waves and ripples of the ocean that flow perpendicularly into each other (*Staring* 56). Serjeant reveals that she has never been to the beach and has trouble picturing the author's description, much less imagining how it equates to the loss of her virginity to her husband. Later, when she marries, she questions the lack of "interlocking crosscurrents she had been led to expect" (64). When Serjeant and her husband are unable to have children, she becomes even more disillusioned with the author's image of natural aqueous bliss. Her womb is barren. Instead of experiencing "waves" of passion, conceiving, and giving birth to a new life, she begins to imagine sex as an "overflowing water tank which occasionally had to be drained" (74). Defeated, she mentally replaces the image of a beautiful shoreline. When her son Gregory grows up, he carries on his mother's depictions of water bodies as graves. He has an intense fear of being in an airplane crash, first because such a rapid descent into water would be no different to crashing into concrete, and second because he would be locked, claustrophobic, in a tiny enclosure. His "womb" would become, in a moment, a watery tomb.

Besides depicting many water bodies as wombs-become-tombs, Barnes also experiments with the interchangeability of the water's two functional roles. In the initial story in the seventh chapter of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, Barnes first feminizes the Atlantic Ocean, depicts it as a place of death, and then amends it to a place of rebirth. Prep school founder Beesley, at age thirty-five, escapes from the foundering

Titanic (on its “maiden” voyage) into Lifeboat 13 afloat in the freezing water. He does so apparently by dressing himself in petticoats and other articles of women’s clothing to avoid detection among the other woman aboard the lifeboats. The narrator sarcastically refers to the octogenarian as a “transvestite imposter” (*History* 174). Indeed, the old man, who probably would have been thrown from the boat into the water to drown had his true gender been discovered, not only survived but found a new life after the tragedy and engendered others; the narrator specifically mentions the existence of Beesley’s daughter and Beesley’s family legacy. The water that could have been his grave and is a tomb for so many of his worthy counterparts--“heroes, the solid men of yeoman virtue, the good breeding stock” (174)--carries him instead to the *Carpathia* and to fame.

The second story in the same chapter presents an even more telling example of the fluidity of Barnes’s water bodies’ functions as both womb and tomb. The aqueous space is that of a whale’s stomach--both that in the Biblical story of Jonah and that in the account of *Star of the East* crewman James Bartley in 1891. The narrator appropriately and contradictorily calls being swallowed an “image of enclosure, smothering, *live burial*” (*History* 178, emphasis added). Both Jonah and Bartley are swallowed by a whale, leaving one watery environment for a more intimate, frighteningly uncontrollable natural one. The extent of the narrator’s skepticism about Jonah’s supposed survival within the whale for three days before continuing his journey to Nineveh bolsters the reader’s interpretation of the whale’s interior as a tomb. Of course Jonah will die, the reader thinks. How could a human survive floating in a whale’s gastric juices? Bartley’s terrifying account of being swallowed does little to change the reader’s mind:

I looked up and saw a big-ribbed canopy of light pink and white descending over me...I was drawn lower and lower; a wall of flesh surrounded me and hemmed me in on every side...Suddenly I found myself in a sack much larger than my body, but completely dark....Soon I felt a great pain in my head and my breathing became more and more difficult. At the same time I felt a terrible heat; it seemed to consume me, growing hotter and hotter...I tried to rise, to move my arms and legs, to cry out. All action was now impossible... (179)

While Bartley (and the reader) anticipates his death, a closer reading reveals that the whale's stomach is actually a womb of sorts, and Bartley experiences a horrific sort of birth in reverse. He finds himself in a fleshy sack without any light. He is tightly enclosed on all sides, forced into a fetal position. He also experiences head trauma and difficulty obtaining air in his enclosure, just as a baby experiences difficulty emerging from the birth canal because its head is its largest part and must learn how to breathe upon being born. The narrator theorizes that stories of being swallowed by a whale are indeed so frightening because they create mental images of transportation back to the womb (178). Ultimately, both Jonah and Bartley survive, escaping their respective wombs/tombs as manifested in feminized aqueous bodies.

If the gendered images that Fowles and Barnes present via their protagonists and narrators seem predominantly uniformly feminized and aqueous, it is critical to realize that they include mountainous landscapes that thoroughly complicate the issue of gender. These hills and mountains are central landscapes, and the events that happen on and near them are critical to each plot. Sometimes, mountains are portrayed as phallic symbols or

connected with masculinity; for example, Fergusson thinks of Ararat as the male half of “that primal divide in the human race between the two sexes” (*History* 156) and Rachel, Gregory’s girlfriend, equates “being a man” with climbing mountains (*Staring* 121). However, hilly landscapes, like water bodies, historically have been a feminized part of a larger picture of land as a helpless woman; recall Holly and Vincey’s quests into the bowels of Ayesha’s mountain or picture an early American male explorer triumphantly standing atop a western mountain peak, surveying the surrounding terrain. According to Erich Neumann, because the female body is a baby’s first environment, woman, body, vessel, and world are often equated, and mountains often correspond with this chain (qtd. in Lutwack 82). In *The Idea of Wilderness: From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology*, Max Oelschlaeger explains more concretely the connection between mountains and the female body, indicating that the newborn baby’s first sight is that of its mother’s mons veneris between her two breasts (311). Etymology supports his claim; he adds that the Latin word for mountain is “mons,” meaning the female genital region (310-1). Land, when feminized, becomes subservient to those who issue from it, move through it, challenge it, climb it, and cross it. As images of female anatomy like “Sheba’s Breasts” in Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* or the spread legs of a woman in his *She*, mountain landscapes can (and typically do) reinforce images of humanity’s mastery over the natural surroundings.

Fowles and Barnes counter these feminized images not with predominantly masculinized images--referring to mountains with masculine pronouns, for example, and subverting expectations--but in other ways. In “Project Ararat” in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, Spike refers to one mountain as male and another as female; he calls Great and Little Ararat “like man and wife...Brother and sister, Adam and Eve” (270).

Fowles and Barnes also offer feminized images of mountains that surprisingly and notably have the opposite effect from what the reader might expect; they again remind the protagonist that he or she is most definitely not in control of the landscape. Atop a mountain, the protagonist who struggled to get there should feel victorious, the reader expects. Often, he or she does not relish triumph for conquering a feminized obstacle but instead embraces contentment being a tiny part of a larger magnificent landscape. Often, too, the mountainous landscape is secluded and the site of a monumental epiphany for the protagonist, similar to watery womb-like landscapes. Via mountainous landscapes, the authors upend a gendered image's effects to break down the reader's expectations in these ways.

Like water bodies, mountains as gendered geographical landscapes serving as both womb and also at times a tomb are prominent in Fowles and Barnes's work. In *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, Mount Ararat is a central setting in "The Stowaway," "The Mountain," and "Project Ararat," which is another indication of its defiance of human constructions of time--according to the woodworm, it exists from the end of the great flood, if not the beginning of the world, and in 1839 as an expedition site, and on into the latter half of the twentieth century. On the mountain, in their own separate stories and shut apart from the rest of the world's prying eyes, both Fergusson and Spike find reassurance in manifestations of their religious beliefs. In differing ways, they relish their smallness in a larger landscape that both contains and defines them and gives them long sought-after peace. In the end, however, the mountain overcomes them, in Fergusson's case with death and in Tiggler's case with public humiliation. The mountain is "the birthplace of mankind; and...a man cannot enter a second time into his

mother's womb and be born once more," an Armenian priest informs Fergusson (*History* 155). Peace is short-lived; true return is impossible.

The narrator captures Fergusson's reverent attitude toward landscape:

"Nature...was provided by God for Man's enjoyment. This did not mean, as some had assumed, that Man might recklessly pillage Nature for what he sought; indeed, Nature was deserving of the more respect because it was a divine creation. But God had created both Man and Nature, placing Man into that Nature as a hand is placed into a glove" (*History* 147). Fergusson expresses this reverent attitude when she is horrified by a monk who ferments the grapes from Noah's vineyard in Arghuri. He takes from the landscape what he wants and blasphemes by his actions, according to her. She, in contrast, wishes to leave the world behind and climb Ararat supposedly to intercede for her father's soul, but her real purpose could be to find her own peace, her own intercession via the landscape. The narrator reports that Logan realizes that no one prayed intercessory prayer since their arrival on the mountain (165). Their true purpose is clearly more connected to Fergusson's desire to commune with the landscape than concern for her deceased father's soul.

Fergusson willingly, perhaps eagerly, acknowledges her smallness in the face of the immovable natural world. When she falls on a patch of rock, nurses her injury in a cave, and essentially dismisses her companion and guide and any future help that might return for her, she embraces inevitable death. No one climbs the mountain, after all. The Armenian priest assures her that no one ever climbed the mountain and no one ever would (*History* 154). Warnings do not deter Fergusson, though, because for her, return to the landscape is a return to a simpler, purer time without her father's irksome insistence

on advancement, on growth, on forward chronological movement. She exhibits what David Harvey in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* defines as a postmodern attitude: “Eschewing the idea of progress, postmodernism abandons all sense of historical continuity and memory, while simultaneously developing an incredible ability to plunder history and absorb whatever it finds there as some aspect of the present” (54). Fergusson embraces the history of Noah’s resting place and tries to mimic it. She freezes time in the only way she knows how by choosing what the reader can only presume is suicide. This realization is compounded by Miss Logan’s reflections at the end of the tale: was Miss Fergusson’s fall an accident, or did she choose to fall? No answer is provided for the reader or for Logan who must leave the mountainous landscape without her employer.

In *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, Ware Commons is the central mountainous image, and it too reminds the protagonist that he has no control over the natural landscape. It is easy to forget that the landscape of which Ware Commons is a part, the Undercliff, is essentially a mountain face. The narrator explains that the mile-long steep slope was caused by erosion, and Charles is always described climbing it or moving up or down its face. The mountain also houses Sarah’s retreat. Her womb-like “‘secluded place’” (*French* 134) affords Charles and Sarah a mutual sense of contentment as small elements of a magnificent geographical landscape. From its charming height, they are protected and alone with an amazing view stretched out before them. The ivy tunnel in which Sarah hides from prying eyes is tucked into the mountainside and a feminized site suggesting birth. Rose notes the scene’s “rather explicit body-image and primal scene symbolism, projected onto the shore of the English mother-land of long ago...” (“*French*”

166). Ivy hangs over Charles's head as he struggles through the tunnel into a clearing, his endeavor taking a full ten minutes. After Sarah pleads for an hour of Charles's company to unburden her soul, he assents by bowing and turns before stumbling away downhill "a good deal more like a startled roebuck than a worldly English gentleman" through the outer ivy curtain (*French* 119). The site is very much one of rebirth, for at this point in the narrative, the narrator indicates that "He [Charles] knew he was about to engage in the forbidden, or rather the forbidden was about to engage in him" (120). Simon Wolfe calls the Undercliff "the novel's seedbed for growth and abundance" (153). Here in the ivy, "which contains the elements of both womb and tomb, Charles will begin the process that involves the death of his old self and the birth of the new" (Barnum *Fiction* 54). It is a turning point. Across Ware Commons's mountainous face, especially in Sarah's special place or in the ivy tunnel, Charles is reminded of his own smallness and of the reverent relationship with landscape that Sarah has but he sorely lacks.

The postmodern reader should also note Parnassus's significance as a feminized geographical landscape actively affecting the protagonist's sense of power. At the mountain peak, Urfe recollects the dream-like state of being fully in Conchis's power: "There came back the memory of that mind-voyage Conchis had induced in me under hypnosis. They seemed almost parallel experiences..." (*Magus* 259). As noted above, he acknowledges his smallness in the natural world around him ("remote from all towns, all society..." [258]) and his distance from all other human beings except Alison--and though there is no physical distance between them, the communicative barrier erected by his lie about syphilis creates emotional distance. He also does not gloat in his ability to climb the highest peak. In fact, the opposite is true; Lykeri is too steep to be climbed in

haste, he and Alison must stop often to regain their breath and energy, and they have to struggle to reach the tip (258).

Beyond water bodies and mountain places as symbolic wombs and tombs, caves can also serve as locales indicative of both ends of the human's chronological spectrum. In *The Language of the Goddess*, Marija Alseikaite Gimbutas, using evidence as old as Paleolithic art in which caves and narrow passages were painted red to symbolize female reproductive organs, claims that the symbiotic relationship between womb and tomb is ancient, and "burial in the womb is analogous to a seed being planted in the earth..." (151). Barnum points out that Urfe's temporary "burial" in the earth in a sort of underground cave before his disintoxication ordeal foreshadows the "womb-and-tomb experience he will later undergo when he returns to the earth to emerge reborn" (*Fiction* 19). Likewise, Fergusson's decision to remain alone in a cave at Arghuri for shelter--the first of a pair that she compares to God's thumbprints (*History* 164)--is a conscious choice to shut herself in a warm, dark hole away from the rest of the world and to embrace death.

In addition to portraying the timeless appeal of the natural world, largely through descriptions of Edenic landscapes, the authors can create gendered landscapes to chart their characters' evolving attitudes toward the opposite gender and toward issues of gender in general. This is accomplished often by the close ties between landscape and characters. In general, glowing descriptions of the natural landscape coincide with persistent idealization of the opposite gender at earlier chronological stages in the novels' plots. When the idealized person dissolves an idealized label placed upon him/her, the

character's sense of power over both the idealized person and the landscape is severely shaken.

One significant example of the association between landscape and a character can be found in *Staring at the Sun*. More than any other character, Uncle Leslie is associated with nature. While Serjeant rarely encounters the natural world--at least the narrator hardly reports any notable incidents--she does go to the "Old Green Heaven" often with her uncle. On (and nearby) this golf course with her uncle, she comes as close to nature as she ever will. Together they share private rituals and jokes like the "Shoelace Game" near a cluster of silver birch trees between the ninth and tenth tees and in a field beyond a small forest of mossy beech trees near the fourteenth hole (*Staring* 10-11). Serjeant imagines that he and she have control over nature, the ability to ban airplanes and empty the sky, with their happy screams (14). His answer to her worried queries about her future--"The sky's the limit"--perfectly capture the way Serjeant imagines her uncle and his communion with her limited childhood glimpse of the natural world.

Early in the novel, Serjeant idealizes and idolizes her uncle. Her first memory, or "Incident" as she refers to it, occurs with Uncle Leslie at its center. Serjeant waits impatiently for Leslie's Christmas gift of hyacinths hidden beneath the soil in a pot to grow beyond their half-inch lengths. When four months pass and there is no evident change, she digs up not bulbs but rather four wooden golf tees--Leslie's idea of a silly joke. Leslie is the only childhood friend she remembers, and he speaks in a cryptic code that pleases her although she cannot understand it (*Staring* 9). As a result, as a duped, lonely child, Serjeant's faith in and devotion to her uncle remains strong despite the hyacinth "Incident"; as an adult, however, her attitude changes as Leslie's true character

comes to light. Serjeant sadly begins to see Leslie's drinking problems, his supposed cowardice in war, and even his lack of skill as a golfer. Leslie vanishes from Serjeant's life. Later, her father critiques Leslie's laziness and indiscretion when Leslie sends underwear as a wedding present to his niece (57). Ultimately, middle-aged Serjeant reflects on Leslie's influence over her, equating his first joke not with childhood fun but with the cruelty of life:

Jean felt that now she knew all the secrets; all the secrets of life. There was a dark, warm cupboard; she had taken out something heavy, wrapped in brown paper. There was no need to cheat--no need to unscrew a tiny viewing hole and peer in with a torch. She was grown-up. She could carefully and seriously unwrap the paper. She knew what she would find. Four slim ochre points. Golf tees. Of course. What else would you expect? Only a child would take them for hyacinths. Only a child would expect them to sprout. Grown-ups knew that golf tees never sprouted.

(65-6)

Leslie retains some magical hold over Serjeant's childhood memories, but his fakery distorts their idealized earlier relationship. When Serjeant's idealized image of her dissolves, her childhood sense of connection with him and her naïve sense of power over the natural landscape is also disturbed.

A more pervasive example of the association between landscape and a character can be found in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, in which Sarah is closely associated with the natural world. She embodies its characteristics, and she makes it her home. Huffaker equates Sarah and her surroundings: "The wildness of the Undercliff...matches

Sarah's natural wildness" (122). The narrator twice compares her mannerisms to that of a wild animal (*French* 98, 101). The sorrow of her face is compared to water from a woodland spring (14), and her last name "Woodruff" is yet another link between her identity and the natural world. Woodruff is the name of a common sweet herb, also named "waldmeister," or master of the forest (Tarbox 65). In addition, Sarah embraces the geographical landscape, walking there to comfort herself, to be alone, to sleep, and to relax. As noted above, a small green enclosure high up on the edge of Ware Commons that is her "secluded place" is especially dear to her as a place of solitude. Charles calls it her eyrie (*French* 135). In so many ways, Sarah is an emblem of nature at its wildest and best.

Sarah's complete comfort in the natural world contrasts sharply with other women's resistance to it, specifically Mrs. Poulteney and Ernestina. They are both far more "at home" when literally at home, between humanly constructed walls. Mrs. Poulteney, the narrator makes a point of explaining, seldom leaves the confines of her house and never walks outdoors (*French* 54). Hence her distorted image of Ware Commons, a place Poulteney has never seen much less visited (78). Worse, she perverts the wonder of the natural landscape within her domain, having metal obstructions put down for security and therefore turning the gardens of Marlborough House into "a positive forest of humane man-traps--'humane' in this context referring to the fact that the great waiting jaws were untoothed, though quite powerful enough to break a man's leg" (23). No one can wander through them freely without fear for his or her bodily safety. Ernestina, too, is most comfortable far from the Undercliff. In fact, there are no mentions of her ever traveling far from home. The only situation in which she is outside is the

opening scene on the Cobb. Further, she accepts Charles's marriage proposal in a sadly comical scene in her family's greenhouse--the antithesis of Ware Commons. Surrounded by "hot, fragrant air" and preparing to snip dead blooms from cultivated plants, Ernestina accepts Charles's proposal (70-1). The scene is sadly comical and the perfect demonstration of Ernestina and Sarah's opposing characteristics regarding closeness to the natural environment.

If Sarah is closely linked with the Undercliff's natural wonders, Mrs. Poulteney and Ernestina are identified both with constructed representations of nature and distaste for the natural world. For instance, Ernestina is vexed by Charles's gift of flowers; she tells her servant Mary to place them far from her (*French* 63, 66). Controlled images of nature amuse her and Mrs. Poulteney instead. Mrs. Poulteney is pleased by Sarah's gift of an antimacassar embroidered with flowers, while Charles's gift of a brooch depicting flowers overcomes Ernestina, who presses jasmine between diary pages rather than enjoying it in the fields (52, 264, 30). When the narrator compares Ernestina to nature, he uses humanly manipulated, cultivated images. For instance, Ernestina's face is "delicate as a violet..." with creases in her eyelids and lips "as faint as the fragrance of February violets" (26, 27). February violets are possible only when grown in a greenhouse. Her features correspond to the kind of manipulated environment in which she is engaged. Charles is increasingly disturbed by her air of artificiality (106).

When Sarah, in contrast to the less likeable and less complex female characters in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, is associated with the natural landscape, she helps set a new standard for authentic postmodern femininity. Though her ties are to the natural landscape of the Victorian era, she defies "feminine" labels and Charles's idealization.

The narrator notes Sarah's androgynous features from the opening of the novel, and yet they have largely been overlooked. She enters the story without having clear gender, so the reader is put in the same position of perspective as Charles and Ernestina who look on from afar: "It [the figure of Sarah] stood...Its clothes were black....the figure stood motionless..." (*French* 11). In this early scene, Charles mistakes her for a fisherman and shortsighted (in multiple senses of the term) Ernestina can only make out a black figure (13). As they approach her and realize the figure is a woman, the narrator notes that Sarah wears a "bizarre" coat "more like a man's riding coat than any woman's coat that had been in fashion..." (14). When Sarah tells Charles her tale of abandonment by Varguennes, the narrator again notes the masculine air that her clothing gives her (136). Sarah is dressed partly due to circumstance--what is socially appropriate for someone of her standing and what is financially within her means--but perhaps also to confound Charles's efforts to idealize her.

Even when Charles is overcome with Sarah's idealized image, Sarah continues to defy clear gender boundaries. She has dark, heavy features. The narrator points out twice that she has the "faint touch of a boy stealing apples" (not any child, but specifically a male) and "a faintly tomboyish air on occasion" (*French* 99). Without apparent knowledge that she is being followed, Sarah walks the Undercliff "without feminine affectation" (73). At the end of the novel, Sarah fully transforms into the epitome of the Victorian "New Woman" and as such is dressed without attention to then-popular standards of women's fashion (347). She makes no apparent effort to model Ernestina's attitude or style.

With Sarah, Fowles rejects accepted definitions of the Victorian woman and landscape *and* the contemporary woman and landscape; with her characterization, he begins to move into a literary realm that rejects arbitrary gender dichotomization of person or place. Sarah defies categorization as a virgin, a mother, or a lover with her clever lies to Charles and the narrator's proposed triple endings. With their frantic sexual consummation and then her absconding with the "swarm of mysteries" (*French* 278) surrounding her motivations multiplied rather than solved, she gently forces the protagonist to be humble and respectful toward both her and his surroundings. She forever refuses to provide answers to his bewildered "why did you tell...what have I...why should you..." (278). If Sarah is neither Charles's ideal Victorian woman nor a wholly masculine figure, and is so closely and obviously associated with the landscape, that too can be neither wholly feminine or masculine. Neither Sarah nor the natural world is predictable or conventionally "pretty" or easily manipulated. As the narrator aptly queries but does not answer, "Who is Sarah? Out of what shadows does she come?" (80). The question remains in the text for the reader to answer: she comes from the future that the postmodern author writes, from an Edenic geographical landscape that cannot be controlled and that at long last defies gender labels. Immersed in the lost domain, the reader finds the seeds of an androgynous future landscape.

In *The Magus*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, and *Staring at the Sun*, Fowles and Barnes lay the groundwork for future literary landscapes that amaze both characters and readers with their natural beauty and size. They present both male and female characters who gender landscape in healthy ways that highlight the natural world's majesty and the constructed world's limitations.

When they portray landscapes as wombs, which could damagingly relegate the woman to a powerless “other” position, they amend that portrayal with empowered tomb imagery. Patrick Murphy urges readers to resist “yearning for a nonexistent androgynous golden age in which male and female and humanity and planet harmoniously coexisted” and instead “look toward creating a new culture and evolving a new paradigm” (68). Fowles and Barnes, gendering geographical landscapes in their postmodern novels, do the latter while cultivating the former: an androgynous age of valued landscapes.

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISHNESS AND GENDERED PLACES IN FOWLES AND BARNES

Fowles and Barnes craft provocatively gendered portrayals of their own and their characters' national landscape of England, as well as countries with which England is compared and contrasted, as they "narrate" their country. By national landscape, I mean the entirety of a country or portions of it that are historically representative of it, such as London or Oxford in the case of England. As a result of Fowles and Barnes's gendering, the landscape becomes a far richer story element than mere backdrop to plot in their texts. England in the postmodern novel must play a complex narrative role bound up in social ideology, for the reader should recognize that "[s]pace...is always already a practice. A place...is a spatial practice...encoded with aesthetic, cultural, and social relations..." (Burden "Introduction" 18). Further, gender and national identity are inseparable (Garrity 5). The national landscape, while arguably far less overtly gendered than Fowles and Barnes's geographical and textual landscapes, nevertheless suggests a postmodern understanding of gender's continual fluidity within Fowles and Barnes's oeuvre in a number of ways. Especially in *Daniel Martin*, *The Magus*, and *England, England*, and to a lesser extent in several of their other postmodern novels, Fowles and Barnes foreground the importance of national identity while complicating a definitive gendered vision of England. They question what Homi K. Bhabha, in "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," posits his hybridity paradigm against and urges his reading public to question: "that progressive metaphor of modern social cohesion...shared by...theorists who treat *gender*, class, or race as radically 'expressive' social totalities" (294, emphasis added). In the postmodern world, gender is a

fragmentary construction. With their protagonists' primarily condescending descriptions of England, shifting attitudes toward the national landscape, self-imposed temporary exiles, and forays into other distinctly personified and gendered national landscapes, Fowles and Barnes evade overly simplistic universalizing male/female binaries and celebrate such postmodern fragmentation.

Gender issues concerning people and place are a predominant concern in all three of the novels, for each protagonist must come to terms with the societal expectations and implications of his or her own biology and gender as well as overcome his or her tendency to idealize the opposite gender. Descriptions of place are closely connected to these basic gender issues, as the developing protagonists move from geographical point to point. Robert Burden writes of the protagonists' literal movement from England and across foreign landscapes and accompanying psychological transformation in Fowles's works in general, "Existential journeys as a basis for narrative coherence are symbolically correlated with spatial imagery. There is a movement from enclosure to plenitude which is symptomatic of the need to transcend the loneliness of the isolated self and engage in meaningful relationships" (*John* 159). This insightful statement could apply to both Fowles and Barnes's novels. In *Daniel Martin*, the middle-aged successful screenwriting title character must stop manipulating his relationship with glamorous actress girlfriend Jenny McNeil for his own ends and reunite with his ex-wife's sister, his soulmate Jane. In *The Magus*, Maurice Conchis "disintoxicates" bored, conceited Nicholas Urfe from his unrealistic and chauvinistic demands upon women so Nicholas can earn the right to reunite with vital, authentic Alison Kelly--the antithesis of Conchis's twin "lures" Lily/Julie and Rose/June Montgomery. In *England, England*, Martha

Cochrane must come to terms with memories of her estranged father, especially as manifested in postmodern tourist attraction England, England and Martha's attitude toward its owner Sir Jack Pitman; she must also deal with a romantic love that turns sour when Martha blackmails Pitman, embraces corporate power, and temporarily becomes CEO in Pitman's place.

In other novels by Fowles and Barnes with more limited focus on the national landscape, gender issues and learning to resist idealizing are still a prominent concern. For example, in *Metroland*, Christopher Lloyd funnels his adolescent lust and curiosity about love and sexuality into an honest, caring relationship with wife Marion, even when it creates tension with his childhood friend Toni Barbarowski and prompts his return to Metroland, which surprises even himself. And in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Victorian gentleman Charles Smithson breaks off his engagement with socialite Ernestina Freeman when enigmatic social outcast Sarah Woodruff leaves him and forces him to finally cease from searching for a "perfect" woman to please him. Most of these revelations about the dangers of idealizing the opposite gender occur not at home in England but elsewhere. As attitudes toward others change, attitudes toward the national landscape change as well; it is a mutual process.

The protagonists of *Daniel Martin*, *The Magus*, and *England, England* begin and end their narrative journeys, when their plots are arranged chronologically, in England. They open their respective narratives by recounting their lives and perceptions of Englishness as children, they emphasize their gradual psychological development within lands unknown to them that serve as transformative temporary enclosures, and they ultimately return home to England as wiser, liberated adults. Especially in the central

stage of their journeys, the narrators reveal their generally jaded attitudes toward the national landscape and its people via their speech. They turn hopefully to foreign countries, seeking in each what the reader could term a substitute Lacanian “fantasy space,” or “an imaginary body onto which individuals can project their desires of wholeness, completeness and belonging; a space that momentarily removes the lack with which individuals are burdened by their move into the symbolic world of adulthood” (Bentley 486). The symbolic world is that associated with language, and this movement is itself a type of idealization, as the protagonists resist self-fragmentation. In America and Egypt, Greece, and a postmodern “amusement park” version of England, respectively, they critique their temporarily abandoned homeland. It is their actions, however, of returning home that speak louder than their words. Paradoxically, their literal return as adults can be read as an attempted symbolic reversion to their childhood states of innocence and naïve contentment (and fragmentation not unlike that experienced prior to the mirror stage) as they return to their geographical and emotional “homeplace.” Nandor Fodor suggests, “Nostalgia is a yearning for our country or home town. The definition is superficial. It is our childhood for which we yearn in a nostalgic mood” (213). In the end, the narrators choose to not sever the bond that links them to the national landscape of their childhood--England, their mother country, “conventionally figured as the feminine Britannia” (Garrity 8). This evident desire to return to a figurative womb as an idealized space, however, is frequently difficult if not impossible in a postmodern world, which Fowles and Barnes make clear in their depictions of England late in each novel. Knowledge of oneself and of others, once gained, cannot be lost at will--at least not by conventional, anti-destructive means.

Despite their common and unexpected starting point and destination, the narrators express widely varying views of England between the two narrative points. The reader sees dramatic variation in attitudes from book to book and across the span of both the plots of their novels and their chronological development. In *Daniel Martin* and *England, England*, Fowles and Barnes highlight England's role as a "mother country" nurturing each of the novels' protagonists, Dan and Martha, respectively, from a young age. Unlike Dan and Martha, however, the young protagonist of *The Magus* Nicholas describes, from the beginning of his tale, England as a dismissive, unsavory influence, suggesting the opposite of a nurturing mother at worst or a spurned maternal force at best. Yet Fowles and Barnes also show England accepting the wandering protagonists back as they return to England as the protagonists' actions contrast the ease of return with the practical difficulties of remaining in foreign lands. Further, while the authors never have their characters explicitly refer to England as a maternal force, they do complicate a simplistic portrayal of England as a feminized "mother country" by having the protagonists repeatedly portray their homeland as a civilized, structured, rigid, mechanized, and therefore masculine, national entity.

As discussed above, the historical association in the western world of femininity with nature and masculinity with culture, as well as the gendered character of the nature/culture dualism, are disturbingly widespread and have long been established, though the harmful implications of the division have only recently come to light in critical theory. Kate Soper believes that the dualism, specifically the association between nature and the female, is not only a part of the Western world but "crosscultural and well-nigh universal..." because it was established by the association between the female and

her reproductive capacity (139). Similarly, Carolyn Merchant terms the biologically essentialist association of the female with nature an “ancient” one (xx). Supposedly, because woman has a womb, she epitomizes nature. Because nature and culture have also been viewed as opposite, the connection between man and culture is reinforced by default.

Within and across each postmodern text, the protagonists’ depictions of Europe disrupt problematic equations set up by a nature/culture dualism--happily for the critic concerned with present perpetuation of it. While Fowles and Barnes rely on that dualism to establish the reader’s sense of England as gendered, a skeptical reading reveals that England functions as neither a wholly consistent masculine nor feminine entity. This narrative move undermines the dualism while being forced to acknowledge its structure in order to undermine it, in characteristic postmodern fashion. The protagonists inconsistently react to the national landscape as a maternal figure at times and verbally describe it, and especially its citizens, in masculine terms at others. The attempted separation of England from the English further complicates a gendered reading of the landscape, for it is impossible to divorce the two (as the protagonists so often attempt to do) and then emotionally embrace one or the other without experiencing discontent and psychological confusion--without feeling “out of place.” As a result, a simple gendered reading of the national landscape’s function is impossible. England can be read as androgynous, serving various gendered roles that mirror the protagonists’ psychological development throughout each plot’s chronological development. The protagonists’ love/hate relationship with England plays a noteworthy role in the implied dual gendering of England.

Fowles and Barnes set their novels in dually gendered Englands of past, present, and quasi-future; their gendering cuts across historical time periods, perhaps in attempts to address historical constructions of gender in still other subtle ways. I pluralize “England” because each depiction of the country is both embedded in its fictional temporal setting which molds the characters’ relationship toward England, as well as in the cultural milieu of its publication (1977 for *Daniel Martin* and the revised version of *The Magus* and 1998 for *England, England*) and its readings since publication. I also append “quasi” to a picture of a future England because Pitman’s postmodern England, England seems futuristic but exhibits a condensed version of what Pitman deems the biggest and best cultural features of England, albeit then-contemporary England. Also, the world of Anglia that Martha inhabits at the conclusion of *England, England*, while set in the future like “wild England” in *After London*, resembles the national landscape of the distant past.

The origins of the gendered phrase “mother country,” especially in regards to these various depictions of England, are critical to understanding the characters’ attitudes toward the national landscape. “Mother country” means one’s country of origin, one’s native land. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s etymology, the original term derives from Puritan Arthur Golden’s translation of Ovid’s Latin phrase “antiquam matrem,” from *Metamorphosis*, as “moother countrey” (“Mother”). One’s mother country in this context and others is the source of its citizens’ sense of national identity and belonging in the world. It grounds heritage in a gendered construction. “Fatherland” can also mean the same connection between a person and his or her national landscape, but there are crucial differences between the two gendered expressions. It is helpful to

briefly examine the effect of the two terms in Machiavelli's *The Prince*, as explained by gynocartography critic Darby Lewes:

The politic author frequently refers to his country as the "fatherland" when he describes it as a proud and great nation. But when he speaks of a weak, passive, vulnerable state, the fatherland suddenly undergoes a rapid sex-change operation; the pronouns are switched and Italy becomes the feminized motherland. At several points in his discourse, Machiavelli characterizes Italy as an exposed, susceptible "she": weak, vulnerable, meek, and submissive. Italy can now be "beaten, despoiled, torn, pillaged" and forced to endure "ruin of every sort". ("Feminine" 50)

Here the gendering of Italy reveals the narrator's dual views of the country as well as colors the reader's interpretation of the national landscape. The terms "fatherland" and "motherland" used in conjunction with any specific country mold the reader's interpretation of that country, perhaps even without the reader being conscious of it because he or she has been desensitized to the terms' significance. Throughout the world, many people--Dutch, Romans, Danes, Norwegians, Greeks, Brazilians, French, and Armenians, among numerous others--refer to their homeland as "fatherland," or associate it primarily with paternal concepts, simply due to gendered grammar. (The masculine origins of the term are another matter). England is free from such gendered linguistic restrictions and is referred to as a feminine entity largely due to its history, despite its patrilineal heritage.

The first recorded specific reference to England as a "mother country" is nearly four centuries past. Gary Martin explains its circumstances. In a letter dated December,

1617, written by Dutch religious separatists John Robinson and William Brewster to Sir Edwyn Sandys as they planned their trip on the Mayflower, England is wistfully referred to as “our mother countrie” providing milk from which the letter-writers and prospective American colonists were successfully weaned (pars. 1-5). During World War II, Nazi propaganda probably unsuspectingly bolstered the association of England with femininity; the German government used the grammatically neutral “Vaterland” to refer to its homeland, but the German word’s English translation as “fatherland” subsequently linked the term and Germany with the horrors of war in the minds of the listening world. To distance themselves, the English thus refrained from associating their country with the German term for “fatherland.”

As noted earlier, the characters of the three postmodern novels experience England as a maternal space but never specifically call England their “mother country.” This marks a significant difference from Victorian literary treatment of England’s maternal role, especially in the wake of America’s breaking away and in the heyday of England’s most extensive colonialist endeavors in Africa, Asia, and the West Indies. Nevertheless, England serves as a metaphorical mother figure, or more specifically as a womb, by helping form its/her young children’s emotionally complex attitudes toward itself/herself as they reside within its borders. Though these attitudes vary, England as a feminine entity is foregrounded in other ways, specifically in each of the three novels’ openings and the titles of several of Fowles and Barnes’s novels. Several critics have noticed the suggestively recurrent usage of “ma-” in the titles of Fowles’ works: *The Magus*, *A Maggot*, *Mantissa*, *Daniel Martin*. Barnes’s *Metroland*, when the word is studied etymologically, reveals roots in the Greek term for “womb” and is akin to

“metropolis,” the *mother* city or parent state of a colony (“Metro-,” “Metropolis”). Thus both authors consciously or unconsciously (the latter in Fowles’s case) select etymologically suggestive gendered words and word roots for a few of their novel titles, again subtly indicating England’s role as the characters’ first maternal home. For Dan, Martha, and Nicholas, England is home, and “home” traditionally is associated with the feminine, with birth, emotions, and affectivity (Shands 109). The environment molds the young characters and shapes their ideological perceptions while they literally stand on its shores. It is central to each protagonist’s identity as the reader comes to discover it.

Dan in *Daniel Martin* and Martha in *England, England* develop a sense of their role as English citizens and a general sense of belonging at early ages. Paradoxically, this sense of maternal protection comes from Dan’s and Martha’s fathers, both of whom receive much more notice (and ink) than their flesh-and-blood mothers. In fact, England receives more attention than any of the narrators’ parents. The beginning of each novel foretells England’s importance beyond mere setting, beyond mere backdrop.

Several images of birth appear in the early English settings of *Daniel Martin*. They reinforce interpretation of England as a womb. For example, in the stooking field setting of the first chapter, “The Harvest,” after a day of sweaty labor, bombers roaring overhead, a massacre of rabbits by the reaper machine, and a delicious country meal, young Dan contemplates life with his back against a beech tree. The day is “pregnant with being” and the day, or Dan, is “Unharvested, yet one with this land...” (*Daniel* 11). The narrator portrays Dan as part of the cultivated English landscape itself, as an unborn baby is physically inextricable from its mother’s body. Also, Carol M. Barnum notes the significance of the wheat harvest as a symbol of rebirth (*Fiction* 102). The day does

initiate Dan's manhood. As he carves his initials into a tree, he thinks, "Adieu, my boyhood and my dream" (*Daniel* 11). The image of harvest itself is a nod to the cyclical nature of life and inevitable births to come. A second image suggestive of England as a fertile place yielding Dan to the world is that of Dan poling a punt upstream at Oxford with Jane accompanying him. The watery image could indicate a birth canal, for though the water leads to death (in the form of a dead woman's naked body) not life, the day ends with Dan and Jane's first sexual consummation--a solitary act that sends Dan on his midlife quest to Egypt in search of his past, his purpose, and his authentic self.

Much of Dan's childhood formulation of his mother country comes via his very English father, for his mother passes away before Dan turns four. His father is a preacher in the Church of England and exemplifies the qualities Dan comes to associate with England: fear of showing his feelings, dullness, dryness, adherence to established rules, and predictability. His father, however, also introduces Dan to another side of England--a wild, natural, green side--in his garden. Though Dan's father's garden, like Fowles's deceased father's own orchard, is supervised and controlled by Dan's father in a fashion that Dan (and Fowles) abhors, it is also his passion and pride and instills a love of nature in young Dan. As it epitomizes Fowles's recurrent use of the "lost domain," the image of the garden manifests itself in other landscapes throughout Dan's life. Peter Conradi sees the domain image resonate throughout the text in other landscapes (199), landscapes that Susana Onega describes as containing the essence of Englishness (114). Further, Dan's father's garden destines Dan for the natural environments in which he is most comfortable, "hidden, precivilized retreats [that] represent the chance for a new start amid peace and plenty" (Wolfe 184): the wild outdoors of Tarquinia, Tsankawi, and

Thorncombe, places also associated with birth. Here we see how Fowles's clever mingling of paternal and maternal influences--a means of marking the landscape as androgynous--manifests itself throughout Dan's later life.

Like Dan, as a child, Martha forms an attitude toward England via her father's influence. Her interaction with her father reverberates throughout her later involvement with Pitman. Her first true and repetitive memory (in contrast to an artfully constructed one in which her mother helps her make the outline of her Counties of England jigsaw puzzle on the floor) involves her sitting at the kitchen table a little later in her childhood, putting the same puzzle together and realizing the final piece is missing. Happily, her father, suddenly and conveniently in the kitchen, discovers the missing piece somewhere, often in his trouser pocket, and teases her. Martha remembers, "She would smile...because Staffordshire [or Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, or Warwickshire] had been found, and her jigsaw, her England, and her heart had been made whole again" (*England* 6). This recurring memory, or single memory of a recurring event, establishes several details about Martha's relationship with England. First, her connection to her country is established at a very early age, and it is established via her father's assistance. Martha's sense of patriotism and citizenship begins with a child's toy in her formative years. Looking back, she also refers to England with a possessive pronoun. She belongs to England; England belongs to her.

Martha's connection to England is mentally bound up with her relationship with her biological father and, in his absence, Pitman as father-figure. As she works for Pitman, her father remains a painfully poignant emblem of the England she essentially leaves behind. Just as Martha's father is associated with a time of idyllic childhood

happiness, innocence, and a complete England, Pitman serves as an ever-present emblem of adult financial pursuits, adult responsibilities, and England's farcical replacement, England, England. As such, Pitman becomes a father figure to middle-aged Martha though she rejects lover Paul Harrison's earnest insinuation that Pitman is a substitute for her father (*England* 92). Until Pitman's meddling in her personal affairs and condescending attitude unnerve her, Martha's discomfort with the paternal association may be due to its implications--that she may unwillingly relive her father's disappearance once again.

As a child, Martha linked her father's disappearance, the vanishing of the Nottinghamshire piece, and by implication the resultant incompleteness of her country with her own actions: "She had lost the piece, she had lost Nottinghamshire, put it somewhere she couldn't remember...and so her father, who loved her, who said he loved her, and never wanted to see her disappointed...had gone off to find the piece, and it would be a long, long search if books and stories were anything to go by" (15). Due to her persistent and powerful memory of the jigsaw puzzle and her father's ability to solve her problems and restore her heart to its wholeness, Martha is wrenched by guilt when he disappears, apparently for good if Martha's mother's bitterness is any indication. When Martha gives up on hopes that her father will return, she disposes of the puzzle piece by piece, shoving the counties down the seats on the school bus (19). Years later, when Martha reunites with her father over lunch, she asks him about Nottinghamshire. His complete lack of remembrance of the jigsaw puzzle at all, much less his magical ability to always locate the missing piece, hardens Martha's heart and perhaps makes her so susceptible to Pitman's plan for England, England. In "Re-writing Englishness:

Imagining the Nation in Julian Barnes's *England, England* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*," Nick Bentley suggests that Martha's father serves to not only complete the puzzle but also to complete Martha's identity (489). Therefore, Martha enters adulthood incomplete and unfulfilled, an apt image of a fragmented self. The original England and her childhood connection to it are marred by joyous memories of her now-vanished father, memories turned sour.

England, England antagonist Pitman's "childhood" relationship with England is more complicated than Dan's or Martha's, and more bizarre. Adult Pitman often mentally returns to infancy to find substitute maternal affection and perhaps to escape his involvement with England, England--a deviation that causes temporary severing of his powerful connections to both national landscapes. Literally tucked away in the English countryside, his own private womb, he secretly pretends to be "Baby Victor" (a name that, in the nursery setting, ironically suggests his sense of mastery over his surroundings) and is cared for in a giant nursery equipped with large versions of an ordinary baby's needs, from diapers to a wooden playpen to baby oil. He nurses at the breast of "Lucy," actually Heather, a doctoral student of psycho-sexual studies. Like a baby, he soils his diaper but like a man, ejaculates into Lucy's waiting hands (*England* 157-62). Though he is physically in England, I argue that Pitman's need to frequently mentally escape England, the "Island Project," and adulthood responsibilities is his temporary undoing; his childish lingo, "titty, nappy, poo," is caught on tape and used to blackmail him from his powerful position. His frequent regressive escapes to a somewhat "parental" locale come to an end.

Fowles's restless, orphaned *Magus* hero, Nicholas, also portrays England as a parental figure, though the opposite of a warm, embracing maternal one. Nicholas is like a fully developed fetus struggling to be birthed from the womb. The English national landscape is both boring and pushy, an entity from which Nicholas seeks escape. Similar to Mary's attitude toward India in *The Secret Garden*, England annoys Nicholas. He finds the Greek landscape, in contrast, to be enigmatically attractive. He confesses that Greece, the world into which he is metaphorically birthed, is "supremely beautiful; but when it touched me, I felt it was hostile" (*Magus* 49). Characterized as a tempestuous lover, though hostile it inspires Nicholas who at this point in his life desires an exotic country, not a protective one (and an exotic woman, not a "conventional" one). Unlike Greece's ability to incite heights of love/hate passion, the English live in "a very muted, calm, domesticated relationship with what remains of our natural landscape and its soft northern light..." (49). In other words, England lacks the fire that Nicholas as a young man seeks.

After growing up in England and studying at Oxford, before fleeing to Greece, Nicholas finds himself trapped in a microcosm of England when he takes on his first teaching job which molds his very telling attitude. He calls the school's location, East Anglia, a "claustrophobic...nightmare..." and a condensed, intensified version of the national landscape which also disgusts malcontent Nicholas. He terms the "smug, petrified school...a toy model of the entire country..." (*Magus* 18). Acting as the adolescent he still is emotionally, he feels as though England is making unreasonable demands on him--to teach disinterested students--and pushing him away. He longs for a new land--any new land--with its accompanying new race, language, and mystery (19).

He desires escape from “dull, bourgeois reality” (Tarbox 19). He is frustrated with England’s stagnancy. Even after meeting and living with Alison, and after losing his parents in a plane crash in a thunderstorm, Nicholas cannot ignore the unwanted parental-like attention of England and again expresses his desire to escape (*Magus* 40). Most of the entire first few chapters of *The Magus* echo a theme of discontent and frustration.

Nicholas’s restless spirit manifests itself in self-imposed homelessness. When Nicholas does leave for Greece at last, he expresses his action as an exorcism (*Magus* 54). Already an orphan after his parents’ deaths, Nicholas makes himself an orphan from his home country. He enjoys the anonymity afforded to him in the new national landscape (59). He naïvely believes he can escape responsibilities and begin again--his job, his relationship, his acquaintances, and his poetic endeavors. This sentiment of blissful evasion is echoed even after Nicholas endures the godgame’s mysteries; Nicholas calls the unknown Greeks in the street “familiar compatriots” while the members of the British Council, despite being helpful, are “total foreigners...” (556). England begins to fade from his mind, like high school does to a graduate leaving home for the new adventures and landscapes of college. Nicholas informs the reader, “The outer world, England, London, became absurdly and sometimes terrifyingly unreal....the news broadcasts [from the BBC] seemed to come from the moon, and concerned situations and a society I no longer belonged to, while the rare newspapers from England that I saw became more and more like their own ‘One hundred years ago today’ features” (56). With Lily/Julie, he claims to not miss England at all (367). Nicholas cuts all ties with his homeland. He chooses his estrangement.

While England is a literal womb for Dan and Martha (and Pitman, in a twisted fashion) but a less flattering maternal figure for Nicholas, it is a maternal safe haven to which each protagonist, seeking comfort and psychological rebirth, ultimately returns. Like Vincey in *She* and Abel in *Green Mansions*, both questing in texts written more than a century ago, Dan, Martha, and Nicholas search to recapture innocence back in and associated with their homeland. Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva explain, “The nostalgia for childhood and the search for motherliness are often combined with the search for *homeland* or *home*, for belonging, for one’s own place” (141). This urge supersedes the passage of time simply because all people of all time have experienced childhood. Burden claims that “To practice space is thus to repeat the joyful and silent experience of childhood...” (“Introduction” 20); while unfortunately many childhoods are not happy, the earliest stage of childhood could be considered to occur before birth within the safety and joy of oblivion within the womb. I argue that Fowles and Barnes’s protagonists actively seek the joys of that privileged enclosure when they find themselves in its proximity. While the womb offers no freedom from its defined boundaries, it does provide complete protection from worry and danger--something the protagonists lack. Annette Kolodny, in reference to the American pastoral, uses language that nevertheless perfectly captures Fowles and Barnes’s protagonists’ attempted “regression from the cares of adult life and a return to the primal warmth of womb or breast in a feminine landscape” (6). Overcome by the “cares of adult life”--destroyed romantic relationships and unhealthy employment positions--they seek English shores.

The England that Dan, Martha, and Nicholas return to contrasts sharply with the national landscapes that they leave, in terms of each country’s atmosphere of welcome (or

lack of it). This is especially true in *The Magus* and *England, England*. Practically considered, Greece expels Nicholas. He is essentially being pushed out of the country. Nicholas loses his teaching job, Conchis and his party vacate Bourani (or appear to, at least), and Lily/Julie's deception causes Nicholas's desire for her to turn to disgust. Martha, too, is told to leave England, England when Pitman regains power and summarily fires her.

Interestingly, while circumstance strongly assists their moves, Dan, Martha, and Nicholas *choose* to return to their homeland. This movement toward home is a creative inversion, on three levels, of what Kathleen L. Komar in 1994 in "Feminist Curves in Contemporary Literary Space" identifies as an old literary technique: "forcing women back into an enclosed space reminiscent of a womb in order to destroy them..." (91). Fowles and Barnes turn a consciously blind eye to gender. *Both* men and women, not just women, in Fowles and Barnes move *of their own accord* from a central foreign landscape toward their original starting point seeking *redemption*, not fearing destruction. No one forces them to vacate; Dan could easily return to Hollywood and Jenny, Martha could attempt to resist Pitman's plans or plead for another job in England, England, and Nicholas could linger and find another teaching job and another girlfriend in Greece. Instead, in the three novels, the reader finds three willing protagonists, both male and female, returning to what hitherto, mid-plot, they described as an imperfect, realistic national landscape.

The protagonists' literal return to England is reemphasized by the circular fashioning of each narrative. Fowles and Barnes ensure that the reader notices the revisited national landscape by precisely structuring their novels. The textual landscapes

lead the reader from one location to a second and then back to the first. For example, *England, England* is composed of three sections identifying the central location and Martha's whereabouts: "England"; "England, England"; and "Anglia." (*Metroland's* three parts also mirror *England, England's* in reflecting movement to and from England: "Metroland," "Paris," and "Metroland II.") *The Magus* is composed of three sections, these untitled but still very much marking Nicholas's travels across the landscapes of England and Greece. Simon Loveday notes, "The action of Fowles's narratives typically withdraws from the opening setting to some kind of natural refuge or retreat: in the closing stages the move is reversed....the pattern recurs throughout Fowles's fiction..." (4). *The Magus* is an apt example, as are *The Ebony Tower*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *The Collector*, and *Daniel Martin*. While *Daniel Martin* is not divided into sections, its last chapter title "Future Past" indicates dual movement in time, as well as draws attention to Dan's locations in past, present, and future.

In *Daniel Martin*, England functions as a maternal refuge beckoning Dan's return, and Onega argues that Dan's literal journey across the landscapes and back to England is a mental journey backwards (111). Despite Dan's disdain for many "English" characteristics, England will always be his home and a place to which to return, and the temporally convoluted nature of the narrative reflects Dan's frequent thoughts about England. He repeatedly refers to England as a home, sometimes with a possessive pronoun and often passionately. For instance, when former schoolmate Barney Dillon asks him if England really is Dan's home, he answers, "'England? Good lord, yes'" (103). He responds as though the question is a silly one and the answer is obvious. The first chapter--arguably the most lushly descriptive of the lengthy novel--finds Dan toiling

and sweating in the English countryside, “slightly drunk, bathed in the green pond of Devon voices, his Devon and England...” (6). Despite all that happens in the novel, despite all of Dan’s worldwide travels, the England of Dan’s childhood, reminiscent of his father’s garden, of the stooking field and Thorncombe, is his homeplace. In Hollywood with Jenny, he claims to wish he could metaphorically return home, and Jenny believes Dan does not need the English landscape as much as he believes he does (15, 33), but the reader will learn that Dan is suppressing verbalization of his desire for a literal journey back to England, especially back to his small Devon farm Thorncombe. Like a return to the womb, a return to Thorncombe is always a “retreat into the past, his lost domain, his other world...” (419). Thomas C. Foster refers to it as Dan’s attempted recreation of “the sacred wood, the green enclosure of his memory...” (133). Thorncombe is the central place of *Daniel Martin* and the lone English place that is the exception to England’s structured, civilized portrayal. In Dan’s heart, it is a cherished place because of “its green secrecy, its hiddenness, its charm...” (*Daniel* 129). It is a wild, natural treasure for Dan.

The conclusion of *Daniel Martin* finds Dan’s devotion to Thorncombe still intact. The title character joins Jane, residing both in Oxford and at Thorncombe. In the final scene, Dan stands by Jane cooking in her kitchen--a feminized place in that it is stereotypically a “woman’s domain”--in Oxford, but he confesses to Jenny that he intends to continue to use his farm, too (*Daniel* 629, 625). There is little doubt that he will follow through. Even at the conclusion, “Daniel persistently resorts to the evocation of place as a mode of fixing identity in a spatial image. The sense of self, of being there, is evoked firstly through the loss of place from childhood and secondly through the

eventual return to a private domain in the English countryside” (Burden *John* 54). The reader gets a sense that Dan’s Hollywood screenwriting career and travels are over. His appreciation for England may be genuine. His self-image is bound up within his childhood locale, and despite no overt declarations on Dan’s part (the concluding scene is only a short paragraph), the reader can infer the recurring role of Thorncombe as a maternal safe place in Dan’s future.

Similarly, England takes on an authentic mothering role, welcoming back its/her wandering citizens, in *England, England*. Martha’s eventual return to England-turned-Anglia leads to, while not complete contentment, acceptance of her homeland. Return to the old England is impossible, of course, for time has inevitably passed, and Pitman’s amusement park country alters England’s history (and tries to alter its past in historiographic fashion). It is Pitman’s attempt at what Peter Ackroyd describes as an “enchanted circle” and Bentley further defines as “hermetically sealed and transcendent of any actual events that might threaten to disrupt the sanctity of Englishness...” (484). Yet Anglia does retain some of England’s old idyllic charm. If personified, it appears to forgive her wandering into and helping to create the parodic fantasy world of England, England. It takes her back with figurative open arms, welcoming her into its gritty reality reminiscent of both wild nature and the nostalgic past as exemplified by wild woodlands, a collapsed churchyard, a country village fête, and banter like that between young Martha and her long-estranged father. The village celebration itself is bittersweet and reminiscent of Martha’s powerful childhood experiences at the county fair, trying to grow winning vegetables but failing.

In *The Magus*, England is also a place of return, a safe but apparently dismal one --until the reader's final few pages and Nicholas's final self-narrated experience. For Nicholas, the English national landscape is the lesser of two evils--a far more comfortably predictable world than Conchis's chaotic Greek villa. In the third part of *The Magus*, Nicholas finally realizes that the nucleus of his world should be Alison, Alison is alive, and she is probably in London (566). He subsequently leaves Greece behind, and after a trip to Rome in pursuit of his predecessor Leverrier, he rediscovers London. At first it is a horrid place, for Alison, the object of his journey, remains hidden; Nicholas calls London "a city of the drab dead..." and notes its overwhelming ugliness. Comparing it to the exotic Greek landscape, he adds, "It was like mud after diamonds, dank undergrowth after sunlit marble..." (573). Such a reaction is expected, for this is a painful return for Nicholas who is still caught up in the mysteries of the godgame. It takes time for the prodigal to return emotionally, and having been ejected from Conchis's world and his Greek school, Nicholas feels separated from all places, from both Greece and England. He laments his "alienation from England and the English, my specieslessness, my sense of exile..." (632). Without England, Nicholas loses all sense of himself, even comparing himself to a mother as he reflects on his aching desire to see Alison: "a new feeling had seeded and was growing inside me, a feeling I wanted to eradicate and couldn't...a feeling that haunted me day and night, that I despised, disproved, dismissed, and still it grew, as the embryo grows in the reluctant mother's womb, sweeping her with rage, then in green moments melting her with...but I couldn't say the word" (577). Frustrated without Alison, he halfheartedly ponders exile by choice via a trip to America or South America (643). While the conclusion leaves the reader

wondering where Nicholas chooses to reside (as well as whether or not he successfully forms an authentic relationship with Alison, a topic debated at length by critics), it is highly unlikely that Nicholas returns to Conchis's domain or that Alison returns to Australia as she threatens to do when the hot-tempered couple meet again in Regent's Park. Their uncomfortable reconciliation is a reopening of communication--honest discourse at last--and confirmation of Nicholas's rejection of self-pity. It is also a symbolically rich site of "green distances" (646) and Nicholas's psychological rebirth.

Despite each protagonist's obviously successful return to England--they all successfully complete their geographical journeys--Fowles and Barnes complicate a simple image of England as a feminized entity that frames each protagonist's temporary exploratory excursion into foreign landscapes. They acknowledge the adult's desire for a return to psychological innocence as couched in psychoanalytic terminology: "The circular journey is comprehensible in Freudian terms as the search for the lost Mother and original innocence" (Burden *John* 161). But they also suggest that return to the symbolic womb, to a prior, childlike, simple vision of England and a self unencumbered by adult responsibility, is desired but potentially harmful and difficult if not impossible in a postmodern world that prefers the replica to the original. In their guide to Fowles, Jonathan Noakes and Margaret Reynolds refer specifically to the "motherland" as "a place from which one is exiled, a scene of origin *to which one can never return*" (10, emphasis added). In a postmodern world, the search cannot successfully conclude, Fowles and Barnes suggest. The "lost Mother" of England is a myth, and original innocence cannot be regained. No one can authentically dehistoricize the past.

Adulthood choices have irreversible consequences, and time triumphs over space by irrevocably molding it.

Anglia is an apt example, and Barnes's novel fits neatly into a category Christine Berberich defines in her essay on cultural constructions of Englishness: recent literary writing that ironizes the notion of England as a pastoral idyll (214). Martha returns to "Old England" in search of what she discovers in her final recorded experience on the Isle of Wight: "the original image: getting back there, seeing it, feeling it" (*England* 245). This image is a blissful, pre-England, England, pre-paternal-abandonment one. In several ways, Martha seems to meet her goal. Effectively fired, she divorces herself from England, England. In Anglia, she reminisces, and townspeople Mr. Mullin, attempting to recreate (or create?) a village festival, specifically seeks out her childhood memories. Martha finds new worth in herself; her anecdotes and advice are valuable. In appearance, Anglia also moves backward in time, resisting communication technology, mass transit, and advanced power sources. Yet all is not as it seems. Bentley explains:

[*England, England*] laments the belief that we cannot access an authentic place of origin, whilst it simultaneously critiques those who celebrate this fact. It presents the preference for the replica alongside the psychological desire for the original, and, in fact, these are presented as the same thing. What Martha discovers in the last section of the book is that if we desire to recover a lost past--a garden show, our image of rural England, Cornish smugglers, Robin Hood--it is in fact not the original or authentic reality that we desire (because there is no original)... (494)

A closer look reveals that the England to which Martha returns is a far cry from the authentic England of her childhood, or more precisely, of her childhood memories. This version of England is, like England, England, an artfully constructed replica of what its inhabitants want the past to have been like. Anglian citizens are fully aware that authenticity is sacrificed on the altar of desire, but they choose to ignore the less pleasant ramifications of their reproduction. For example, country vicar Jez Harris “plays the yokel” though formerly known as legal expert Jack Oshinsky. His prior employment with an electronics firm was in America; he is probably not even English, though he plays the part well. The local legends, Martha soon discovers, may have little to no historical factuality to them. Instead, they are constructions designed to please nostalgic locals and visitors alike. In “The Invention of Cultural Traditions: The Construction and Deconstruction of Englishness and Authenticity in Julian Barnes’ *England, England*,” Vera Nünning explains the “new” version of “old” England and the mentality of its people, including Martha:

the inhabitants of Anglia discover that it is impossible to re-experience or relive the old times. Though the outward forms and economic conditions resemble those of the past, the villagers do not return to “authentic” pre-industrial attitudes and habits because they have internalised modern values. This is emphasized by the fact that they look for models in the past to establish manners and rituals that would be in keeping with their economic circumstances, thus illustrating Dr Max’ [sic] claim that there is no new beginning. (71)

Berberich claims, “Old England is robbed of its feeling of identity and steadily declines....all knowledge of old rituals and traditions has been lost” (221). Martha herself has difficulty accessing her childhood memories. For instance, when she discovers a dried oak leaf she as a child pressed between the pages of a fair premium booklet, “no memory of joy, success, or simple contentment returned, no flash of sunlight through trees, no house-martin flicking under eaves, no smell of lilac. She had failed her younger self by losing the priorities of youth” (*England* 255-6). She finds herself transformed eventually into an old maid, and when she asks herself, “Could you reinvent innocence? Or was it always constructed, grafted onto the old disbelief?” (276), the reader can understand that she answers her first question in the negative and the second with a resounding “yes.”

While the conclusion of *Daniel Martin* finds the title character in England, linked to residences in both Oxford and Thorncombe--homeland sites critical to Dan’s formative years--Dan, like Martha, still clings to the replica over the real despite claiming the opposite is true. Doing such allows the supposedly reformed Hollywood screenwriter to continue to “play the lead,” and Burden claims, “The return to the original territory of his boyhood memories is a final recognition of his solipsistic inability to reach other minds...” (*John* 54). He still seems mentally bound up in alternate landscapes. While his Hollywood screenwriting days are probably over, he has not lost his affinity for playing out his life like an actor in a scripted role in an environment like Hollywood that allows him to do so. Dan is still writing and living life like a screenplay. When Jenny claims that women are easier to live with ““when we’re just notions in your past”” Dan does not disagree (*Daniel* 619). The two, mildly sparring, fall back into the metaphoric kind of

media language that characterizes their conversations throughout the novel, as they speak of the script, final fade, and rewritten version of the final scene of their relationship (619, 627). Like Nicholas, Dan reverts yet again to inauthentic, unattainable idealization and imagines himself living a literary role, and he compares himself to Lovelace, the seducer in *Clarissa* (622). In the last paragraph, the reader finds the final illustration of Dan's desire to embrace attractive falsehood instead of bare truth: "Dan told her [Jane] with a suitable irony that at least he had found a last sentence for the novel he was never going to write....in the end, and in the knowledge that Dan's novel can never be read, lies eternally in the future, his ill-concealed ghost has made that impossible last his own impossible first" (629). The reader is meant to understand that *Daniel Martin* is that very novel, not eternally in the future but here and now in his or her hands.

Nicholas, too, lives in an English world that is not quite the mother country of his childhood, of his existence prior to Conchis's masque. Right to the conclusion, Nicholas fears that the Greek masque pursues him and overtakes the English landscape; he imagines Conchis and his costumed cronies lurking in Regent's Park, watching his interaction with Alison, and testing the results of his "disintoxication" ritual in the bowels of Bourani. Initially, Nicholas was able to distinguish between the masque and reality, but Conchis quickly teaches him that at Bourani, that is an impossible task. Nothing is as it seems. Despite his disintoxication ordeal and expulsion from Bourani, and from Greece, Nicholas is still in Conchis's shadow. England, then, is not an England apart from Greece, and its mysteries still haunt Nicholas, who fears that Conchis's employees haunt him everywhere. While Nicholas might express longing for a return to his existence prior to knowing Conchis and Lily/Julie, it is impossible to ignore his

immediate past and jump back diachronically to a more innocent time and place. Thus Nicholas flounders in his homeland, not knowing where to go or who to believe. He learns that all reality must be questioned.

In Nicholas, Martha, and Dan's attempted returns to England after self-imposed temporary exiles, and in their shifting attitudes toward the national landscape, Fowles and Barnes, through unconventional "reading between the lines" methods, begin to create ambiguous feminized portrayals of their own and their characters' national landscape of England. Conversely, they refrain from most of the more blatant means of feminizing the national landscape. Just as the national landscape of England is not overtly gendered in any of the five turn-of-the-nineteenth-century novels in the same ways that geographical landscapes are gendered (i.e. via pronoun references, intense emotional reactions, references to female anatomy, and strong identification with female characters), England in *Daniel Martin*, *The Magus*, and *England, England* surprisingly evades all but a few overt gender markers. The reader may wonder why, especially if gender is such a critical issue to comprehending the layers of the texts. Since some overt gender markers of femininity are present, should the reader continue to think of England as a feminine entity? Or since they are few and far between, should the reader give them little notice? I argue that these markers, though few, are critical precisely because they raise such questions about England as a gendered entity. Their scantiness further supports a dually gendered characterization of England. The few overt gender markers must therefore be considered in conjunction with Fowles and Barnes's less obvious but more influential implied references to gender. I suggest that the questions yield no easy answers because

Fowles and Barnes have their protagonists encounter and then literally move beyond such simplistic portrayals of England, just as the reader should.

While feminine grammatical references to national landscapes are virtually nonexistent in *Daniel Martin* and *The Magus* and few and far between in both England and England, England in *England, England*, the few that are present serve to illuminate Pitman's and his entourage's chauvinist attitude in the latter. For instance, consultant Jerry Batson pretends to speak to England and report back his findings to Pitman: "So England comes to me, and what do I say to *her*?" (*England* 38, emphasis added). Similarly, a French intellectual called upon to provide insight to the Project's Coordinating Committee ponders Pitman's plan to recreate "Olde Englande, an expression whose feminine endings are of particular interest to me, but that is another matter" (57-8). Third, Pitman gleefully tells everyone clustered around a map to view the Isle of Wight, the site of his prospective enterprise: "Look at *her*..." (64). Though Pitman speaks only the last of these examples, all three examples of gendered grammar are indications of his general attitude toward the national landscape--a dangerous attitude if the reader perceives England as a feminine entity. Pitman thinks of both England and England, England as manipulable entities. He takes--buys, persuades, cajoles--the "best" of England, fashions it for his own pecuniary gain, and creates his own fully controllable (he thinks) domain, despite the destructive consequences of his actions. Jerry's query prefaces a derogatory remark about England's "tits [that] have dropped" (*England* 38). The foreign intellectual's comment posits the femininity of England as a provocative topic for discussion but also unimportant enough to be placed far below more pressing concerns. Pitman's quote is full of gloating over his latest (feminine) conquest. All three

quotes illustrate the chauvinism of Pitman's Project Co-ordinating Committee in which Martha as "Appointed Cynic" is drawn, and they preface Pitman's announcement of his plan for England, England.

Besides these feminine grammatical references to the national landscape of England in *England, England*, national landscapes in whole and part in all three novels are personified as females, though the personifications are solitary and varied descriptions rather than overt recurring motifs within each text. Again, this scarcity highlights the questions about definitive gender that both Fowles and Barnes raise. Reminiscent of Nicholas in love with Greece-as-a-woman in *The Magus* as discussed above, Dan recalls having an affair with America in 1954, leaving his wife and daughter on the East Coast and traveling to Hollywood for the first time (*Daniel* 159). America takes on the role of a female lover, but Dan writes little more of this characterization. In these two examples, since the narrators leave England for Greece and America, respectively, and describe the foreign landscapes as desirable women, it is easy to presume that they also view England as a woman, albeit a much less attractive one. Earlier, Dan makes clear an alternate but still feminized view of England; he describes his college town as a sexually deviant mother, considering return to "the most English of all cities" to be "Not a city, but an incest" with Mother Oxford (149). He directly feminizes Oxford with negative sexual connotations. And in *England, England*, Jerry heartlessly refers to England as though the country is an old woman. As mentioned above, he addresses her, "Listen, baby, face facts. We're in the third millennium and your tits have dropped. The solution is not a push-up bra" (*England* 38). His answer, of course, is the quintessentially postmodern Island Project. Also, in the end, England-as-Anglia is

personified as a bankrupt parent severing itself from its wayward spendthrift child as it renounces territorial claim to the Isle of Wight (268-9). Thus, Pitman's union with England results in a child. As Pitman is male, the wording suggests that England, again, is a feminine entity. In all of these instances, a character resorts to metaphor or simile to personify England but refrains from using the comparison more than once.

Gendering via personification in the novels does not always demonstrate so strongly that the narrators attribute feminine features to the English national landscape. In *England, England*, the gender of personified England and its counties is implied. Setting forth his plan for England, England, Pitman calls England his client (*England* 38), perhaps suggesting a relationship with it like the metaphorically sexual one between Dan and America or Dan and Oxford. Pitman does "invade" the Isle of Wight and use England as a prototype for his own pleasure. He describes the geographical layout of the Isle of Wight, future home of England, England, as a presumably female entity "snuggling into the soft underbelly of England" (like a newborn with its mother, perhaps, in a maternalized image a gestational step ahead of Haggard's description of Ayesha's womb-like home/tomb in *She*) and adds that it/she is "The little cutie. The little beauty....Pure diamond...A pure diamond. Little jewel. Little cutie" (64). The latter description probably refers to a female entity, based on the word "beauty" as opposed to "handsome"--but not necessarily. In the same novel, Martha as a child considers the counties of England in her jigsaw puzzle in human terms; all or none might be female in her eyes. For instance, Norfolk and Suffolk sit atop one another like siblings or cling to each other like a married couple, Kent points its finger or its nose at foreign countries, Oxfordshire plays spoons with Buckinghamshire and squashes Berkshire, and

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire lie next to each other (5). The reference remains couched in Martha's childish imagination, however, and its implications are not blatantly explored. Once again, Fowles and Barnes tantalize the reader with personifications that hint of gender but refuse to pinpoint it exactly.

These personified references may also be extensions of lack. For example, Pitman has no children, and as noted above, he treats England, England as though it is his child. Martha suffers from her parents' separation; hence her depictions of happily coexisting entities. Pitman and Martha are both essentially orphaned from successful familial relations.

Having suggested a maternal image of England via the protagonists' geographical locations at the beginning and end of each text, via grammar and via personification, Fowles and Barnes appear to gender England in *Daniel Martin*, *England, England*, and *The Magus* in yet another way--via the voices of all three novels' narrators as they describe English mannerisms. Much like the narrative voices in the late-Victorian novels discussed above, they overwhelmingly portray England as an old, civilized, structured, rationality-driven, and therefore masculine, national entity. The reader learns this primarily through the narrators' frequent discussion of English habits and quirks in the central sections of the novels. However, while the late-nineteenth-century discourses focus on Englishness manifested as sophistication and cultural superiority, Dan, Martha, and Nicholas call attention to the negative connotations of English habits and attitudes.

It is helpful to consider again the connection between civilization and masculinity, for Dan, Martha, and Nicholas unconsciously rely on it in their characterization of the English. The historical theoretical division of nature from culture, of femininity from

masculinity, is well documented and once again informs Fowles and Barnes's treatment of gender in regard to the national landscape. In *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space*, Stacy Alaimo considers that nature and culture used to be mirror images of each other (10). A mirror image by definition is an image duplicated in reverse, so Alaimo's interpretation of the relationship between nature and culture helpfully suggests that though the two are inseparably linked, one is always "backwards." Unfortunately, in the case of nature, "backwards" too often refers not only to a mirror reflection but also to a derogatory sense of "backwards" as less advanced. Steven Adams and Anna Gruetzer Robins, writing in 2001 about gendering landscape art, point out that "Until comparatively recently, Nature was--and in some circles still is--seen as a relatively unproblematic term, a 'rude', edenic state, unencumbered by the trappings of culture" (3). Again, nature and culture define each other by their differences. In early western culture and beyond, Nature was persistently feminized and culture associated with masculinity. If the hallmark of England is its Englishness, i.e. culture, then the proverbial stage is set for the protagonists' gendering of England as a masculine entity.

Daniel Martin contains perhaps the most obvious examples of masculine gendering via spotlighting cultural concerns. Fowles refers to *Daniel Martin* as a "long essay on Englishness," on "what it is to be English" (Olshen 118). Fowles's narrators in *Daniel Martin*--usually Dan, often an unnamed narrator, and occasionally Jenny--also portray England as a civilized, structured, masculine national entity. England provides Dan with a powerful sense of national heritage. Regardless of his love for his homeland, however, Dan constantly draws attention to what he finds unsavory about his own countrymen and women as a result of its reputation. (Foster claims that Fowles, too, "is

not terribly enthusiastic about social England in any class...” [28]). All of England is distilled in a notable moment at Oxford, the hitherto incestuous microcosm of England and a city that seems hundreds of years older than Hollywood. Looking out at Oxford’s roofs, Dan “felt psychologically stifled...and privileged, unhardened by the realities of the world outside. That also stood for the whole of England” (*Daniel* 176-7). For Dan, ingrained stubborn English pride funnels itself into unattractive qualities he finds within himself and all around him at home.

The primary English characteristic that seems to annoy Dan but pervades his own self at stressful times can be variously described as standoffishness, chosen isolation, and reservation. Gregory J. Rubinson refers to it as the “stereotype of extreme British propriety” (8). Conradi writes, “The English self in inhospitable ages (like the present) goes into hiding, and the English are expert practitioners of privacy, concealment and duplicity” (86-7). On Dan’s and Jane’s trek across Egypt, a fellow traveler, the Herr Professor, tells a joke that exemplifies the English’s tendency toward extreme politeness in social situations:

An Englishman in French Africa goes swimming towards a place where there are crocodiles. A native on the bank who speaks English cries to him. “Turn back! Danger! Turn back at once!” The Englishman hears, he looks round, the black man cries again. But the Englishman takes no notice at all. He goes on swimming. And he is killed. The French authorities hold an inquiry--no one can understand why the victim ignored the warning. But another Englishman stands up to explain. The warning had been given in incorrect language, it would not have been understood.

Ah. Then would monsieur please tell the court the correct call, in case such an unhappy event occurred again? The Englishman thinks, considers very deeply, then he says, “Would you mind awfully turning back, sir, please?” (*Daniel* 523)

The politeness that the crocodile victim possesses is akin to selective evasion in social situations, and Dan repeatedly refers to it in various manifestations. For example, the English, according to Dan, engage in the time-honored game of hiding inside and judging the outside or they retreat into the mundane to escape the topics of conversation that are most important (260, 211). He says they put on polite faces when forced to face company (497). Their conversation is littered with “conditioned evasions and half-finished sentences, its permanent poised flight to the inarticulate” and with “undisclosed memories, undisclosed real feelings” (155, 331). When Dan’s daughter Caro compares English attempts at conversation to words spoken in code (214), she describes much of middle-aged Dan’s own dialogue, as well as that of his British acquaintances, who speak in tentative quasi-riddles. This problem that thwarts open communication plagues Dan’s relationships, initially with Jane and then with Jenny.

Dan’s actress girlfriend Jenny feels differently about the English qualities that Dan finds distasteful. Early in the novel, she longs for England and its inhabitants who while away hours “that drift and conversation that hops about and has silences, with nobody really believing one another or expecting to be believed, because it’s all a game” (37). This, of course, describes her own method of speaking and relating everything, even her own life, to the glitzy entertainment industry. She recognizes her own Englishness in her evasiveness with co-star Steve in “A Third Contribution,” the story of

their imaginary (or so she claims) romantic liaison; her responses to his questions are vague and noncommittal. They are falsehood and farce.

Fowles writes at length of this English aversion to public expression in his essay “On Being English but Not British.” He terms it being “withdrawal-adept” and equates it with being English. He explains it in this fashion, including himself in the group of people he disparagingly describes:

Nothing is nicer, to us, than not saying what we really think. We play this stranger-baiting game in several ways. We advance opinions we do not believe in. We deny those that we really support. We listen in silence when begged for opinion. We are noncommittal when goaded. We make deliberately obscure, oblique remarks (our “genius” for compromise). And all the time we watch our interlocuters getting hopelessly lost in the trees, as they stumble after echoes, shoot at shadows, and nine times out of ten end up with yet another sharp attack of anglophobia. (*Wormholes* 35-6)

The implications of this for postmodern novelists and narrative are huge, for the quote indicates that the English writer delights in avoiding saying exactly what he or she means--which is exactly what I argue Fowles and Barnes do with gender issues. They make the reader into a “hopelessly lost” textual interrogator; they turn the reader-as-explorer loose in a foreign landscape without a map or a compass. They confuse with insinuations. They lead the reader on with gender markers. While the postmodern reader outside the text can delight in this challenge of discovery, the quality of being “withdrawal-adept” inside the text is often interpreted quite differently by the characters.

For them, it means snobbery; hence the protagonists' fits of "anglophobia" and its inclusion in Pitman's list of English quintessences, before his skillful expurgation.

Dan tries to escape the "anglophobic" paranoid aspect of his national heritage and be more "American" and more like Jane's husband Anthony Mallory, an Oxford philosophy professor who is one of the very few people in Dan's life who has the "curiously un-English habit of looking you in the face when he talked to you" (*Daniel* 68). Near the beginning of the novel in the temporal present, cancer-ridden Anthony urges Dan's overseas flight to his bedside to reveal, without anger but with simple emotional openness, that he knows that Jane, while engaged to Anthony, slept with Dan while Dan was linked to Jane's sister Nell and all four were Oxford undergraduates--a painfully stark fact that Dan somehow avoids throughout his life while still remaining friends with Anthony. On his deathbed, Anthony is unafraid to speak directly to his friend about the romantic entanglements of the past, and he urges Dan to rehabilitate his former friendship with Jane. Perhaps mirroring Anthony's example, Dan then tries to avoid getting caught in "that dreadful English middle-class trap of never showing or saying what you really feel" (125) by traveling abroad and by "writing" *Daniel Martin*.

Resisting the tendency to hide behind a tough outer veneer is a struggle for Dan in America because Dan's career in Hollywood nurtures his desire to "act" in all areas of his life. Dan's screenwriting allows him to wear an emotional mask. Worse, Dan cannot seem to divorce himself from his history in England or his current situation in Hollywood, so he is destined to straddle the line between his true nationality and his American affiliations. Worst of all, his obvious affinity to two countries draws cynical starlet Jenny's attention. She notes his more-American-than-British haircut and, over

time, increasingly notices the way he is unable to sever his national connections. She compares his relationship with England while in America to a divorce, calling Dan “Homeless, permanently mid-Atlantic--and in spite of the way he clung to his Englishness in accent and idiom, the kind of parenthesis he always let you see round his Americanisms...” (*Daniel* 32-3). A divorce marks a separation of two parties but also their former link; the connection, though severed, leaves indissoluble memories. Dan’s relationship to England becomes gendered in this way, as Jenny’s comparison implies that England is female. He recognizes that his introverted Englishman half is at war with his practical American half (131). Dan himself is torn between his national affinities. When he succumbs to the part of him that he deems is American, he must suppress the part of him that is English (71). The opposing parts of his personality war within him. He enjoys his first visit to Hollywood precisely because he likes California’s “total non-Englishness and the endless facilities it offered me for suppressing that side of my nature” (159). If Dan must constantly struggle between revealing his Englishness and keeping it hidden, his emotional exhaustion and confusion--his sense of being lost no matter where he is--are equally understandable.

Likewise, Nicholas battles between his opposing ideas of Englishness and his wistful attempted identification with another country, in his case, Greece. To Nicholas, Englishness does indicate a sense of morality; he admits he is English and therefore puritan (*Magus* 165). In this instance, he means this as a positive trait, though his womanizing and treatment of Alison, Lily/Julie, and Rose/June reveal a skewed sense of moral responsibility. He also identifies Englishness with a sense of class and sophistication. To be English is to be “born with masks and bred to lie” which is

evidence of “emotional depths and subtleties of the English attitude to life” (372). Initially, Alison finds Nicholas “very English, very fascinating” (33); does she intend the two to be synonyms? Lily/Julie, too, claims to be excited by his nationality and teases him about being her English shepherd (366). Except for these few attractive qualities which appeal to romantic interests in his life, however, Nicholas does not view his Englishness in a positive way. From the opening paragraph of the novel, he reveals his disdain for his ancestry and its inevitable result: family hypocrisy, wasted time, and discontent. He writes that his English parents were born “in the grotesquely elongated shadow...of that monstrous dwarf Queen Victoria” (*Magus* 15), a figure long identified with England and the kind of Englishness young Nicholas abhors. Under their control, he also falls in that shadow of Victorian strictures. Putting up with his hypocritical and hot-tempered brigadier father and undergoing necessary stints in public school, national service, and Oxford leave him with one realization: “I was not the person I wanted to be” (15). When he sees Conchis’s elaborate yacht up close, he recognizes his inheritance: British characteristics of envy and contempt (354)--though he fails to recognize these qualities played out in his relationships with Lily/Julie and Alison. Further, he hates his “pale London hands. Even they seemed changed, nauseatingly alien, things I should long ago have disowned” (49). He feels he is a slave to English convention and struggles to overcome it (247). Though he teaches and, for much of the novel, resides in Greece, he remains a tourist, always on the outskirts. For example, when he questions the inhabitants of a group of cottages at Agia Varvara, the bay east of Bourani, about Conchis and his domain, they in turn question him about London and England instead of satisfactorily answering his queries (163). They even regard the reclusive Conchis, a man

who has supposedly lived nearby them for years, as a foreigner. One could argue that Conchis and Nicholas are both foreigners attempting to be Greek, but neither is entirely successful due to his national heritage.

Alison and Conchis, two narrative figures that by turns please and infuriate Nicholas by inciting the mutual love and hatred in him that he feels for Greece, also straddle lines of nationality that confuse the reader's attempts at definitive national gendering--and like Nicholas, neither does it entirely consistently or contentedly. As Nicholas notes on first meeting her, Alison possesses two voices, one Australian and the other English (*Magus* 23). She lives in Australia but has an English-born mother (33). As an air stewardess, Alison epitomizes outward success negotiating with various country affiliations. Yet she expresses a feeling of not belonging anywhere. While Nicholas essentially chooses to be homeless or at the very least to adopt a frustrated air of homelessness, Alison also admits ties to no place in particular. When she visits Nicholas and they descend Parnassus, she laments her sense of dual, and therefore no, citizenship: "England's impossible, it becomes more *honi soit qui* smelly pants every day, it's a graveyard. And Australia...Australia. God, how I hate my country. The meanest stupidest blindest..." (267). Also, as an air stewardess, she continually travels from place to place, helping many others explore and then return home while confusing her own body-clock and necessitating recurrent homelessness as loosely defined. Conchis also negotiates with dual nationalities. As a blend of cultures and national heritages, Conchis contentedly refers to himself as European, though he claims he is proud of his Greek, Italian, English, and Celtic blood (*Magus* 116). Conchis speaks with admiration of his Greek mother and English father, as well as his naturalized Englishman grandfather and

his own formative years spent in England (81, 116, 112). He also claims that his first love, Lily Montgomery, was English (98), and he appears to worship her memory (or, when Nicholas first arrives at Bourani, her manifestation in the form of Lily/Julie). At a young age, Conchis recognizes Englishness as a virtue. Further, he defines Englishness as purity, a gift to offer one's lover (116). When he volunteers to serve as a soldier in World War I, he believes he overcomes his Greek half, his "miserable Greek blood," and is "fully English at last" (118). Later in life, however, Conchis's attitude changes.

According to Lily/Julie he expresses sarcasm about the English school system (331). As a magus who defines himself by his ability to teach, Conchis is making more than an off-hand comment; he is articulating a central problem with Englishness. Conchis must also reject his Englishness as he strives to become Greek, to a large extent. He continues to negotiate between his Greekness and his Englishness, just as he forces Nicholas to negotiate between the world of the masque and the world of reality external to Bourani.

The communicative and self-identity issues that Englishness raises for Dan and Nicholas are counterpart to another inherited "English" habit that is the result of the rise of England's civilization and rigidly structured social codes. Dan identifies this as the self-proclaimed need for conflict. He recalls that as a child, he is taught that sportsmanship is akin to godliness (27), and even during his college years, "Britain was still deep in a dream of siege" (52). As an adult, he laments the English's rules, the result of ancient military conflict, that manifest themselves in eternal competition and blindness to the present in light of the past. Further, he abhors the English's myriad of excuses and their contentment with discontent which Jenny, as one would expect her to do, calls such dissatisfaction the "awful English attachment to defeat and loss and self-negation" (234).

Although large-scale military conflict is over and Dan lives in a historical period of peace, he perceives England's collective mindset as constantly eager for controversy. Even in the novel's present, Dan claims "the English turn all outward freedom...into a game with set rules..." (79), much like the absurd military rules manifested in wartime. What Fowles defines as Britishness in "On Being English but Not British" is in part the lust for competition that Dan describes over and over, as well as the social rigidity that works hand in hand with it.

Dan is not the only postmodern protagonist to dwell on England's masculine cultural heritage as manifested in controversy and power struggles. In *England, England*, Pitman thrives on economic competition and clings to a similar historical view of Old England as a civilized and structured national entity. Rather than it discouraging him, though, it brings him joy because it enables him to pursue his dream of England, England. When Pitman asks Martha during her interview if England's purpose is "to act as an emblem of decline, a moral and economic scarecrow," Martha interprets Pitman's beliefs about England to be the exact opposite; she answers, "I'd say it doesn't sound much like you" (*England* 49). And she would be correct. Despite his disdain for what England becomes, Pitman still recognizes that English lust for struggle and advancement allows him to bring his dream to life, and it will attract tourists. England, England is England in microcosm, only selectively condensed and "purified," and the inspiration for his new endeavor lies in the old reality.

Martha's vision of England is much less positive than Pitman's grudgingly grateful one, but she still believes in England as a bastion of civilization, as opposed to a wild, primitive national "other" that Old England, as Anglia, eventually resembles.

Questioned by Pitman about ““this great nation of ours,”” Martha answers sarcastically about the ““undefeated”” and ““proud”” British people, ““with notable victories in the American Revolutionary War and the Afghan Wars”” (*England* 47)--both military failures for Britain. Her attitude echoes Nicholas’s and Dan’s, and it highlights the country’s prowess as an earlier great military power and its inability to relinquish those memories.

Dan’s, Nicholas’s, Pitman’s, and Martha’s conflicted attitudes toward English identity shed light on a closely related gendered term related to nationality: patriotism. In *England, England*, to uphold England (at its best and worst) as the cultural ideal, the best of which is appropriated into Pitman’s new empire, is to extol patriotism, albeit by various definitions and generally an inherited attitude rather than a chosen one. Jerry’s declaration, ““I’m a patriot, and I bow to none in admiration of this great country of ours, I love the place to bits”” (*England* 38) does not cloud his vision for a “better,” enhanced version of England. The narrator reports that Jerry’s brand of patriotism is both critical and full of praise, with firm belief in England’s rich heritage and potential future. Pitman’s version of patriotism is more pecuniary and practical, and he is critical of Jerry’s definition. He defies the traditional English quality of keeping reality and illusion separate from each other, as Martha defines it (114). Pitman uses his national enthusiasm for his own financial gain. He is also a complete patriot; the narrator notes that even his entire woodland ensemble, from deerstalker to gaiters to boots, is made in England--unlike his French intellectual consultant with an English jacket, American shirt, Italian tie, international trousers, and French loafers (43, 54). In contrast, Pitman lives and breathes England and attributes his sense of patriotism, logically, to his literal

geographical position (62). Pitman's patriotism becomes not Englishness but English, Englishness.

Martha's patriotism is less clearly defined or even understood by herself, perhaps because it is tied up in her bittersweet familial memories, her souring relationship with "Ideas Catcher" and lover Paul, and her overnight transitions from "Appointed Cynic" to CEO to unemployed Anglian. What is clear is that Martha does not idealize England or England, England. She sees the inescapable flaws in both. While the narrator indicates that Old England declines into "inefficiency, poverty, and sin; depression and envy..." (*England* 207) after the advent of Pitman's-turned-Martha's Project, Martha's mildly irreverent and damaged perception of England is more redeeming than the Island's "bright and modern patriotism...based on...magic" (207). For Martha, no matter how successful as CEO, admits she does not believe in Pitman's dream (197). She sees more clearly than he, though even her vision leaves her (and the reader) with questions about her patriotism.

The terms "patriotism" and "patriot" themselves, with their roots in the male "patria," are problematically gendered like "mother country" when considered from a postmodern perspective. They imply a masculinized national landscape. Perhaps Conchis would applaud Martha's skeptical and adaptive attitude, for he describes patriotism as one of a series of cogged dice (*Magus* 126). He therefore implies that one's connection to the national landscape can blind one to the nation's problems. True patriotism, in his eyes, has an inevitable outcome of willing submission to a nation's moral causes. Similarly, in *Daniel Martin*, Dan defines Britishness as "obsession with patriotism, duty, national destiny, the sacrifice of all personal temperament and

inclination...to an external system, a quasi-mythical purpose..." (422). It is a disease, a delusion, an urge to empire. Observing his nation's development as a whole, he decries the "bad mess of the transition from nation of brain-washed patriots to population of in-turned selves" (157).

In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Arjun Appadurai draws the reader's attention to a further problem with postmodern definitions of patriotism. He writes, "Patriotism is an unstable sentiment, which thrives only at the level of the nation-state. Below that level it is easily supplanted by more intimate loyalties; above that level it gives way to empty slogans rarely backed by the will to sacrifice or kill" (160). Again, true patriotism in these three novels is largely lip-service, and Fowles and Barnes's narrators' gendering of the national landscape is inextricable from the protagonists' other related motives. Beyond its connotations, the term "patriotism" has a denotation that is linguistically troubling as well. Its usage and history greatly dwarfs Frances Payne Adler's obscure feminized term "matriotism," coined during the Desert Storm conflict. No matter the country or the citizen's view of it as a gendered entity, the citizen's devotion to, loyalty to, and love for the country is couched in a masculine term. The first use of "patriot" was over four-hundred years ago; "matriot," surprisingly just seventeen years ago in the wake of postmodern experimentation.

Ultimately, taking the "patriotic" protagonists' literal journeys and attitudes into account, England can, and should, I argue, be read as both a masculine and feminine national landscape. Despite its role as "mother country" with each novel's protagonist beginning and ending his or her journey within its boundaries, its people's attitudes

toward Englishness imply that the “mother country” is actually better understood as a masculine landscape. Both Fowles and Barnes bolster this suggestion with comparisons between England and variously feminized “other” landscapes that serve as temporary new homelands for the protagonists. On differing levels, each of Fowles and Barnes’s narrators contrasts the dually gendered English national landscape with various European and American landscapes. As in *She*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Green Mansions*, the authors mark blatant differences between civilized, structured England and primitive, wild foreign places. Noakes and Reynolds write, “If there is one thing that holds all Fowles’s novels and ideas together it is that ‘motherland’. A home, a lost *domaine*, a place from which one is exiled, a scene of origin to which one can never return” (10). The foreign landscapes become, ironically, a different sort of feminized “mother country.”

In *Daniel Martin*, rigid, civilized England is compared several times with “other” national landscapes such as Germany and Italy. As early as the first chapter, and during one of Dan’s most formative experiences, a German bomber flies overhead as young Dan stooks wheat with other workers. Dan believes he is about to be killed (*Daniel* 7). The sound of the two-engine Heinkel warplane shatters the natural quiet of the field and the peace of England as Dan understands it at that age. Italy is described in more positive terms than this early image of Germany but also contrasts sharply with England. When Dan vacations there with Anthony, Nell, and Jane, he adores the heat, delightfully “vulgar” Rome, and lack of structure he experiences, moving leisurely from picnic to siesta to sightseeing spot to the beach at Tarquinia (108-9). He enjoys none of these hedonistic pursuits in England.

Dan also compares civilized, masculinized England with the Egyptian national landscape. Egypt seems especially foreign and feminine to him: unpredictable, erotic, gritty, and primitive. As such, it is reminiscent of Dan's vacation in Italy. Dan is by turn disgusted by its architectural extremes and enchanted by its ancient seductive charms. He falls in love with the Nile's landscapes. Earlier, landing in Cairo with Jane, Dan notes the bustling city's chaos as he senses "the immediate plunge into a non-European world, and at first sight one principally indifferent to chaos and dirt" (*Daniel* 458). He compares the airport to a disturbed beehive with a primeval mob (458). In contrast, the majestic Luxor with its sprinkling of ancient temples' ruins is exotic, its "brilliant azure sky, the mimosas and acacias and poinsettias in flower, the drifting feluccas, the shimmering water tinged a pinkish ocher by the reflections of the cliffs of the Theban necropolis to the east..." like a dream while the next tourist destination, the Temple of Karnak, is an example of "grandiose and bloated vulgarity..." and the plain of Palmyra is desolate and deserted (475-6, 606). Conradi calls the latter "a place of ultimate nihilism..." (197), the opposite of a lifegiving place like that of England at the beginning and end of Dan's narrated life (and novel). It certainly is unpredictable in its array of geographical landscapes and is therefore the antithesis of Dan's residence on English soil.

Due to Dan's frequent stays in Hollywood, wild, spontaneous America is also feminized and contrasted with the rigidity of England. Even at Oxford, America colors Dan's definition of his nationality. As a giant American bomber flies over the body of the deceased woman in the reeds, Dan wonders if it carries the woman's murderer (*Daniel* 27); he suspects that a foreigner, not one of England's own civilized countrymen, murdered the unknown lady. Barney compares Americans not to unsophisticated killers

but rather to children; “They just never seem to grow up,” he complains to Dan, who partly agrees (101). Both Dan and Barney, in vastly different ways, contrast cultured English ways with primitive American ones.

Fowles’s narrator, too, contrasts England with feminized landscapes. Fowles centers *The Magus* on the differences between the blatantly feminized Greek national landscape and England as seen from Nicholas’s perspective. Nicholas, in his disdain for England, sees Greece through proverbial rose-colored glasses. He refers to Greece as a woman with whom he deceives his left-behind lover Alison (*Magus* 39). The country is “a woman so sensually provocative that I must fall physically and desperately in love with her, and at the same time so calmly aristocratic that I should never be able to approach her” (49). As discussed above, Nicholas similarly feminizes both the island of Phraxos and Conchis’s estate Bourani, and his attitude toward them as well as Greece mirrors his infatuation with the unattainable Lily/Julie.

England also contrasts sharply with America and Germany in *The Magus*. If England is morally strait-laced and fair in competition, America is not, Nicholas suggests. When an American airplane flies over the cape of Bourani and close to the sunbathing twins, Rose/June is indignant at the pilot’s apparently salacious intentions (*Magus* 350). When the airplane’s true political purpose is revealed, the bathing party’s opinions change but not for the better. Nicholas unflatteringly--and ironically, considering his own general womanizing, even to the point of imagining “having” both Lily/Julie and Rose/June at the same time--describes the fighter plane and its fellows, a carrier, cruiser, and four destroyers, as “[d]eath machines holding thousands of gum-chewing, contraceptive-carrying men...” (353). Germany, too, is dealt with harshly, though it is

Germany of the historical past and Conchis's supposed personal past. According to Conchis's final autobiographical story, S.S. colonel Dietrich Wimmel is the epitome of evil, commanding unspeakable tortures of those captured in war. These characterizations of non-English landscapes, while making America and Germany seem similar to England in their focus on competition, actually carry out that competition unfairly--something the English would never do if the reader believes Dan's account of English characteristics; the twins are powerless against the voyeuristic soldiers and Conchis's helpless victims are bound and subjected to burning and mutilation.

While *The Magus* and *Daniel Martin* overtly contrast a vision of England as a masculine national landscape with other vastly different landscapes, largely by depicting their protagonists globe-trotting, *England, England* does not. The characters confine themselves to England and England, England. None venture to other "primitive," wild lands. There is no definitive "other" against which England (or England, England) is compared. Suggestions of a feminized national landscape remain merely that-- suggestions--as Barnes resists from assigning specific gender labels to his national landscapes. For instance, Pitman's project team considers the Island's role for vacationing tourists seeking sex. England, England's ability to attract these visitors is a critical piece of their marketing strategy. When challenged to brainstorm connections between the nation and sex, Martha comes up with Oscar Wilde, the Virgin Queen, Lloyd George Knew My Father, and Lady Godiva--which Dr. Max and Mark summarily dismiss as an Irishman, a virgin, a Welshman, and a stripper (*England* 96). Their short list's shortcomings support a vision of England as repressed and living in the shadow of Queen Victoria, as Nicholas calls it in the first part of his lengthy narrative. England, England is

therefore associated with sensuality and femininity simply by virtue of its contrast with England.

All versions of England, then, across the three novels are characterized by their narrating inhabitants as complexly gendered national spaces which result in the protagonists' love/hate relationship with their homeland as well as their self-proclaimed temporary exiles. These dually gendered landscapes result in the characters' confusion. One might argue that the postmodern alternative to such a bewildering, gender-bending national landscape is Pitman's brainchild--a new national landscape, carefully constructed to meet his dreams and the desires of the postmodern public. Pitman strives to isolate and perpetuate what Berberich terms the idealized notion of England as a "green and pleasant land," a notion that she argues persists even today (213). The space can be formed precisely with only desirable qualities--masculine or feminine characteristics, or a provocative mix of both--that the general public associates with England. It culls from reality to produce a more attractive vision of reality in the form of a distinctly postmodern landscape--a "merged" place. A "merged" place is one in which a human principle character enters a "natural" place in the novel's present time, intentionally endeavoring to change that place solely for human gain. Often, this alteration involves destroying the natural landscape--something neither the character nor the narrator recognizes or admits, in many cases.

In the turn-of-the-twentieth-century British novels *After London; or, Wild England*, *She*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Green Mansions: A Romance of the Tropical Forest*, and *The Secret Garden*, there are no discernible merged places and only one nearly merged place, that of post-apocalyptic London in *After London*. The majority of

England, England, by contrast to the earlier novels, takes place in the ultimate merged place: England, England. In *England, England*, Pitman brushes away negative thoughts about his “Island Project” plan’s inevitable destruction of nature and alteration of the Isle of Wight’s population and culture, and he instructs his planning committee to do the same. For instance, when Mark infers that the population of red squirrels on the Isle of Wight will be wiped out by Pitman’s construction, Pitman is unconcerned and presumes that everyone will likewise agree (*England* 76). Pitman’s rallying cry becomes “Fuck the puffins!” because the island’s celebrated natural colony also will be uprooted by Pitman’s bulldozers; it becomes the watchword for his renovation that necessitates altering the natural world. Dr. Max, one of Pitman’s confidantes, tries to ground Pitman and delicately show him the error of his ways, but the author of *Nature Notes* is almost fired more than once for what Pitman deems his eventual irrelevance to the Project.

Pitman’s destructiveness in creating England, England does not stop with the eradication of unwanted species. He also destroys the established social order on the Isle of Wight. When Jeff protests that it will be difficult to populate the island as needed (with peasants, actors and actresses playing the roles of famous English citizens, etc.), and that the island is already inhabited, Pitman retorts, ““it is not full of inhabitants. What it is full of is grateful future employees”” (65). Sadly, what Pitman says is partly true, and in his merged place, even his committee has to agree.

As a postmodern merged place, Pitman’s England, England is formed by attention to the division between real and replica. Pitman claims that after a time, ““the real thing becomes the replica”” (*England* 63). Ironically, Pitman himself becomes a replica. After he dies, three successive “Sir Jack” figures replace him as figurehead of the Island

Project as a new quasi-nation. The authentic Pitman gleans selectively from the list of results from a survey given to prospective England, England vacationers (“potential purchasers of Quality Leisure in twenty-five countries” [86]) which asks them to list quintessences of England. In promoting the resultant Project, its employees laud its artificiality, its constructed nature, which assures its visitors of its convenience by squashing England’s tourist highlights into one-hundred-and-fifty square miles. Once the visitors are on the Island of Wight, however, they experience Pitman’s attempts to make the artificial, from the royal family to buildings to historical events, seem as real as possible. Incognito *Wall Street Journal* reporter Kathleen Su explains:

In our time-strapped age, surely it makes sense to be able to visit Stonehenge and Anne Hathaway’s Cottage in the same morning, take in a “ploughman’s lunch” atop the White Cliffs of Dover, before passing a leisurely afternoon at the Harrods emporium inside the Tower of London (Beefeaters push your shopping trolley for you!). (183)

Other easily accessible highlights include Great Scenes from English History, a half-size Big Ben, Shakespeare and Princess Diana’s graves, the Battle of Britain, Dr. Johnson’s Dining Experience at The Cheshire Cheese, the National Gallery, Stonehenge, and Jane Austen’s house, among a myriad of other redone, remade, reenacted aspects of England (145-6). In fact, a helicopter tour of the Island is akin to a “fast-forward version of England,” jetting the vacationer from Big Ben to Anne Hathaway’s Cottage to Wembley Stadium to Sherwood Forest in a matter of minutes (168). Thus, Pitman’s replicated version of England is far more pleasing to the eye, tailored, and convenient (though far less authentic) than the original.

The Island Breakfast Experience is the epitome of Pitman's vision of a perfect ahistorical English replica to please wealthy vacationers--and would especially please female visitors due to its original "heroine" whom they are allowed to "replicate" themselves. According to superstition, a nineteenth-century woman with a basket of eggs was walking to market when wind from a sudden storm lifted her and her umbrella over a cliff and safely down onto the beach. The only damage was a few cracked eggs. To recreate the Heavens-to-Betsey Bunjee Experience-become-the Island Breakfast Experience (a change in title that erases gender connotations), as the committee terms the re-creation, Pitman employs a camouflaged cable, a free-range hen facility, airlifted eggs, and a clip-on Betsy Basket (126). The unreal experience satisfies, in Pitman's own vehement words to Martha, exactly what England, England's tourists want: "We want our Visitors to feel that they have passed through a mirror, that they have left their own worlds and entered a new one, different yet strangely familiar, where things are not done as in other parts of the inhabited planet, but as if in a rare dream" (*England* 123). No matter that the experience is a farce, much less that the legend cannot be true. The Island Breakfast Experience is a magical recreation of a mythical event--a dream become reality resembling a dream.

As the literalization of Pitman's dream, England, England is so attractive because it so effectively matches the contemporary person's acceptance of, even desire for, replicas--at least on the surface. It is, as reporter Su and the England, England billboards claim, "everything you imagined England to be, but more convenient, cleaner, friendlier, and more efficient" (*England* 188). The French intellectual (clearly modeled after postmodern gadfly Jean Baudrillard) claims that members of the modern world actually

prefer replicas like England, England because they thrill and excite us without endangering us in the way originals do: “We must demand the replica, since the reality, the truth, the authenticity of the replica is the one we can possess, colonize, reorder, find jouissance in, and, finally, if and when we decide, it is the reality which, since it is our destiny, we may meet, confront, and destroy” (57). Originals frighten us; replicas empower us and prove our creativity and ingenuity. Dr. Max agrees, helpfully describing reality as a rabbit. The public’s desire is for a pet bunny, not an unpredictable, biting, defecating wild creature (136). And Pitman’s goal for the Island Project is a merged place entirely controlled, entirely sanitized, entirely fabricated, entirely tailored to its visitors’ gendered expectations--entirely postmodern.

In conclusion, the implications of an admittedly complicated picture of the English national landscape, suggestively gendered by the oft-confused protagonists of *Daniel Martin*, *The Magus*, and *England, England* who change their minds as they shed their immature idealizing tendencies and grow to embrace England by literal return if not psychological return as well, are decidedly postmodern. While both Victorians and postmoderns feminize the national landscape as a maternal safe haven and masculinize it by contrasting it with foreign landscapes, the protagonists’ motivations for exploring are dissimilar and manifest themselves differently in the protagonists’ attitudes toward England. England as a steadfast symbol of cultural superiority and safety in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century novels gives way to protagonists’ frustration with English reservation. Victorian exploration in search of new knowledge of London’s fate, Ayesha’s dwelling place, Kurtz’s identity, Rima’s beauty, and the key to Misselthwaite Manor’s garden are replaced by Dan’s, Nicholas’s, and Martha’s mutual need to escape

the past, to escape the old. The “search for” becomes the “exit from.” While the idea of Englishness remains problematic from a century ago, the fictional means of grappling with questions about nationality has changed.

As the reader will discover, by looking at the postmodern texts as landscapes, Fowles and Barnes resist simple universalizing male/female binaries and masculine/feminine divisions. England, if described authentically in a postmodern world, therefore must fill multiple gendered roles because gender is a shifting, evasive category. It must also fill societal expectations. In *Letters from London*, Barnes provides a practical example: for an English stamp designed fifteen years ago, for which stamp artist Barry Craddock’s wife Karin posed, Mike Denny of the Roundel Design Group critiqued his design by saying, “Britannia must look powerful and imperial, but she also has to be feminine” (163). The public expected no less than a dually-gendered figure to represent their nation. In their novels, Fowles and Barnes present no less to the critical reader today. If the postmodern agenda includes emphasizing the fluidity of gender, both authors accomplish it in an unexpected way as their characters “narrate” England. The country--what could be mere setting or backdrop to the characters’ exiles--emerges instead as a critical piece of evidence in the contemporary case for a closer look at gender.

CHAPTER 4

POSTMODERN TEXT-AS-LANDSCAPE IN FOWLES AND BARNES

Beyond gendering geographical and national landscapes, Fowles and Barnes suggest both awareness of and skepticism toward rigid gender classifications in their textual landscapes and readers' exploration of those landscapes. They gender the landscapes and the reading process, but deconstruct that idea as they do it. Here I apply the terms "landscape" and "explore" to fictional texts with the terms' linguistic origins and connotative possibilities in mind. Several aspects of landscape, as they are understood especially in the realm of fine arts, are useful: first, that a landscape is a *limited* section of scenery; second, that a landscape is generally seen, chosen, and described from a single point of view; and third, that the term originally referred to use by pioneering sixteenth-century Dutch painters and thus entails geography that is "framed," set apart for pleasure or contemplation. *Mantissa*, *A Maggot*, *Flaubert's Parrot*, and *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* are limited by their authors and placed between literal covers that frame the reader's period of literary discovery. Each novel is only a sliver of a world--and the postmodern novel both acknowledges and celebrates this fact--and is carefully selected and recorded by its author and presented by its focalizer from a myriad of unwritten possibilities. It is similarly chosen by its reader from a multitude of available texts. Further, the reader encounters the novel as a traveler greets a new and unknown land; he or she and the author become "cocreators" (Tarbox 168). He or she leaves the old and familiar, i.e. "reality," and moves through time and space with the characters with a goal in mind. The final goal, however vague, entails discovery which can be a richly rewarding process. Flaubert puts it this way, according

to biographer Geoffrey Braithwaite, the protagonist of *Flaubert's Parrot*: "Amongst those who go to sea there are the navigators who discover new worlds, adding continents to the earth and stars to the heavens: they are the masters, the great, the eternally splendid" (*Flaubert's* 33). While the character traverses the geographical plot of land, the "armchair traveler" does likewise to the plot of a different literary definition. Both understandings of "plot" merge as Fowles and Barnes blur the separation between character and reader, making the reader's role as explorer both plausible and inevitable. If, as Braithwaite relates, "Form isn't an overcoat flung over the flesh of thought...it's the flesh of thought itself" (*Flaubert's* 136), textual landscape is inextricable from its theoretical makeup. Opening one of Fowles's or Barnes's novels is like taking the first step as an explorer into the postmodern textual landscape and opening oneself to the details of both kinds of plot.

As noted above, both Fowles and Barnes's experimentation with landscapes is ultimately about experiencing pleasure in the external environment and in the body. Both writers invite what Freud might call polymorphously perverse readings. From a sensual perspective, exploration parallels feminine narratological reading patterns; the "reader-as-explorer" discovers enjoyment in many parts of the textual body. While Fowles and Barnes's postmodern texts question notions of masculinity and femininity, my analogy between the reader and explorer similarly aims to create a reader who chooses to be theoretically androgynous.

Historically, the reader's ability to recognize a literary plot has not been androgynously shaped but rather has been defined by scholars in terms of the masculine body and embedded by them in heterosexual, patriarchal culture. For example, Peter

Brooks's *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* famously links plot and desire that excludes the female experience, using terms indicative of sexual activity to define plot as "a structuring operation elicited in the reader trying to make sense of those meanings that develop only through textual and temporal succession....We can, then, *conceive* of the reading of plot as a form of *desire* that carries us forward, onward, through the text. Narratives both tell of desire...and *arouse* and make use of desire as dynamic of signification" (37, emphasis added). Brooks's emphasis on structure and temporal succession specify a masculine plot. Also, no matter the reader's biology, Judith Roof notes that "something in the way we understand what a story is in the first place or something in the way narrative itself operates produces narrative's 'heterosexually friendly' shape" (xxxii). Male or female, no matter his or her sexual identity, the reader is socially constructed to intuitively look for and identify a masculine plot. In other words, contemporary readers are conditioned by a history of accepted male plots. Fowles and Barnes challenge this ingrained understanding of literary plot as a masculine process of desire in their textual landscapes.

To write with a questioning twenty-first-century curiosity about gender and call a work of fiction a "textual landscape" is to read that text skeptically beyond a traditional realist or feminist narratological viewpoint and beyond a narratology based on an Oedipal model into what I think of as a fluidly gendered realm, recognizing that gender is far more complex and fluid than a simple universalizing male/female binary or masculine/feminine division. Brooks proposes only one overarching androcentric model. Postmodern feminist narratologists like Susan Winnett propose another, but Winnett urges in "Coming Unstrung: Women, Men, Narrative, and Principles of Pleasure" that

her own feminist and feminine hypothetical narratological model implies the possibility of more than two models (508). Fowles and Barnes offer a third. To read their textual landscapes from this perspective means to be critical of gender, to celebrate reading in drag, as Winnett aptly describes the process (516). It also means to privilege the reader over the author and to temporarily but intuitively reject extratextual reality and accompany the characters--while paradoxically acknowledging that the postmodern text ridicules or at the very least draws attention to its own fictional construction.

If the “blank page [is one] of oblivion” (*Mantissa* 6), the printed page demands awareness and involvement. Fowles and Barnes present their “unwritable non-text[s]” (*Mantissa* 183) as written texts. As the reader encounters the written texts as uncharted landscapes with real perils, and as the reader gets swept up in the stories, Fowles and Barnes cleverly undermine their own presentation of their landscapes. By projecting an authorial voice or jumping into an earlier time period with a modern perspective, they remind the reader that the narrative journey is not “real” and the dangers are fiction. While reading has traditionally been seen as a potentially dangerous act--hence book burning and censorship--the reader knows that the dangers portrayed in fiction issue from the author’s imagination. The dangers are constructs. The characters are also constructs. When Fowles and Barnes have a character vehemently declare, “I am *not* something in a book” (*Mantissa* 59) or characters declare, “it would be juster to say we were like the personages in a tale or novel, that had no knowledge they were such; and thought ourselves most real, not seeing we were made of imperfect words and ideas, and to serve other ends, far different from what we supposed” (*Maggot* 143), the reader is reminded

of the characters' limited textual world. However limited, that world engages because it is "false" and because the reader knows it is false:

Literary landscapes are undoubtedly "just" fictional, and hence unreal spaces but they are also "more real" than the real ones. A tourist guide or a documentary can give us precise and exciting images of foreign countries...while literature offers images of the same where the point is not exactness, but verisimilitude, it is not verification in the world "out there", but the credibility of the fictional world. (Locatelli 52)

Thus, the twenty-first-century reader is an "explorer" in more ways than earlier readers of many earlier novels who were encouraged in most cases, by omission of metatextual "reminders" otherwise, to be fully immersed in the text. He or she is reminded often that the period of discovery is temporary; in earlier conventional novels, the only reminder of the journey's end is the decreasing number of pages to be read.

Unlike the textual landscapes of many turn-of-the-twentieth-century British novels, many of Fowles and Barnes's landscapes belittle, if not overtly reject, humanity's sense of mastery via strict gender categorization which is bolstered by the "traditional" predictable novelistic structure. Here for my purposes of analysis it is necessary to acknowledge Ruth Page's criticism of gendering specific narrative elements and inevitable resultant universalizing of male/female categories (*Literary* 31) but to remain indebted to such categorization in order to show how Fowles and Barnes move *beyond* the categories. Just as postmodernism is shaped by modernism, the very movement from which it attempts to divorce itself but also the movement that gave it life, the authors and I are bound by what we aim to escape--this is a basic assumption of most postmodern

criticism. From a postmodern, genderless narratological perspective, their postmodern novels challenge gender-specific narrative constructions. Via problematic or complex subjectivities and shifting character identities and narrative voices, they confound notions of masculinity and femininity. Most of the postmodern novels seem to either follow male or female narrative patterns as conventionally understood and can be defended as such, but in reality evade both. All entail a quest or quests of some sort and reach some form of conclusion, but all also reject a definitive climax near the end of the story. On the surface, the novels all seem to proceed chronologically, but none really does; the novels actually heavily rely on temporal experimentation. Further, each ends with cleverly-devised hints of closure--enough to leave the reader at least partly satisfied after reading the final page--but, upon closer examination, none has a definitively closed ending. In these ways, Fowles and Barnes subtly poke fun at the “masculine” novel *and* the “feminine” novel, as well as attempts to classify either.

As contemporary writers, Fowles and Barnes are essentially engendering a new fluidly gendered narrative form, breaking free from restricted narrative plot lines. In *Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closure*, Alison Booth writes, “The interaction of current gender ideology and narrative form is complex and dynamic, of course, or novels could not have played the part that they have been playing for several centuries in *changing* the possibilities for gendered plots” (4). Gender ideology at the turn of the twenty-first century and beyond is influenced by new scientific possibilities and greater sensitivity to the nature/nurture divide and the formation of gender “norms.” The lines between “traditional” notions of femaleness and maleness, between femininity and masculinity, are increasingly blurred in a world of successful gender reassignment

surgeries, constantly challenged gender roles, and encouragement of gender experimentation--a world of working mothers, "the Pregnant Man," transgendered models, "Mr. Moms," intersexed individuals, and bisexual reality television stars in search of love. In the construction of their texts, Fowles and Barnes embrace this postmodern society which contains their readership. They express dissent from dominant ideology and androcentric bias in narrative formation. H. Porter Abbott provides a practical illustration from chemistry to explain such narrative innovation, which I apply to Fowles and Barnes: "Codes and formulas thrive on their inflexibility...the formula for methyl alcohol can be depended on so long as it stays the same. Change it ever so slightly and you've got a formula for something else. Were narrative to operate in the same way, we would have nothing but stereotypes and wooden clichés for our literature" (55). Fowles and Barnes actively resist stereotypical male *and* female narrative forms and thus suggest a new vision of literature. Fowles even jokes about rigid plot lines and has writer Miles Green's muse sarcastically inform him, "'I'm sure you'd much rather be having some boring discussion about the parameters of contemporary narrative structure [than seducing me]'" (*Mantissa* 82). If the reader attempts to read any of the novels as an expression of a female plot as a substitute for the traditional male plot of ambition, or as an expression of a male plot as a substitute for a female plot, he or she must neglect critical parts of the narratological picture Fowles and Barnes construct.

I identify gendered plots throughout this chapter, believing that form and story cannot be wholly extricated from one another in a narratological study of gender in Fowles and Barnes. While Page argues, "label[ing] narrative strategies as 'male plots' or 'female plots' is thus misleading, for it conflates the narrative form with the content of

the narrative or its interpretation” (*Literary* 43), I seek to conflate form, content, and the inevitable interpretations that accompany every reading. Entirely ignoring one aspect of the text is to embrace blindness to one part of the textual landscape that could illuminate another. It is to ignore part of the carefully framed portrait painted by the writer.

As mentioned above, subjectivity has a critical role in shaping the textual landscape and the reader’s perception of it. Essentially, the focalizer metaphorically takes the reader by the hand or pushes him or her away, and if the focalizer is the in-text explorer, i.e. the main character, the roles of character and reader become one in the search for knowledge as they move through the geographical landscape. Via point-of-view, the intensity of the textual-extratextual relationship is determined. Further, if the reader rejects the author’s influence on a text and divorces the author from his or her own work, the reader also decides that a character “selects” and describes the narrative (the textual landscape) as that character sees fit. When the subjectivity abruptly shifts, especially from male to female or vice versa, no one gender can be privileged--a further step toward equalizing of narrative voices.

I contest that gender of the reader is an important consideration in the reading experience. For example, if the narrator acts “feminine,” as conventionally defined, immediately the reader forms expectations for that narrator and probably presumes the narrator is female. These expectations issue from a plethora of ideologies that shape the reader but of which the reader may not even be aware. Most would agree that a male reader would experience a novel differently than a female reader would--or more precisely, a masculine reader, male or female, would absorb a text in a different fashion than a feminine reader, male or female, would. Page reminds the reader that he or she

brings gendered assumptions to every text (“Gender” 197). As a woman, my readings are necessarily shaped by the complex interplay of biology, ideology, cultural background, and education. Here I acknowledge these precise categorical “limitations” (in the sense that they lead to only some of countless interpretations, not in any sense that they are inferior) to move into a broader scope of knowledge that critiques various gendered interpretations.

No matter the reader’s gender, the postmodern author, like earlier authors, can undermine gender expectations on multiple levels. For example, if the narrator or the character about which he or she speaks does indeed engage in “feminine” activities or mention feminine traits, biologically or socially prescribed, the narrator can undercut the reader’s aforementioned expectations by eventually declaring that narrator or character male. Or the author might create a character with unstable gender, as Virginia Woolf does in *Orlando* and Angela Carter does in *The Passion of New Eve*. Characters can be transvestite, hermaphroditic, or androgynous. Their gender may remain indeterminate. They may also be confused themselves about their own identity, as Calliope/Cal Stephanides is, for example, in Jeffrey Eugenides’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Middlesex*; Calliope has an extended clitoris and undescended testes, so her chromosomal maleness remains undiscovered until she/he reaches adolescence. A reader might also have certain gendered expectations of a text merely by glancing at the author’s name on the title page --reader expectations that the author can toy with by using a pseudonym indicative of the opposite of the author’s gender or by remaining anonymous and leaving the author’s gender open to reader speculation.

Both men and women read Fowles and Barnes, but the authors thwart the gender expectations of all types of readers via postmodern subjectivities. No longer does the reader metaphorically accompany a static “conventional” male narrator (with an occasional second narrator who governs a prologue and epilogue). No longer can the reader open a novel, identify a lone speaker, form firm expectations of him or her, and proceed through the novel. Gender expectations are continually upset as characters’ personalities shift, blend with each other, and multiply unpredictably, in some cases alternating between male and female. Fowles and Barnes also present layers of points-of-view that the reader must unwrap, much like the reader unwraps the layers of clues and landscapes in Haggard’s *She*, from the contents of Vincey’s chest to the nested caves leading to the center of the earth to Ayesha herself in multiple veils.

In *Flaubert’s Parrot*, Braithwaite appears to be the lone, dominant speaker, but that distinction dissolves as the reader learns more and more about nineteenth-century French writer Gustave Flaubert. Both his and Flaubert’s identities morph into complexity. Braithwaite strives to write a biography of Flaubert and relates Flaubert’s various contradictory roles, “playthings, alternate lives issued under license by the celebrated author” for his varied audiences:

For the world, he will play the Hermit of Croisset; for his friends in Paris, he will play the Idiot of the Salons; for George Sand he will play the Reverend Father Cruchard, a fashionable Jesuit who enjoys hearing the confessions of society women; for his intimate circle he will play Saint Polycarpe, that obscure Bishop of Smyrna, martyred in the nick of time at the age of ninety-five... (*Flaubert’s* 125)

Flaubert is also the accused party in the tenth “courtroom” chapter, and Braithwaite-as-narrator speaks of the reader as the accuser as he lists accusations against Flaubert; after listing the first, “That he hated humanity,” for example, the next words are, “Yes, yes, of course. You always say that” (128) as though addressing the reader. The reader not only accuses Flaubert and accompanies Braithwaite on his journey to find the parrot that served as Flaubert’s inspiration for parrot Loulou in *Un coeur simple* but also learns so much about Flaubert’s various personae that Flaubert seems just as real and just as “close” to the reader as Braithwaite--which is ironic since Flaubert is a historical personage and Braithwaite is not, while the historical Flaubert is lost to the passage of time and Braithwaite ostensibly “writes” in the novel’s present. It is as though Flaubert and Braithwaite begin to blend together or even to trade places in the reader’s imagination.

Braithwaite increasingly undermines the credibility and stability of his point-of-view as the narrative progresses. As a result, the reader must question Braithwaite’s motives in writing and thus his reliability as a narrator. Further, *Flaubert’s Parrot* also includes a point-of-view other than Braithwaite’s commanding one and Flaubert’s piecemeal one; the eleventh chapter is entirely in Flaubert’s lover Louise Colet’s voice--as imagined by Braithwaite. Since he writes what she says, and she relates what Flaubert supposedly says and believes, Barnes creates a subtle layering of voices that doubly complicates the reader’s position in relation to Braithwaite. What gender is really speaking, and how accurately is its experience represented? The question cannot be answered. Colet’s chapter appears late in the novel, after the reader has already been guided to a certain interpretation of her. Braithwaite’s comments about Colet in the

preceding chapter, in which the reader is forced to be Flaubert's accuser in a textual courtroom, prepare the reader for what follows: "she was a pest, wasn't she? (Let me answer my own question. I think she was a pest; she sounds like a pest; though admittedly we hear only Gustave's side of the story. Perhaps someone should write her account: yes, why not construct Louise Colet's Version? I might do that. Yes, I will.)" (*Flaubert's* 135). Braithwaite openly admits to manipulating Colet's voice. His male voice presumes control over a female voice while enabling that voice (his? hers?) to speak in the first place. Further, just two chapters later, he ironically calls his one-sided account of his relationship with his deceased wife "Pure Story." He admits comprehending her less than Flaubert (168). Again, his male voice presumes control over a female voice.

In *Flaubert's Parrot*, then, Barnes, "between the lines," urges the reader's engagement with the text via his commingled presentation of both Flaubert and Braithwaite (and additional voices). The reader is encouraged to research Flaubert's life and to read Flaubert's works. He or she is also urged to make judgments about Braithwaite's motivations and reliability as the novel's principle narrator. If he is untrustworthy, is his data about Flaubert similarly questionable? To answer the questions, the reader must read closely, searching for contradictions both within the novel and between the novel and extratextual material. When the contradictions are blatant, as they are in the second chapter which presents three opposing chronologies of Flaubert's life, the reader must decide what to believe, and why. Reliability is a gender inflected issue within *Flaubert's Parrot*, especially in light of its layering of voices.

The characters in *Mantissa* especially evade the reader's expectations concerning gender by proliferating personality traits, and subjectivity is central to the confusion. The heterodiegetic narrator hovers above the action, reporting what Miles says and feels, a complicated task due to the dually-gendered setting. Miles lies inside a single room in a hospital, a setting that Jane O'Sullivan argues "foregrounds the largely patriarchal and 'mind-privileging' discursive practice of modern medicine..." (112)--but is visited only by a female doctor, female nurse, female Staff Sister, and female muse in various other guises. The room becomes an observation cell and resembles the inside of Miles's male brain with its padded gray, buttoned squares. He is "trapped within the monothematic sexist world of his own imagination" (Onega 135). If his hospital room is his brain, the sharp divisions that Miles constantly defines between masculinity and femininity, between himself and his "muse," disappear; if his "muse" is part of him, they are a single being. Miles informs his muse of her status--and her knowledge of it: "As you yourself have just informed me that you are not actually standing there, you are inside my head, I'm not at all clear how any decision about our future can lie with you alone" (*Mantissa* 141). To mark distinctions between the gendered parts of every human that Miles and his muse possibly symbolize is ultimately futile in a postmodern world. The text suggests that the war and peace that the two figures continually enact will never end.

The struggle also reveals Miles to be far more complex than many critics give him credit for. The two main characters, Miles and the woman with him, are two separate entities only on one narrative level. On another, they are two parts of one entity. And on another gender-bending level, they exchange conventional gender roles. In its "distorted portrayal of an ostensibly postmodernist 'de-gendering,' or masculine appropriation of

the specifically maternal body” (O’Sullivan 109), *Mantissa* reveals gender-bending central figures. Maternal but male, Miles creates the muse, molding her identity and even her number (somehow she is two complete female figures near the opening of the novel), and also gives birth to a baby, albeit to a literal text--the same text that the reader holds in his or her hands. The fact that all the narrative action occurs within Miles’s own brain in *Mantissa* is suggestive of his femininity. In “Feminist Curves in Contemporary Literary Space,” Kathleen L. Komar reminds the reader that in contemporary texts, women, not men, typically “retreat into the interior space of the mind” (98). The well-read contemporary reader is likely aware of this. The muse in turn, by definition, provides Miles with the material for that text, thereby symbolically impregnating him as only a male could. The muse “Erato” (Greek muse of erotic lyric poetry and Miles’s name for her, which she denies) also shifts identities. She tells Miles she “‘can’t help being a tissue of contradictions’” (*Mantissa* 107) and appears as Dr. Delfie, Nurse Cory, a punk, a goddess, an invisible being, and a geisha. The reader-as-explorer is constantly required to stop and be “reintroduced” to Miles’s antagonist as she expands the definition of femininity with each new human form.

In *A Maggot*, the reader crosses the English landscape with five travelers whose identities continually shift. Despite exploring the same geographical landscape--and experiencing the same events--with each of them, the reader never fully connects with any of the travelers. Fowles makes this impossible. Expectations continually shatter, as each moment of identifying the characters’ identities is revealed to be just another layer of deception. The story pivots around one of a “forlorn little group of travellers” who, the reader quickly learns, is a young woman almost entirely hidden from view in a

hooded cloak (*Maggot* 3, 4). She is cocooned like a maggot and swaddled like her newborn baby will be at the end of the story. Like Ayesha, she must be literally and psychologically unwrapped. The reader is not given her purpose, her appearance, her name, or her words via dialogue. The next glimpse of her, rather than providing further evidence of her silence and modesty, reveals the opposite: her washing, adorning herself with perfume, coloring her cheeks, and dilating her eyes with belladonna as a mute and masturbating manservant looks on. The reader is told she is a maid who flaunts airs like her absent mistress. Next, Mr. Bartholomew finds pleasure in berating her for being nothing more than his hired prostitute, “a public whore...issued of Eve, with all her sins...guilty of insolence” (43). Is she to be feared, scorned, empathized, rebuked, or embraced? By turns throughout the narrative, various points-of-view reveal her as, contradictorily, a lusty harlot, an obedient servant, the May Queen in Cleave Wood, an insane woman, a rape victim of Satan in the flesh, a religious zealot, a repentant follower of the French Prophets, an Ur-Shaker, a wife to both the mute servant and a poor blacksmith, and a mother--and throughout it all a brilliant actress, certainly. Her name ultimately is not Louise, Fanny, or Rebecca Hocknell, as she is called, but Rebecca Lee. Just as with Erato in *Mantissa*, the reader cannot even rely on the character’s name as the foundation of her identity. In the end, due to the abundant points-of-view in the novel, Rebecca remains entirely a mystery. Who she was, who she is, cannot be known. Fowles makes sure of that. The other characters’ identities are problematic, too: Dick, the mute servant, is either a murder victim or a suicide victim, Rebecca’s lover or wife, loyal to his master or filled with hatred toward him. Lieutenant Farthing is really actor David Jones. Mr. Bartholomew’s purpose for the entire masquerade is never known. Mr. Brown, Mr.

Bartholomew's supposed uncle, is actually Francis Lacy, a hired actor. All are actors, filling various roles simultaneously, dependent upon their audience at the time.

All of this confusion is made possible by the multiple narrative perspectives. The novel opens with a "conventional" narrator, presumably male (who only later refers to himself as "I" and confirms his contemporary viewpoint halfway through the book) who may or may not be heterodiegetic; the narrator seems to see all and know all, from a contemporary viewpoint looking back on the novel's events of 1736, but reveals only what can be seen. The narrator reports dialogue and the characters' actions but does not comment on them. After this initial section, much of the novel consists of ostensible examinations and depositions, in question-and-answer format, of everyone prosecutor Henry Ayscough can locate and question, with the narrator rarely interjecting explanatory comments. Thus, the reader figuratively sits in the courtroom as a member of a jury, similar to what he or she does in *Flaubert's Parrot*, hearing the contradictory testimonies of innkeeper Thomas Puddicombe, brothel owner Hannah Claiborne, actor Jones, minister James Wardley, and Rebecca herself, among others. In *John Fowles's Fiction and the Poetics of Postmodernism*, Mahmoud Salami explains the reader's position, thrust inside the story:

Dialogue thus enables the reader to formulate the meanings of the situations that are in the text instead of receiving such narrative information from an authoritative narrator. Indeed with dialogue the text becomes "open" for different interpretations, hence its refusal of a monologic meaning. The reader therefore becomes the master of the text;

s/he determines his/her own position in the text without actually being led by the narrator. (220)

The reader in *Flaubert's Parrot* accuses; the reader of *A Maggot* casts unspoken judgment. Those involved in the center of the controversy--what happened in the cave--report strikingly different accounts of the same events. Even Ayscough's reliability as a narrator is questionable; Katherine Tarbox, author of *The Art of John Fowles*, points out that after Jones's testimony concludes, Ayscough consumes alcohol laced with wormwood, a powerful toxin used in absinthe (138). The decider of truth's choice of drink emphasizes that objectivity can be quickly destroyed. Lost in a "polyphonic juxtaposition of rival discourses" (Salami 222)--or constructed of them--the truth cannot be known because it is always relative to its speaker. Like Braithwaite taking on the voice of Louise in *Flaubert's Parrot*, the oscillation between gendered voices in *A Maggot* is a move toward further destabilizing binary identification.

Fowles began experimenting with shifting points-of-view and character identities long before *Mantissa* and *A Maggot*, his final two novels. In *Daniel Martin*, the point-of-view shifts continually, including excerpts from Martin's lover Jenny and imaginary twin sisters and jumping back and forth in time to portray Martin's psychological development. Fowles's first published novel, *The Collector*, presents two versions of Frederick Clegg's kidnapping of Miranda Grey; the first is Clegg's, the second Miranda's. The book concludes with another section in Clegg's voice, and the reader is meant to read the novel as if he or she, voyeur, were reading Clegg's and Grey's diaries. To his acquaintances, Clegg is a run-of-the-mill clerk. To Miranda, he is an insane kidnapper.

Fowles pits the two versions of Miranda's imprisonment until her death against each other. The reader must decide who is in the right.

A different effect is created by the multiple points-of-view present in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, which may be called a novel but also resembles a series of short stories and essays with recurring thematic threads tying them together--threads that the reader must find and link. Different narrators for the reader to accompany present each chapter: a stowaway woodworm, gender unknown, aboard Noah's ark; both defendants and prosecutors in a case against other woodworm living inside a Catholic bishop's throne; possibly delusional middle-aged cataclysm survivor Kathleen Ferris; and actor Charlie whose voice is communicated only via written communication to his "darling"-turned-"bitch" (*History* 191, 220), among many other narrators. The third chapter opens with a number of prefatory "warnings" about point-of-view: "the testimony of witnesses, who might be anything from local peasants to distinguished experts on the behavioural patterns of the defendants has not been recorded....we are not dealing with the original submissions as penned by each lawyer's clerk, but with the work of a third party, perhaps an official of the court, who may have omitted sections of the pleas" (61)--yet another example of the courtroom metaphor in Fowles and Barnes's novels and a device which, by its very nature, involves multiple conflicting voices. In "The Survivor," Kath both speaks as "I" and is referred to as "she" as the point-of-view repeatedly shifts. The polymorphously perverse reader-as-explorer is pulled into Kath's mental realm as co-character and then abruptly pushed away into a voyeuristic position, then pulled back in again. In "The Mountain," the narrator reveals knowledge of both Amanda Fergusson and her father, as if he were inside both characters' heads. As a

discourse on relationships, with its attention to couples and references back to the ark and its humanity-preserving pairs, the novel's numerous points-of-view emphasize the complications of defining gender-specific definitions of love.

In addition to thwarting the gender expectations of all types of readers via postmodern subjectivities, Fowles and Barnes manipulate gendered plot lines to bolster the reader's intellectual engagement with each text-as-landscape. Their landscapes cannot be mapped easily or predictably. The "traditional" male plot, or master narrative, as mentioned above in relation to the novels of Jefferies, Haggard, Conrad, Hudson, and Burnett, includes a hero's ambitious journey of adventure and discovery that typically concludes with his success and often his marriage or the death of a woman judged for social failure. Its format models the male sexual experience in its pace, tempo, and shape, as articulated by novelist Dorothy Richardson in 1948 (DuPlessis 187) and can be drawn as a gradually ascending line reaching a high point, then rapidly descending. This trajectory is of rising action, climax, and denouement. In contrast, a graphic representation of a feminine plot is a wavy line or even a circle because the novel's plot is lyric and nonlinear. Difficult to adequately describe due to its spatial complexity, it pays attention to "a multipointed multiplicity of narrative middle...and critique of telos, sequence, causality, gender polarization, and gender asymmetry" (DuPlessis 187). While the master narrative is one of growing adventure, its feminine counterpart is not about continual upward striving. There is no single climax; there may be multiple points of tension or one that recurs. Rather than reflecting the male sexual experience, it can be compared to the female's bodily experiences; Page notes A. S. Anderson's description of a female orgasmic plot pattern, Winnett's birth and breastfeeding pleasure metaphors, and

Hélène Cixous's "feminine practice of writing" characterized by the female body, especially lactation, non-linearity, and resistance to closure (*Literary* 22-3). It can also epitomize "playful representations of the female body as fissured, split, or castrated" in sharp contrast to images of the unified virile male body (Higonnet "Mapping" 207). The plot is characterized by cycles of repetition and, according to Kristeva, "lyric timelessness" (qtd. in Wallace 177). In the feminine narrative, there may even be multiple heroes, a heroine, or heroines instead of a solitary masculine central figure.

Fowles and Barnes reject, or embrace, both types of gendered plots and their constituent parts, or more precisely, both ways of reading. They go beyond Joseph Frank's "spatially-formed" nonlinear narratives, following neither his modernist poetry-based models of "recurring motifs (when there is no continuing developing social or physical action in the forefront...)" or "'forward and backward-moving' [that] treats textual space as violations of causality..." (Punday 75), nor the *fully* self-conscious and self-reflexive narrative form of the latter half of the twentieth century, a form in which authors refer to themselves as characters, that Jerome Klinkowitz proposes in "The Novel as Artifact: Spatial Form in Contemporary Fiction" (39-40). Instead, they present heroes circuitously navigating feminine plots and heroines ambitiously striving toward goals in masculine-plotted novels. They weave both types of plot together. They pick and choose narrative elements. The reader can focus on the masculine or feminine narrative plot elements, just as a wanderer across a geographical landscape may choose to focus his or her attention on hills, valleys, flora and fauna, or a water body. Ultimately, though, the reader will recognize that both plots are present; a landscape is a complete picture, carefully chosen and placed in a frame--in this case, between the covers of books. Part of

the picture cannot be ignored. Thus, the novels, narratologically, are androgynous--a textual version of Angela Carter's fascinating winged character Fevvers, a hybrid who transcends biology, in *Nights at the Circus*.

The plot of *A Maggot* can be read as having clear masculine elements. First, Henry Ayscough can be considered the novel's single hero. His armor is language, and he uses it to undertake his journey. Without his governing voice, the novel would dissolve into a series of contradictory viewpoints with no purpose for their combination between the covers of a book. Ayscough dispatches others to locate all those involved in Mr. Batholomew's disappearance, and he questions them relentlessly to uncover the unknown. His efforts can be read as the heroic deeds entailed by a journey of romance, and missing witnesses and the pervasive lies of those he finds thwart his efforts. Also, Ayscough seems like the novel's hero because the reader as explorer spends the most textual time with him; there are more of his words in the novel than of any other character--or even of other characters combined. The narrator occasionally reveals Ayscough's inner turmoil, which is highly significant in that the narrator rarely interrupts the dialogue of Ayscough's confrontations with the characters, much less provides insight into any character's mind. More than any other character, Ayscough is on a clearly defined mission: to discover the truth. The more people he questions on his mission, the closer he gets to Rebecca and the stronger his belief in her as the key to the truth grows. Thus, when she is found at last, roughly three-quarters of the way through the novel, Ayscough's questioning of her can be read as the novel's climax; his intense barrage of questions can also be read as a linguistic perversion of the deeply emotional, possibly even sexual, encounter that a hero has upon locating his beloved heroine at the end of his

quest. After Ayscough questions her at length, culling as much information from her as he can, the novel's action slows dramatically. Ayscough sends his final letter discussing his findings to his employer, and an epilogue about Rebecca concludes the novel.

Narrative elements of *A Maggot* also suggest a feminist narratological reading. While one could argue that Ayscough is the hero, there is also a strong case for Mr. Bartholomew, or Rebecca, or the original group of travelers, especially Dick, as the central figure or figures propelling the narrative. Like Ayscough, each is on a journey of discovery. Mr. Bartholomew is the original questing gentleman in *A Maggot*; as hero, Bartholomew organizes the journey to the cave, amasses the traveling group of actors of which Ayscough is curious, and is related to Ayscough's employer who urges Ayscough's quest for the truth of his son's mysterious disappearance. But Bartholomew is present for roughly only half of the narrative after which he vanishes. His journey prematurely ends, while the narrative continues. Any symbolic narrative climax occurs without his heroic presence. If the reader considers Rebecca the questing heroine, he or she recognizes that Rebecca holds the key to the central mysteries of Dick's death and the events in the cave. Every person who testifies for Ayscough speaks of his or her connection to Rebecca. But Rebecca is not a strong, masculine hero; she is the opposite, a woman, appearing outwardly weak, pleading humility, and sacrificing her elevated position at madam Claiborne's in order to marry a destitute blacksmith and give birth to an out-of-wedlock child. Beyond Bartholomew and Rebecca, Lacy, Jones, and Dick can also be read as equal heroes in the narrative journey across the dismal English landscape. Because they are hardly distinguishable from each other at the beginning of the narrative, because they are then unnamed, and because their identities remain unclear, they are as unlike typical

heroes as possible. Finally, Dick's death and his (or someone else's) seed in Rebecca's womb encompass the entire narrative; though Dick is mute and his journey ends long before any of the other characters, he can also be considered the novel's hero.

Further, with all of the potential heroes having their say and vying for the reader's attention, there is no definitive climax within the plot. If one cannot decide on the hero of the story, how can one determine the hero's moment of ultimate struggle and triumph? If the central climax occurs at the moment of Rebecca's supposed sexual encounter with Satan or her vision of the future in the maggot-like spaceship, that moment recurs each time another character offers his or her account of it. Since the novel's structure is largely testimony following testimony, the climactic moment is recounted multiple times. Also, the actual moment of climax that the characters recount never occurs within the book; Bartholomew commands "Fanny" to attempt to "please" mysterious strangers he plans to meet the following day and then dismisses her, two reprinted pages from the April 1736 *Gentleman's Magazine* follow their dialogue, and then an entry from *The Western Gazette* of 1736 announces the discovery of Dick's corpse six weeks after the fact. The "climax" and the action leading up to it occur "off-stage" in the chronology between the two magazine entries. The novel, then, proceeds backwards, as Ayscough uncovers layer after layer of testimony to find the truth of the climax. In this sense, the denouement following the climax forms most of the book rather than a few pages or chapters near the end. The narrative line can also be pictured as a repetitive circle, with Ayscough continually returning to the events of the cave as supposedly viewed through each character's eyes. The circularity of *A Maggot* can be read as a metaphor for the way Fowles refutes male narrative dominance. It reveals the futility of Ayscough's attempts to

determine the truth about the maggot-like shape, despite his intense inquiry. Closure evades his dedicated efforts; therefore, Ayscough cannot be the novel's hero.

The inclusion of multiple types of texts within *A Maggot* further complicates determining a climactic moment, for the "supplemental" layers of narrative of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and *The Western Gazette* are narrative elements within the novel's larger plot but also contain their own miniature plots and climaxes. Between the lines, the author urges the reader's engagement with these texts; the reader probably wants to discover if the historical documents are "real," and he or she will flip back to reread them as the narrative progresses when their inclusion is more comprehensible in relation to plot development. As in *She*, again in *A Maggot* the reader is forced to unwrap layers of clues and move between narrative moments. A similar complex interweaving of multiple texts is found in both *Flaubert's Parrot* and *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* and can be viewed as a microcosmic version of Fowles and Barnes's oeuvres, with each novel varying from its author's predecessors in form and focus.

When considered as solitary textual landscapes, both Fowles and Barnes's entire oeuvres are characterized by the fluidity that marks their individual gendered narratives. Their textual landscapes are not rectangular even plots with straight rows, manicured plants, and regular irrigation systems. Instead, they resemble Fowles's own garden, a meandering jungle of myriad plants loved but largely left to Nature's control, a distinctively English approach to gardening. Unlike many other postmodern authors, Fowles and Barnes only flirt with blatant authorial intrusion, postmodern content, and futuristic time periods while they constantly experiment with postmodern literary form. Neither author finds a commercially and critically successful textual format and shapes

future narratives in the same way. For example, Fowles never repeats the dual-voiced short diary format of his original bestseller *The Collector*. Instead, he subsequently published *The Aristos*, a collection of philosophical musings; his inconclusive mystery/romance *The Magus*; a collection of loosely-connected short stories, *The Ebony Tower*; the postmodern Victorian novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; and the very long quasi-autobiographical *Daniel Martin*, in addition to *Mantissa* and *A Maggot*. Fowles also published translations, essays, reviews, and a collection of poetry. One cannot read one of Fowles's texts and open a second expecting to read anything similar to the first. Similarly, Barnes's semi-autobiographical tale of friends Christopher and Toni in *Metroland* was followed by the experimental *Flaubert's Parrot*; Jean Serjeant's life story in *Staring at the Sun*; the crazy-quilt collection of fictional and historical narratives of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*; political fiction *The Porcupine*; multi-voiced historical fiction *Arthur & George*; and *Nothing to Be Frightened Of*, described on Julian Barnes's website as "a family memoir, and exchange with his brother (a philosopher), a meditation on mortality and the fear of death, a celebration of art, an argument with and about God, and a homage to the French writer Jules Renard" (Roberts); in addition to short story collections and essay compilations, among others.

In many of these novels, both Fowles and Barnes complicate the narrative plot line into one that can be read as equally masculine and feminine, thereby poking fun at the supposed simplicity of classifying plot according to gender, as Fowles does in aforementioned fashion in *A Maggot*. In postmodern fashion, he forces the reader to question his or her notions of the novel. If a mystery within a novel remains unsolved, is it still a mystery novel? If the hero detective fails, is he still the hero? If the one who

confounds him is a woman, does she become the heroine, or as the source of the answers to the detective's search, has she always been the heroine? Can a man incapable of speech in a novel so dependent upon spoken words, who is also largely absent from the scene, be the hero? Can a climax take place "offstage" and still be the climax?

In *Mantissa*, a number of equally significant questions arise as a result of Fowles's interweaving of what are considered masculine and feminine narrative elements. Miles's relationship with his muse, as explained above, is complicated because Miles and his muse are inseparable despite their vastly different appearances and desires, both sexual and intellectual. Miles appears to be the hero of the story, for he writes the story, "creates" his muse, molds her into varied personae as he pleases, and uses her to satisfy all of the sexual desires of his varied emotional states. As such, his muse belittles him for striving to epitomize the original "logical" male hero, Adam: "'that all-time wet drip. Driving his wife mad with domestic boredom. Not even allowing her to buy a few clothes now and then'" (*Mantissa* 149). Ironically, if Miles is the masculine hero who exerts control over the women around him, his muse also seems to neatly fit her assigned role as the hero's love interest and therefore an object to be manipulated, valued, and cast aside at will.

The character pulling the strings is not so obvious, however, for if Miles's muse moves him emotionally to write of a certain subject, usually sex, or in a certain way, usually pornographic, one can say that she is the one in control of not only the narrative within *Mantissa* but also the narrative of *Mantissa* and Miles himself. Occasionally she appears to have the upper hand--or does Miles want her to have the upper hand or to think she has the upper hand? Sometimes, it appears that Miles is the puppet-master and

his muse is the puppet. For instance, speaking of the muse-as-punk's ghastly appearance, Miles tells her, "I could have made it far worse....Had you swanning soppily through the olive-groves in a transparent nightie or something" (*Mantissa* 55). As a goddess, she unhappily concurs, "I'm just one more miserable fantasy figure your diseased mind is trying to conjure up out of nothing" (85). At other times, his control dissolves. For example, the goddess causes Miles's hospital room door and clothes to vanish, and she claims the ability to cancel the laws of nature (124, 125). Erato makes Miles a banana importer and jokes about its phallic symbolism. She is the one who makes Miles into Staff Sister and a hideous satyr, and she finds great humor in doing so (169, 191). When she becomes a geisha, Miles's fantasy, she uses her power to torture him. Because both Miles and his muse embrace their own sexuality as a weapon, and because they vacillate as manipulators, they complicate Rosalind Coward's statement that "For men, sexual encounters represent access to power, a series of encounters and experiences which build up a sense of the individual's power in having control over women's bodies. Sexual experience in women's novels represents access to knowledge, rather than power. Sexual experience becomes the way in which a woman finds out about herself" (45). Miles does use sex as a form of empowerment, but his muse also uses sex as a means of finding out more about her own ability to use sex as a form of empowerment.

However, the reader realizes that neither character is in control, that Miles is also a textual creation, especially when the goddess berates Miles, "To say nothing of *your* character. I notice there's not been a single word about his exceedingly dubious status. I wonder who's pulling *his* strings?" (*Mantissa* 88). Fowles makes Miles "both the speaking subject and the subject of speech in his narrative" (Salami 204-5). Erato also is

a textual creation, of course, and the less obvious nod via her name to “errata” suggests that she herself is a textual mistake or would like to think of herself as a proper textual addition. The reader should remember that both Miles and Erato reside within Fowles’s own “mantissa”--by definition, an addition of little importance to the artistic world. Fowles creates a complicated relationship between Miles and Erato, and in doing so, he authoritatively and effectively muddies any determination on who is hero or heroine. Both may be, or none may be, or both definitely are because they are parts of each other. Perhaps Fowles is suggesting that the reader, who makes the ultimate determination, is the one in charge.

A masculine narrative plot surfaces in *Mantissa* in that roughly three-quarters of the way through the novel, at the close of the third part of four, Miles and Dr. Delfie temporarily cease their interminable sexual banter to finally make love as a devoted couple would. Abbott claims that successful narratives are “chains of suspense and surprise that keep us in a fluctuating state of impatience, wonderment, and partial gratification” (53); here finally that gratification is reached both within and beyond the text. As this ultimate sexual climax dovetails with the narrative climax (possibly simultaneous activities, Miles concurs far earlier in the text [*Mantissa* 105]), the walls of the hospital room/brain become plate glass and the entire hospital staff views their coupling. For a moment, all becomes clear--literally--as the hero and heroine’s war of words gives way. The reader is voyeur throughout; “no reader could help being teased, seduced, and being positioned as voyeur...” (Salami 210), but others become voyeurs now, too, at this pivotal moment. Fowles forces the reader’s engagement with the text especially at this point, as the quasi-pornographic text’s teasing and titillation of the

reader reaches its pinnacle. Miles and his muse are not only flirting with each other; they are flirting with the reader, and the reader who reaches this point in the text has succumbed to their advances.

It is equally valid to defend *Mantissa*'s plot as following a feminine pattern. The story is circular and repetitive. While one sexual act may be considered central, Fowles doubly parodies a single narrative climax by filling the novel with climaxes both sexual and multiple in the form of provocative stories, foreplay, rape, sensual banter, and other sexual activity. One could say that there is therefore no distinguishable climactic moment or denouement; rather, there are multiple series of both as the action rises and falls repetitively. The sparring couple point out that their average number of sexual acts performed per collaborative text is “three point three recurring...” (*Mantissa* 165); *Mantissa* is a less impressive example. In *Mantissa*, Fowles uses Miles to directly poke fun at the idea of a climax, especially one embedded in a text that functions repetitively and therefore never ends; he compares “eternally awaiting climax” to constipation (146). Speaking to his muse, Miles humorously refers to the feminine plot line, calling “[a]ll those boring stretches between the sexy bits” the “curse of fiction” (161). Fowles or Miles or the muse herself even has the muse perceptively voice her assumption that Miles enjoys reversals of normal narrative development (101), another nod to experimentation with gendered narrative.

Barnes is equally experimental with narrative gender in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*. If the reader understands the text as a novel rather than a collection of shorter pieces, it is impossible to find one hero whose questing activity spans the entire text. While themes and symbols, which the engaged reader must seek out and define,

cross chapter boundaries, each story's individual characters live within the bounds of their chapters. I argue that Barnes's novelistic construction forces the reader who searches for the male narrative element of a solitary hero to conclude that the extratextual reader, himself or herself, is the only plausible hero. If his work is a novel--and Barnes insists it is--it is only the reader who metaphorically journeys through the entire text, following the thematic threads like Theseus used Ariadne's thread in the Minotaur's cave. Further, if the reader is female, the reader's gender challenges a "traditional" reading of the text because the text's "main character" is a heroine.

While its reading hero/heroine may be unconventional, *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* can be read as having a masculine narrative structure. It is a journey of romance, as I here refer to its classical definition. First, the novel depicts heroic deeds carried out in highly imaginative settings: woodworms smuggle their way onto Noah's ark, a boat far more dangerous and chaotic than in its Biblical depiction; historian Franklin Hughes tries to appease terrorists aboard a cruise ship; prim Miss Fergusson entombs herself in her search for the Ark's landing site; and the concluding narrator travels to a "new heaven" of perfect grapefruit, golf games, and sex; for example.

While the novel does not end, of course, with the main character's marriage or the death of his beloved (this would be impossible due to the reader's position in relation to the text), it does revolve around romance of a different kind: love. Within each successive chapter, Barnes further ponders humanity's desire to define the perfect relationship. The third-last "chapter" of eleven--a chapter in structure but called a "parenthesis" and referred to as the "1/2" chapter in the novel's title--is the text most clearly about romantic love. Its narrator rests next to his sleeping love, and his tale is

more like an essay than a story. For the first time, the novel's theme is directly addressed. For this reason, because Barnes calls attention to the section with its "1/2 chapter/parenthesis" distinction, and due to its emotional topic and curious location in the novel, I argue that this point of the narrative can be considered the climax.

Such a simple picture of *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* is deceptive, for Barnes's novel even more readily can be charted along a feminine narratological axis if it is taken apart. Barnes does not write a conventional novel with sequential chapters and a single story-line. While the chapters' significances grow in relation to each other and reading the entire novel enriches the reader's experience of each chapter, each section of the novel could be read independently of the others and still be completely understood. Hero or heroine, the reader explores the novel at will, skipping chapters and rereading sections if he or she chooses in attempts to piece together Barnes's creative world history. The chapters function as short stories or essays and make just as much sense (and have just as much of an impact) when read out of their textual order as when read in their published order. To identify one chapter as the most important, the "high point," may be a problematic interpretation. Further, each individual section can be interpreted and plotted on a narratological axis independently of the others.

Flaubert's Parrot also invites dually gendered narratological readings with its mingling of masculine and feminine narrative plot elements. For example, Braithwaite is the solitary hero throughout the entire story, and he is engaged on a quest, albeit one at which he fails and one that is a far cry from a journey through forests of mythical dragons to rescue a princess. On his search for the parrot that served as Flaubert's inspiration for parrot Loulou in *Un coeur simple*, his heroic struggles are intellectual rather than

physical. Braithwaite's journey does seem somewhat silly in comparison to other quests, and Braithwaite questions his own interest in Loulou's inspiration and the purpose of his two-year-long quest. He realizes people probably think of him as "a crank, a senile amateur scholar hooked on trivia and pathetically trying to make a name for himself" (*Flaubert's* 180). Thinking of Loulou as a symbol of the Holy Ghost and the power of words, he writes, "The point at which you suspect too much is being read into a story is when you feel most vulnerable, isolated, and perhaps stupid....Is a critic wrong--worse, sentimental--to think of that parrot at the Hôtel-Dieu as an emblem of the writer's voice? That's what I did" (19). With these comments, Barnes is also forcing literary critics to self-reflect, just as Fowles does with his tongue-in-cheek literary jabs throughout *Mantissa*. Further, Braithwaite fails to win the object of the quest. While he claims to solve the Case of the Stuffed Parrot, he never discovers which bird is Flaubert's inspiration for Loulou.

It is also difficult to pinpoint a climax following rising action in *Flaubert's Parrot*, as one would find in many earlier novels. The discourse reflects not only Braithwaite's travels in search of answers about Loulou, but it blends the hero's travels with bits of information and speculation about Flaubert, literature, love, and life. In fact, the first, third, seventh, and fifteenth chapters are the only ones that directly relate Braithwaite's chronological and geographical movement toward facts about Loulou. In the fifteenth chapter, as Braithwaite reminds the reader of Loulou, his comment is like an afterthought, as though he has forgotten about his initial reasons for traveling: "And the parrot? Well, it took me almost two years to solve the Case of the Stuffed Parrot" (*Flaubert's* 180), and as mentioned above he does not solve the case as he claims. His declaration is a lie or at

least less definitive than he or the reader hopes. His final words to the reader are “*Perhaps* it was one of them” as he refers to three more stuffed parrots discovered in a dusty upstairs room at the Museum of Natural History (190, emphasis added). If this moment of discovery (or its opposite) is the climax, there is no denouement. If an earlier moment is the climax, it is impossible to locate it amidst the abundance of information about Flaubert.

The absence of a discernible climax in *Flaubert's Parrot* is largely a result of the text's rejection of a rigid external structure, much like *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters's*; its form prevents Braithwaite from emerging as a triumphant hero. If the reader-as-explorer views the text as a literal, physical landscape, *Flaubert's Parrot* is like a carefully designed garden that sprawls across the lawn. While its individual sections are of approximately equal length and are arranged to form a coherent, artistic, even pleasurable whole for their reader, the garden lacks a fountain or statue, i.e. a central focal point. One can, does, and perhaps should, wander in circles. The arrangement of the novel certainly invites non-linear reading; perhaps Barnes is encouraging the reader to meander through his textual landscape. Between the first, third, seventh, and fifteenth chapters--allow me to consider them a metaphorical garden path--the reader finds an abundance of pleasant textual diversions, albeit only loosely related to the quest for Loulou: three contrasting chronologies of Flaubert's life, the first positive, the second negative, and the third anecdotal in Flaubert's voice; a bestiary cataloging Flaubert's many self-characterizations as animals; discourse on overlapping coincidences and ironies in literature and life; a chapter on the various colors of Emma Bovary's eyes and Braithwaite's hatred of critics; a “train-spotter's guide to Flaubert”; a Flaubert apocrypha;

a list of possible reader accusations brought against Flaubert, with Braithwaite's defending arguments; a chapter entirely in Louise Colet's voice; "Braithwaite's Dictionary of Accepted Ideas"; a chapter on Braithwaite's strained relationship with his deceased wife Ellen; and the questions for an exam on Flaubert which forces the reader to engage with the text as a student would and possibly reconsider his or her relationship to the text. As in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, the reader of *Flaubert's Parrot* could easily skip chapters or read them out of presented order and still glean much from his or her reading experience without ever finding, or even searching for, a narrative climax. After reading the first few textual "diversions" from Braithwaite's quest for Loulou's inspiration, the reader realizes that the novel is not a traditional romance at all.

Much like *Flaubert's Parrot*, the textual landscapes of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, *Mantissa*, and *A Maggot* mingle characteristics of masculine and feminine external narrative structures. All are composed of chapters of approximately equal length, or regularly-sized units--a hallmark of the master narrative plot line. Barnes's novels include paratextual "maps" to their works, in the form of tables of contents, to orient the reader. Fowles's *A Maggot* is "framed" like an artistic landscape hung in a museum, with both prologue and epilogue, while *Mantissa*'s numbered parts function as chapters and open with epigraphs, like road signs, to provide contextual clues for the reader. Yet none of the four novels is conventionally arranged. *Flaubert's Parrot*'s "chapters" take a variety of forms, as mentioned above. Similarly, the sections of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* are like non-sequential short stories, philosophical musings, and essays, and Barnes pokes fun at the conventional chapter with his "Parenthesis" non-or-half-chapter, as well as the seventh chapter which contains and

is titled “Three Simple Stories.” *Mantissa* most closely follows the structure of a master narrative, flowing chronologically from Miles’s awakening in his hospital room, but is complicated by repetition. For example, the text of the conclusion of the first part mirrors the opening of the novel, word-for-word, and the same passage is echoed again by the final paragraph in the book. *A Maggot* even more blatantly relies on repetition for its effect on the reader. As Ayscough attempts to retrace the five travelers’ steps and questions those involved in the mystery, he returns again and again to the same chronological points: Bartholomew’s hiring period, the stay at Puddicombe’s inn, and the mysterious cave visit. He and the reader revisit the same areas again and again. Thus, Fowles and Barnes create inconsistent gender portrayals even on the level of external structure, as the reader-as-explorer considers the text as a literal, physical landscape.

As the reader continues to view Fowles and Barnes’s postmodern texts as physical objects constructed to manipulate gendered plot lines, he or she should also apply narratological principles to understand the effects of the novels’ horizontal axes as refined and defined by Susan Stanford Friedman using Bakhtin’s idea of the chronotope and Julia Kristeva’s definition of text. This axis entails movement through textual space and time. Jonathan Culler claims that plot humanizes time by giving it form (83), so when Fowles and Barnes contort plot they also complicate the reader’s comprehension of time. They tax the reader’s capacity for reflexive reference, as Jeffrey R. Smitten terms it (“Introduction” 21-2). According to Brooke Lenz, “Instead of assuming a natural progression of plot, the reader of a Fowles’ novel is forced to note the very construction of the illusion of natural textual progression” (25). Both Fowles and Barnes also emphasize the contemporary reader’s awkward position, like John Lee’s in *A Maggot*:

“baffled, a child, before the real now; far happier out of it, in a narrative past or a prophetic future, locked inside that weird tense grammar does not allow, the imaginary present” (385-6). I imagine they agree with Braithwaite’s astute observation: “what a curious vanity it is of the present to expect the past to suck up to it” (*Flaubert’s* 130). They complicate temporal arrangement largely by employing unexpected tense shifts that jar the reader, references to the distant past or the projected future in the midst of the plot’s present via an intrusive narrator, and creative manipulation of the reader’s comprehension of temporality and historical facts, to undermine appearances of conventional temporal arrangements that further characterize the masculine narrative. They fold the axis in on itself like a Möbius strip. They manipulate time much more extensively than Hudson does in *Green Mansions*, for example, as Abel listens to Nuflo’s account of meeting Rima’s mother years earlier. Forays into the past to clarify the present action are often necessary in earlier, less gender-conscious novels; in the case of Fowles and Barnes, I refer beyond these expected temporal breaks. The reader of Fowles and Barnes symbolically encounters the plot with the main characters, literally manipulates the physical text by examining its structure, and also becomes a time traveler by turning the pages. Miles in *Mantissa* illustrates this, as he asks Dr. Delfie how long he has been in the hospital, and she replies, ““Just a few pages”” (14). For Miles, and for the reader, text becomes a symbol of time.

Distortions of the horizontal axis, folding it back in upon itself or twisting it into a circle via complications of temporal arrangements, are so significant from a gendered perspective because they blatantly disregard the narrative model of the male sexual experience. That experience is temporally framed with clear divisions, and it moves from

one chronological low point to one chronologically later high point quickly to an even later chronological low point. When Fowles and Barnes slyly, or obviously, switch these chronological points as charted on the horizontal narrative axis, they are rejecting the male model. Ironically, they are also relying on the male model to make their texts different from it.

Tense shifts disturb the reader's sense of his or her textual surroundings. A reader-as-voyeur of Miles's narrative past, with the aid of the narrator's third-person voice, is suddenly thrust into his hospital room and the narrative present in the beginning of the second part of *Mantissa*. As Miles's muse-as-doctor-and-nurse transforms into a punk and crashes through his door, the reader is jolted from past tense narration to present tense--and an altogether frightening present situation: "There stands an infinitely malevolent apparition straight out of a nightmare..." (*Mantissa* 49). Just when the reader begins to feel safely distanced from the perversity occurring in Miles's hospital room, he or she is essentially pushed into the room and next to the action. In contrast to this single past-to-present shift, *A Maggot* opens in third-person present tense but rapidly begins a series of alternating tense shifts. The sixteenth paragraph shifts to past tense. A few paragraphs later, once again the reader finds himself or herself in the narrative present, in the upstairs chamber of Puddicombe's establishment. Shortly after, the narrator recounts the inn servants' gossip about Dick, in past tense. These shifts continue, and the reader is constantly pulled into the plot and then pushed away via tense. In addition, the many examination and deposition portions of the text are printed in a way that blurs past and present. Their question-and-answer format invites the reader to Ayscough's side as he

questions the witnesses, though the answers are mostly in past tense since they refer to the past.

Barnes just as adeptly switches narrative tenses in an unsettling manner, especially within “The Survivor” in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*. The narrator opens in past tense and refers to Kath’s past actions, but Kath quickly becomes the focalizer in the narrative present recalling her past and speaking in present tense of her situation. The narrator and Kath, and the tense, shifts back and forth throughout the chapter. Read as a whole, the text jumps back and forth without warning.

If the reader-as-explorer is temporally disoriented by tense shifts, frequent intrusive historical references to past and future further jolt the reader from his or her sense of being in the narrative present with the characters and therefore part of the textual action. Living on fixed but unknown timelines, contemporary human readers are as predisposed to being concerned about time as textual characters are, and the text provides a way of grappling with time. Foucault’s description of the nineteenth-century’s obsession with history thrives (Soja 10). Abbott argues that “narrative is the principal way in which our species organizes its understanding of time” (3). Our view is worldly, as Lacy points out to Ayscough as he reports Bartholomew’s words in his testimony: “we mortals are locked as at Newgate...within the chains and bars of our senses and our brief allotted span, and as such are blind; that for God all time is as one, eternally now, whereas we must see it as past, present, future, as in a history” (*Maggot* 143).

As the main character crosses the postmodern landscapes, the contemporary reader also mentally traverses the same landscapes that the characters do, and his or her eyes traverse the physical text. However, the reader is reminded that he or she is a

traveler in a world that is only fiction, even if its basis is historical “fact.” Both Fowles and Barnes, like Woolf with the aforementioned *Orlando*, in which the title character changes gender and ages only thirty-six years from 1588 to 1928, emphasize the shifting nature of history. The narrator in *A Maggot* articulates the contemporary reader’s dilemma: victimization in the “debtors’ prison of History, and equally unable to leave it” (231). The past entices but is a disorienting landscape: “Lost, disordered, fearful, we follow what signs there remain...” Braithwaite encourages the reader, with full knowledge that the past is wreckage the reader desires to mull over but must attempt to piece together (*Flaubert’s* 60). The narrator of “Parenthesis” in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* declares that dates don’t tell the truth and only desire to make the reader think he or she is progressing (239). He helpfully adds, “History isn’t what happened. History is just what historians tell us” (240). In his conclusion, he summarizes the contemporary reader’s inescapable theoretical position toward history couched in text:

We all know objective truth is not obtainable, that when some event occurs we shall have a multiplicity of subjective truths which we assess and then fabricate into history, into some God-eyed version of what “really” happened. This God-eyed version is a fake--a charming, impossible fake...But while we know this, we must still believe that objective truth is obtainable; or we must believe that it is 99 percent obtainable; or if we can’t believe this we must believe that 43 percent objective truth is better than 41 percent. (243-4)

Every historical account is colored by interpretation and therefore is more fictional--or history is less accessible and knowable--than the reader might care to admit. In

Flaubert's Parrot, Braithwaite compares biography to a net, or holes connected by string, and he describes trying to capture history as trying to capture a greased pig at a dance; "People fell over trying to grasp it, and were made to look ridiculous in the process" (38, 14). Still, the reader is enthralled by the past. Fowles and Barnes dangle the fishnet, let the metaphorical pig loose, and then shine a spotlight on prospective fishers and pig-catchers.

Absorption in a novel is a temporary mental escape from awareness of the human timeline for the grasping reader, and the narrator's intrusion, like that of the contemporary narrator illuminating quirks of nineteenth-century English culture in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, is unsettling. This is especially evident in *A Maggot*. It is easy to get "swept up" in the mystery of Bartholomew's disappearance and Dick's death, especially with Fowles's interspersed inclusion of seven reprinted pages from the "Historical Chronicle" in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1736. Not only does the reader accompany the travelers, but he or she also reads the same texts they could have--if the characters are real, if they read the magazine, and if the magazine pages are exact duplicates of their originals. Frequently, however, the narrator intrudes without warning. While his additions are usually helpful clarifications of historical minutiae, they are also clearly from a contemporary perspective and thus temporarily destroy the reader's sense of co-exploration with the characters, especially Ayscough, in time and space. These intrusions are especially frequent in the opening sections. The first example of temporal disruption diachronically situates the reader ("This particular last day of April falls in a year very nearly equidistant from 1689...and 1789..." [*Maggot* 11]) but compares the eighteenth-century travelers' thoughts with twentieth-century readers': "A twentieth-

century mind, could it have journeyed back...would have felt itself landed, or becalmed, in some strange doldrum of time, place and spirit..." (11). The narrator continues on for two paragraphs in this reflective manner. Similarly, the narrator defines "night-gown" and the implications of baldness and caps without lappet-bands as they meant then in comparison to today (16, 17, 24). Later in the novel, he continues to make references to "those days" and "these days," as when he delves into property, politics, the legal profession of Ayscough's time, and the history of Englishwomen's undergarments (227-9, 340). He also decides what the reader should judge of Rebecca: "A modern person would not have had a shadow of doubt that Rebecca was lying, or at least inventing" (411). These less frequent latter intrusions are further reminders of the story's temporal distance from the reader--and of the reader's subservience to the omniscient but quiet narrator who nevertheless makes clear how the reader should feel about one of the novel's most enigmatic characters.

Authorial intrusion, ostensibly to enhance the reader's understanding of plot minutiae, can actually further complicate the reader's sense of who (and what gender) controls the text. For example, while the "intruder" in *A Maggot* does not emphasize his or her gender, the similarly intrusive narrator/author in *A French Lieutenant's Woman* reveals his maleness near the end of the novel. At that point, Fowles teasingly suggests his own (male) control over the novel while voicing his lack of control over and knowledge of his own characters throughout the novel. The narrator crosses a textual barrier and enters the story near its conclusion, and his bearded visage is strikingly like that of Fowles himself. The reader loses any sense of burgeoning genderless objectivity

at this crucial latter stage in the novel, as Charles Smithson stands on the brink of reunion with Sarah Woodruff.

The narrator's intrusions in *A Maggot* spark another means by which the author demands the reader's engagement with the text. In *A Maggot*, the reader must find out more about the novel's time period and geography to verify not only the characters' versions of events but also the narrator's supplementary information. The reader must read carefully, weighing evidence in and beyond the novel, to verify anyone's truthfulness or reliability.

The reader should remember that one of the reasons for Mr. Bartholomew's journey--a purpose never fully discovered--is directly related to time travel and humanity's capacity for manipulating temporal constraints. It is ironic that after his disappearance, no one can, or is willing to, fully and truthfully disclose the past, when Bartholomew's interest is in prophecy. He questions Lacy about "fixed morrows" and asks him what he would do if someone claimed to have "pierced the secrets of the [earthly] world to come" and revealed future events while offering proof. He also asks him how the prophet should act if his predictions were of a calamitous world, or of a peaceful, prosperous one (*Maggot* 19, 20). Later, he belittles Lacy's "love of fixed tomorrows" for he knows that the "final act" of his unexplained journey is still unwritten (39). Lacy's account of Bartholomew's purpose concurs with Bartholomew's former teacher, Nicholas Saunderson's, which states of Bartholomew: "he did believe also that this same most elementary sequence [the Fibonacci series] might be traced in the history of this world, both past and to come; and thus that were it fully understood, the

chronology of the future might be prophesied as well that of the past explained” (188). Bartholomew’s apparent goal is the ability to grasp time and manipulate it.

Whether or not Bartholomew finds the secrets of temporality that he seeks, Rebecca inserts historical references to past and future of which she may not be aware but the contemporary reader certainly is. While not from an intrusive narrator, the references still jolt the reader from his or her sense of being in the narrative present because they remind the reader that he or she has privileged knowledge Rebecca lacks. She describes (twice, in differing ways) a “great swollen maggot, white as snow upon the air” within the mysterious cave (*Maggot* 355). The maggot is suspended in the air, with greenish glassy eyes along its sides, funnels at its end, and six black holes underneath it (356). Rebecca describes it as a maggot because to her it resembles the larval stage of a winged creature, albeit a giant one. While none of Rebecca’s company or Ayscough realizes it, the description is clear to the reader: Rebecca is describing a spaceship. This complicated image represents both beginnings and endings--the literal start of a new insect life, the symbolic end of Rebecca’s sinful period as a prostitute, the end of the world as Rebecca knows it with its limited technology, and the beginning of a future capable of travel beyond her dreams. The futuristic ship also rests aloft in the cave not far from Stonehenge, in a brilliant juxtaposition of past and future. In addition to the ship’s exterior appearance, its inhabitants exemplify the conjoined nature of past and present in Fowles’s gender-blind world. Three women dressed identically and appearing the same except in age exit the ship and then step toward each other, all then blending into the figure of one woman, Holy Mother Wisdom (361-2). This symbol of the Trinity,

a typically male image, is female in Rebecca's "vision" and embodies all time with its blending of ages and its futuristic presence in the narrative present and the reader's past.

Before the central story in *A Maggot* even begins, Fowles reveals that its inspiration was repetitive. His unconscious birthed the group of travelers in a deserted landscape, and they "never progressed to any destination, but simply rode along a skyline, like a sequence of looped film in a movie projector..." (*Maggot* n.p.). This is not the only reference to a repetitive medium. The narrator refers to Dick and Mr. Bartholomew as two images of the same person; then, "At last both move, and simultaneously, as a stopped film begins again" (40). The figures are timeless in origin, in text (for they can be read over and over again), and also in the minds of other characters; two shepherd children who see the traveling group see "beings from fable, not reality..." (9). They defy time's imposition of divisions.

In *Mantissa*, it is unclear in what chronological time period Miles and the reader are located. Miles, apparently newborn and without a sense of his gender or time period, declares himself/itself in "Eternal limbo, at least eventless, tolerably nothing" (*Mantissa* 4). Salami argues that "Time has lost its meaning in Miles' imagination; for him time is measured by the pages he produces and not by the actual hours or days. Indeed through self-reflexiveness, Miles subverts the notion of chronology and the traditional sense of narratology" (197). Divisions between the present and the past dissolve throughout the novel. For instance, Miles "remembers" the novel's apparent climactic moment (according to a masculine narratological reading), which occurs near the end of the text, long before it happens. Near the end of the first part of four, as Nurse Cory arouses Miles, the narrator reveals his prophetic memories: "From nowhere, miraculously, came

a first recall of something he knew was autobiographical, and to do with his occluded past...he knew it had something to do with rows of watching, attentive faces; and that what they were watching was he himself” (32). Even earlier, as Miles struggles to determine his supposed illness, surroundings, and identity as Dr. Delfie fondles him, he “seemed to recall that snatch of hospital talk, to have lived it before, even this before...yet how could he have, and not remembered?” (18). The Greek muse-as-goddess challenges Miles to be both ““eternally young and several millennia old, all at the same time”” (66), which she apparently is--until she laments being conscious of being just a few pages old (105). Further, she claims she can and does make time go backwards (125). All of this temporal confusion is bolstered by references to a ridiculous cuckoo clock in Miles’s room.

From the beginning of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, Barnes manipulates time distinctions that would orient the reader via his strange, seemingly genderless and ageless narrator. He thrusts the reader into an unknown situation with an unknown focalizer who begins, “They put the behemoths in the hold...” (3). Who are they? What are the behemoths? When were the behemoths put in the hold? And who is speaking? As the reader quickly realizes that the account is a hilariously irreverent retelling of Noah’s ark, the narrator’s identity remains a mystery until halfway through the first chapter with the first clue: the narrator’s cousin is *xestobium rufo-villosum* (*History* 18). No translation is provided. The final word of the first chapter partially reveals the narrator’s identity: a woodworm (30). However, the woodworm does not indicate whether it is male or female, which biologically it cannot do. Woodworm (just like Fowles’s maggot) do have a certain gender, but that information is only recorded in

DNA because woodworm are larval stages of woodboring beetles and therefore sexually immature. Regarding time, the woodworm's identity presents a temporal problem for the reader, for the woodworm claims to have been aboard the ark but also to somehow have recorded the chapter the reader has just read thousands of years later. The woodworm's presentation makes the chapter's voyage seem to have just happened, but the woodworm must also be as old as the narrative--an impossibility. Woodworm can remain as larvae for years--but not thousands. If the story is the hindsight of millennia, who exactly is narrating and how does the narrator know what it (he? she?) knows?

Beyond tense shifts, intrusive narrators, and commingled references to past, present, and future that undermine the male narrative plot, Fowles and Barnes complicate the reader-as-explorer's sense of time with their manipulation of historical facts. As postmodern authors, they demonstrate so well what David Harvey defines as postmodernism in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*: "Eschewing the idea of progress, postmodernism abandons all sense of historical continuity and memory, while simultaneously developing an incredible ability to plunder history and absorb whatever it finds there as some aspect of the present" (54). They tweak historical evidence. Both Barnes and Fowles inform the reader, in so many words, that history is a farce. History is what we decide to call history. History can be fiction; fiction can become history. Via text that disregards chronological timelines, even the past is malleable.

In the first chapter of *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, the narrating woodworm also "rewrites" history as the reader understands it--and the reader who believes the Biblical account of Noah is approaching the woodworm's account with a

different layer of skepticism. Meanwhile, any reader who extricates himself or herself from the text enough to recognize that Barnes, not a stowaway woodworm, writes the chapter, also encounters the woodworm's critique of human historical accounts before knowing the narrator's identity. For instance, in the third paragraph, the narrator declares to the reader, "I realize that accounts differ. Your species has its much repeated version [of Noah's ark], which still charms even sceptics..." (*History* 4). Later, he adds, "You believe what you want to believe, and you go on believing it....You aren't too good with the truth, either, your species. You keep forgetting things, or you pretend to" (25, 29). The critical woodworm declares, "You don't have to believe me, of course; but what do your own archives say?" (16). The woodworm intertwines these unflattering comments with an unexpected story of the ark which includes such surprises as rain for a year-and-a-half (not forty days and nights), a fleet of eight vessels (not one ark), extinction of many species aboard due to Noah's family's hunger and stupidity (the woodworm calls his company a "floating cafeteria" [14]), the birth of Noah's only red-haired and green-eyed son Phut on the ark (if Phut was not the result of union between Noah's wife and a simian, as the woodworm suggests), and the presence of stowaway animals like the woodworm.

Like "The Stowaway," "The Mountain" and "Three Simple Stories" focus on the effect of the manipulation of history and time. They challenge the Biblical account of history, Noah's sojourn in the ark and Jonah in the whale's belly instead of Nineveh, respectively. The narrators compare those accounts with common perception and scientific projections about "what really happened." The second "simple story" presents God as author, protagonist--and unreliable narrator; the narrator claims "we recognize

that the story can't have any basis in truth....we can tell the difference between reality and myth....it is impossible for a man to survive in a whale's belly" (*History* 179). However, the narrator immediately challenges his own proud statement of scientific certainty, as he presents the account of James Bartley who was swallowed by a sperm whale on August 25th, 1891, and lived to tell the tale though he remained an albino, bleached white by gastric fluids (179-80). What is the reader to make of this? (Entering "James Bartley" in a Google search leads the curious reader, attempting to verify whether the narrator is telling the truth or calling his own fiction "truth," to sites with telling names such as www.truthorfiction.com, www.straightdope.com, and www.trivia-library.com). The narrator concludes that myth will become reality despite pervasive skepticism (181). History cannot be decisively grasped.

In the second chapter in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters*, the main character's preoccupation and occupation is the creative presentation of history. Franklin, like the reader, is an explorer; the reader roams through the fictional world while Franklin "roved freely in the worlds of archaeology, history and comparative culture....as he passionately straddled a foreign [and temporal] landscape..." (*History* 34). Franklin's specialty involves metaphoric resurrections of dead subjects like Herod's palaces and Hannibal's trek over the Alps in allusions (34); his job on the cruise ship is to bring the past into the present for his audience. He also recognizes that history is malleable ("historians were full of bluff...complicated matters were best understood using zestful intuition untainted by any actual knowledge or research" [39]) and manipulates the historical account of the Palace of Knossos for his own self-preservation when terrorists hijack the ship (42). He tries to use the past to explain the present, referring to the

“idyllic nineteenth century” to explain contemporary Middle Eastern politics (55). The terrorists’ reason for taking over the ship is not revealed until nearly the end of the chapter, and even then, Franklin notes that “incidents of this kind were frequent, almost interchangeable” and probably no hostage would remember the specific incident sparking this particular Black Thunder group’s retaliation (56). Ironically, while Franklin “adjusts” history for his own ends, his enemies also manipulate time in their own criminal way; they must adhere to a fixed timetable and kill two people--cutting short their natural human lifetimes--every hour until their demands are met. Also, master fact-manipulator Franklin has no one to corroborate his own tale of the bargain he strikes with the terrorists, for the two terrorist leaders die. His account of that piece of history is his alone.

“Upstream!” depicts equally vivid confusion of history and equally creative textual portrayal of it. In a series of written communications from actor Charlie in the jungle to his girlfriend, Charlie ponders the role of entertainment in the reader or listener’s comprehension of history. On a textual level, his account is chronologically and numerically structured, easy for the reader to follow; each letter is numbered, and entries written over multiple days begin with temporal markers like the day of the week. But the subject of the letters, Charlie’s job, opens the proverbial can of worms regarding history. Charlie’s first letter indicates that he will play a part in a drama set somewhere else in time, “in whatever century it’s going to be when we get there...” (*History* 192). As a result, the crew has differing opinions about the Indians involved in the filming; Charlie believes they are “fantastically advanced and mature” while the crew thinks they’re primitive due to their lack of technology (200). Charlie also believes the Indians are a

“post-acting civilization...they don’t need it [acting] anymore, so they’ve forgotten about it and don’t understand it any longer” while the crew thinks the tribe has not yet discovered acting (203). Charlie suggests that history can be recreated at will, and the audience will accept the entertaining construction as reality. He seems confused himself about whether he is reenacting the past and whether the Indians believe what is happening literally *is* the past. He explains the plot line of the film in which he will play a major role:

A couple of hundred years ago two Jesuit missionaries trying to find their way back to the Orinoco stumble across them [an obscure tribe of Indians], get them to build a raft and then pole the two Godmen several hundred miles south...Just when they get near their destination the raft capsizes, the missionaries nearly drown and the Indians disappear. Melt into the Jungle and no-one sees them again until Vic’s researchers track them down a year ago. Now they’re helping us do exactly the same thing a couple of hundred years on. (201)

The Indians appear to think that when Charlie and his co-star Matt are costumed as the missionaries, they literally are the missionaries. When Matt drowns (accidentally?) during the filming, Charlie again questions whether the present and past are separate entities in the Indians’ minds. He wonders whether the Indians knew what was “supposed” to happen and caused Matt’s death in attempts to make history repeat itself. As Charlie ponders the possibilities of the literal future, he asks difficult questions about temporality, such as “what will happen when we’ve gone? Will they [the tribe] disappear again for another two or three hundred years? Or disappear forever wiped out by some

killer and all that will be left of them is a film in which they're playing their own ancestors?" (201). The questions cannot be answered.

In a novel that emphasizes evolution from primitive states to more advanced states, beginning with Noah's ark and ending in a futuristic heaven, Barnes further complicates the inexorable march of history in "The Survivor." He presents two intermingled accounts of one supposed nuclear war's survivor, Kathleen. Kath appears to regress or progress, depending on whether the reader agrees with Kath's or the narrator's statements. According to Kath, the world is decaying after the "first big accident" resulting in a poison cloud, people's temporary concern over the origin of their milk and meat, and reindeer turning radioactive due to eating contaminated lichen (*History* 85). To escape, she sails from aptly-named Darwin, literally returning to the sea. Kath realizes the evolutionary significance of her decision: "Abandon ship, that was the old cry. Now it's abandon land. There's danger everywhere, but more on land. We all crawled out of the sea once, didn't we? Maybe that was a mistake. Now we're going back to it" (94). She will be one of, if not *the* most advanced creature on earth, as a surviving human exemplifying reverse evolution in her return to the watery birthplace of her ancestors. For Kath, "the future lay in the past" (96). Like the narrator of "The Dream," she imagines being both the last and first person on earth. However, the narrator paints a disturbing portrait of Kath as he depicts Kath's strange world as one of her own mental creation. It appears that Kath is increasingly delusional and thus decaying while reality remains untouched by catastrophe. According to the narrator, Kath experiences psychosomatic symptoms due to guilt and denial from her breakup with boyfriend Greg. She is suffering from "persistent victim syndrome," he claims; she exemplifies what the

narrator of the much later “Parenthesis” claims contemporary readers and lovers do to grapple with the history of the world: “We make up a story to cover the facts we don’t know or can’t accept; we keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them” (240). As a result, Kath’s sense of history is skewed. Even her daily timeline is fanciful; she predicts the future as reversion to the past as she wakes to the lull of waves against her boat: “I don’t keep count of the days. There isn’t any point, is there? We aren’t going to measure things in days any more. Days and weekends and holidays--that’s how the men in grey suits measure things. We’ll have to go back to some older cycle, sunrise to sunset for a start, and the moon will come into it, and the season, and the weather--the new, terrible weather we shall have to live under” (93). She plans to abide by a new, and old, natural temporal cycle in her postapocalyptic world. As a result, the narrator claims, she literally goes in circles when she is found east of Darwin.

“Shipwreck” also highlights art’s--and literature’s--capacity for presenting various versions of history. As Karl Marx claimed, history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce; in “Shipwreck” as the narrator recounts history and then the artist’s first repetition of history on the canvas, he ironically presents his own artistic textual creation (history’s second repetition) as farce. He also shows the potential of art to dissolve the boundaries between viewer (or reader), art, and the “truth” behind the art. The first half of the chapter describes the *Medusa*’s shipwreck and the dwindling of its survivors to fifteen barely-alive men onboard a rudely-constructed raft. The second half of the chapter ponders the translation of catastrophe into art, using the *Medusa*’s raft and Géricault’s painting of it. Barnes’s brilliant deconstruction of the painting’s relationship to the events it depicts examines the evolution of the past via art. It begins not with what

the artist does paint, but rather with what the artist does not paint (and the reader can view the painting in a special intertextual fold-out reprint of the painting mid-novel): the moment of shipwreck, mutinies, cannibalism, murder, a butterfly's arrival laden with symbolism, the rescue, etc. (*History* 126-7). The narrator shows that Géricault interprets historical facts and is forced to pick and choose in depicting them in an artistic medium--and he takes liberties in doing so, perhaps to cement his own name in history. The narrator comments, "Truth to life, at the start, to be sure; yet once the process gets under way, truth to art is the greater allegiance" (135). The result is a memorable image that has, nevertheless, "slipped history's anchor" and in doing so draws the explorer/reader/viewer inside the art (137). The narrator explains, "We don't just imagine the ferocious miseries on that fatal machine; we don't just become the sufferers. They become us" (137).

Braithwaite says about facts in literature, "If you don't know what's true, or what's meant to be true, then the value of what isn't true, or isn't meant to be true, becomes diminished" (*Flaubert's* 77). How much does the typical reader need to know--or not know--about Flaubert to fully enjoy *Flaubert's Parrot*? Braithwaite weighs the consequences of telling three stories--Flaubert's, his wife Ellen's, and his own--all of which are in dialogue with each other and with multiple other texts about Flaubert, such as letters and biographies. Braithwaite claims Ellen's story is true and perhaps that's why he chooses to tell Flaubert's (86). Does he mean that his account of Flaubert is not true? He also presents Flaubert's anticipated life chronology--at seventeen he wanted to live in a ruined seaside castle, at eighteen in Cochin-China, at twenty in Andalusia, at twenty-four in Smyrna as a bandit, at twenty-four in Asia as an explorer, at twenty-nine in South

America, etc.--embedded in sense of place, but the extent of its historical basis is questionable. Until he was thirty-five, Flaubert supposedly believed he lived in the past, too, and led apocryphal and metempsychotic lives back to the Roman empire (122-3). As mentioned above, biographer Braithwaite also overtly adjusts the facts of Louise Colet's relationship with Flaubert to bolster his own interpretation of his favorite author.

Both *A Maggot* and *Mantissa* similarly draw attention especially to textual manipulation of historical facts. In the prologue to *A Maggot*, Fowles (who includes his name and the date, 1985, at the bottom of the page) writes, "What follows may seem like a historical novel; but it is not" (n.p.). He echoes this in the epilogue, informing less knowledgeable readers that "Readers who know something of what that Manchester baby [Rebecca's baby, Ann Lee] was to become in the real world will not need telling how little this is a historical novel" (*Maggot* 449). He admits taking liberties with her birthdate and knowing virtually nothing about Ann's real mother, Lacy, and Wardley, although they all existed (449). Most significantly, Fowles defends his refusal to search for more information about them: "this is a maggot, not an attempt, either in fact or in language, to reproduce known history"; the reader will recall Fowles's earlier mention of the late seventeenth-century meaning of the word: whim or quirk (449, n.p.). (Nevertheless, the typical reader is encouraged to engage with the text and find more information about the historical Ann Lee and the Shakers, to satisfy curiosity). Fowles celebrates his intentional distortion and ignorance of history in his fiction, and the effect is both humorous and distasteful. Similarly, in *Mantissa*, he uses Erato to glorify the fictionalization of history. As a Greek goddess, she is adorned with rosebuds that weren't bred until 1923 and she claims to have written the *Odyssey* (*Mantissa* 58, 172). She also

infers that historians lie or at the very least distort the truth (80). As Dr. Delfie, she compares the hospital's current state to a concentration camp--another historical reference, and an unsavory one since Delfie's companion Staff Sister's initials further implicate her morals as questionable (136-7).

Further, several of Fowles and Barnes's novels end with hints of closure--enough to leave the reader partly satisfied--but, upon closer examination, none has a definitively closed ending. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has three endings. *The Magus* leaves Nicholas Urfe and Alison Kelly finally physically reunited but their romantic relationship's future tantalizingly unclear. *Staring at the Sun* concludes with Jean Serjeant watching the sunset from an airplane and contemplating death. These novels and *Mantissa*, *A Maggot*, *Flaubert's Parrot*, and *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* seem to end decisively but actually leave a number of plot threads dangling that even the observant polymorphously perverse reader is unable to tie together without him or her adding to the narrative. The novels that end conclusively on the surface actually have undercurrents of unsettled plot elements. Thus, both Fowles and Barnes resist what Salami describes as the classic realist text's inevitable closure and "reinstatement of the order that has been violated during the process of narration" (19). Both practice what Abbott terms "narrative jamming," whereby the authors use narrative to arouse and then refuse to satisfy the reader's expectations (9). Because they both hint of closure but "jam" the narratives, the authors make it impossible to definitively classify the novels' endings as adhering to a masculine realist model or a feminine experimental model. Culler speaks of the masculine urge to mastery as the force that drives narrative to its conclusion (91). A counterpart to this is part of Brooks's narratological Oedipal model, a

desire for denouement following climax: “Freud’s discussion of the pleasure principle charts the route an organism takes when, stimulated out of quiescence, it strives to regain equilibrium by finding the appropriate means of discharging the energy invested in it. According to this scheme, desire would be, even at its inception, a desire for the end” (Winnett 507-8). Fowles and Barnes’s narrators partly satisfy these joint urges for power and release but also mock the reader’s innate desire to know. They adhere to both models of narrative, and in doing so, to neither. They also force the reader to be engaged in forming the endings and in deciding what each novel conclusion entails.

Because so many of the characters in Fowles and Barnes’s postmodern fiction are aware of their metafictional status and are conscious of their own precarious lifespans, discussion of narrative endings and closure is not restricted to the reader or to the final pages of the novels. The *characters* talk about endings *throughout* the very texts they inhabit. For example, Miles describes “one of those splendidly inconclusive endings” to his muse-as-goddess as a way to end their latest story/relationship--not even halfway into the novel, as if he is seriously considering dissolving the growing text, his muse, and his own existence that early in one fell swoop. Aware that he is merely a textual character and will always be judged, he adds, “The critics would love it. They adore downbeat endings. It shows how brave they are, leading upbeat lives themselves” (*Mantissa* 99); this statement is perhaps to prepare the reader (who is also a critic of sorts) for the ending of *Mantissa*. Halfway through “his” own novel, Braithwaite also mentions the reader’s relationship with narrative endings. His concern is multiple endings, another form of indeterminacy. He suggests that a writer’s proposed two or more endings is not a choice,

for the reader must read both endings. He offers the following possibility to truly simulate narrative choices for closure:

At the back of the book would be a set of sealed envelopes in various colours. Each would be clearly marked on the outside: Traditional Happy Ending; Traditional Unhappy Ending; Traditional Half-and-Half Ending; Deus ex Machina; Modernist Arbitrary Ending; End of the World Ending; Cliffhanger Ending; Dream Ending; Opaque Ending; Surrealist Ending; and so on. You would be allowed only one, and would have to destroy the envelopes you didn't select. (*Flaubert's* 89)

Braithwaite's biography's ending is as difficult to classify as any of these.

Mantissa's ending is likewise deceptively simple and urges opposing gendered readings with a masculine one more obvious in action and word choice. Provoked by Erato (who is now a Japanese geisha) and turned into a hideous satyr, Miles leaps for her, strikes his head against the wall, and falls unconscious on the bed. At this point, the narrator calls attention to the approaching end of the story, terming the satyr's next change, back to Miles, "the *last* transformation" (*Mantissa* 195, emphasis added). If Miles is not dead, he appears to be a corpse to the casual observer. His body is pale, motionless, and face down, and the body is covered with a sheet and blanket; at this point in the story, the narrator does not specify if the sheet is pulled over his head as it would be over a dead body (195). The cuckoo clock stops. The attendants leave the room, and Miles, oblivious, "lies on his hospital bed, staring, in what must now be seen as his most characteristic position, blindly at the ceiling..." (196). Miles's domination over his muse is over; she wins.

Miles, however, is not actually dead, and the West Indian nurse speaks to his prone body as though Miles will return to consciousness. Further, he is “conscious only of a luminous and infinite haze, as if he were floating, godlike, alpha and omega (and all between), over a sea of vapor” (*Mantissa* 196), which is an almost verbatim description of his initial situation: “It was conscious of a luminous and infinite haze, as if it were floating, godlike, alpha and omega, over a sea of vapor...” (3). Miles is not ending his journey; he is returning to the beginning once again--a beginning of his own making, for the words are the text he “births” at the end of the first section of the novel. What happens to his muse is not clear. The ceased cuckoo clock also makes one more sound; in *The Fiction of John Fowles: A Myth for Our Time*, Carol M. Barnum asks whether its voice is a symbol of the descent of time (126)--a further indication that a new life with its accompanying timeline is begun.

A Maggot, likewise, appears to conclude decisively by informing the reader what happens to the major characters in the novel. Ayscough concludes his search for Bartholomew and suggests to his employer that both Bartholomew and Dick committed suicide. Rebecca is allowed to return home, gives birth to her child, and appears content with her new life as a mother. The epilogue reveals that the baby is Ann Lee, and her religious dissent started the Shaker movement.

Though these loose narrative ends are tied together, Ayscough’s (and Fowles’s) conclusions are not as satisfying as they initially appear. The reader hears all that Ayscough does via the novel’s format but must reach a similar conclusion to his about Bartholomew’s disappearance because there are no answers. There are problems with the testimonies; they do not agree, and no single testimony is ultimately privileged as the

“true” account of Bartholomew’s endeavors. The reader does not learn Ayscough’s employer’s reaction to his “findings” or Bartholomew’s whereabouts. Dick’s death, the sequence of events within the cave, Bartholomew’s motivations--all remains shrouded in mystery. Even Ann’s birth, which seems to bring closure to Rebecca’s tale, is complicated both by the beginning of the novel and the epilogue which introduces a number of new questions. Barnum points out that the opening of *A Maggot* takes place on the eve of May Day, a Celtic holiday celebrating rebirth after winter (*Fiction* 131). Ann’s literal birth marks another beginning of a new journey. The ending is actually the beginning of a new life and an entirely new (untold) tale.

Like Ayscough, Braithwaite ceases his quest for the truth. He realizes that he has learned all that he can and exhausted every possibility of knowledge-seeking. He makes it clear that the journey is over. He also infuses the final chapter with the subject of death, debating theories about Flaubert’s passing. He visits Flaubert’s grave and the Museum of Natural History in hopes of finally finding Flaubert’s inspiration for Loulou. The latter place, too, is a grave for his hopes and is described as a “burial vault...an ambivalent room, half-morgue and half-purgatory” (*Flaubert’s* 189-90). All appearances indicate that Braithwaite’s quest must end.

The final image of closure, with Braithwaite staring at three pesticide-sprinkled Amazonian parrots then turning away, perhaps in resignation, is somewhat upended by the final line: “Perhaps it was one of them” (*Flaubert’s* 190). One imagines Braithwaite continuing the search with that carefully poised “Perhaps” in the final line, for the reader has learned that Braithwaite thrives on possibilities and the eternal search for literary connections. One pictures him writing another book, unearthing more fascinating trivia

about Flaubert, and perhaps even finding more parrots along the way. If so, Braithwaite, like Miles in *Mantissa*, is once more at the beginning of his journey.

Individual chapters in *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* likewise cloak masculine endings in feminine trappings, and vice versa. In “The Survivor,” Kath seems to accept that her sense of reality is false and calls it fabrication. Terms of finality infuse the text: the nightmare leaves her, and she “finally decided” she is deceiving herself. She accepts her fate: “If she had to die then she would” (*History* 110). The reader is assured by this point that Kath really was delusional. However, this masculine conclusiveness is undercut by the final paragraph, in the narrator’s voice, which presents Kath still on her island in the Torres Strait. The reader is thrust back into Kath’s apparent delusion in direct contradiction of what he or she just read. What happens to Kath? Also, Kath’s cat Linda gives birth to five kittens--a symbol of new beginnings rather than endings. In “The Visitors,” Franklin survives physically and American Special Forces bring an end to the terrorist attack. But what happens to Franklin afterwards, and what happens to his assistant Tricia Maitland, is not disclosed. Similarly, in “Upstream!” Charlie survives and his relationship with his girlfriend apparently ends--or does it? The reader only has one side of the story. The similar quests for Noah’s ark in “The Mountain” and “Project Ararat” both come to an end, but “The Mountain” ends with central troubling questions for both the reader and Miss Logan: How did lady explorer Miss Fergusson fall? Was it intentional? The narrator notes, “This dilemma was to preoccupy Miss Logan for years to come” (168). In “Project Ararat,” astronaut Spike Tiggler announces a second Project Ararat in the final sentence of the chapter, despite the farcical nature of the first (278). The definitive closure of “The Wars of Religion” (the

judge's pronouncement and sentence) and "Shipwreck" (the art critic's judgment) are humorously undermined, apparently by relatives of the stowaway aboard Noah's ark; in the first case, a termite eats the judge's closing statement (79-80), and in the second, woodworm probably live within the frame of the painting (139).

In conclusion, Fowles and Barnes suggest both awareness of and skepticism toward rigid gender classifications in their texts by manipulating subjectivities, gendered plot lines, and historical constructions in ways that challenge the reader's ideological perceptions. They are postmodern and postmodernist writers, but to critique gendered narrative forms, they must go beyond the postmodern writer's usual "bag of tricks." Between the lines, they urge the reader's engagement with their texts. It is up to the reader to accept the challenge. Braithwaite asks, "is there a perfect reader somewhere, a total reader?" (*Flaubert's* 75). Page calls for reconceptualizing gender as a fluid construction (*Literary* 15); a total reader must enter a text mentally in drag, ready to explore in all senses of the term and eager to find delight in polymorphous perversity. A perfect reader of the postmodern novel must paradoxically be consciously blind to gender--like remembering to forget--with every turn of the page and ideally be fully male and female, fully masculine and feminine, which is an impossibility that Fowles and Barnes both recognize and celebrate. Ultimately, the reader-as-explorer is left with an open invitation to recognize the power of gender, celebrate conscious abandonment of its deployment as a restrictive form, and see where the textual landscape leads.

CONCLUSION

“In my writing I am acting as a map maker...”

(William S. Burroughs)

Thus the reader and I end our exploration and arrive, just as Nicholas Urfe does in *The Magus*, “where we started”--and only now can we truly “know the place for the first time.” The timely message from T. S. Eliot, apparently left by enigmatic magus Maurice Conchis for a confused and idealistic Urfe on the beach at Bourani, can be similarly adopted here at the conclusion of my study. The reader arrives once again at the beginning of each of Fowles and Barnes’s postmodern novels--at the beginning of Kath Ferris’s oceanic flight from radioactive reindeer, actor Charlie’s journey into the jungle, and Charles Smithson’s walk along the Cobb and into Sarah Woodruff’s own “godgame” of sorts, for example--ready to begin anew the marvelous process of textual exploration. Poised at each first page, he or she now “polymorphously perverse” is equipped to read and explore their geographical, national, and textual landscapes in a strikingly pleasurable way.

An understanding of gendered landscapes in postmodern novels can enrich a reader’s experience by allowing--or forcing--him or her to pay attention to details otherwise overlooked (what landscape is gendered, and why, how, where, and when is it gendered?), and these are details that better reveal the characters’ motivations and psychological transformations on their narrative journeys. For example, Jean Serjeant’s reaction to the Grand Canyon indicates much more about her amazement at the sight of something so large and impressive; it tells the reader specifically about her relationship to the natural world, to her childhood, to her grown son, and to her sense of human

ephemerality especially as a middle-aged single woman. Further, the insight gained from such close inspection of gendered landscapes is a pleasurable process. It enlarges the reading experience. It further dissolves the distance established between character and reader. It also forces the reader out of his or her theoretical “comfort zone” into uncharted novelistic territory and encourages active exploration in both senses of the term as explained above.

Fowles and Barnes make each novel, so different in form and subject, a kind of “engendered Eden”--hence the title of this project. Each is “engendered” because it is birthed, created, brought forth from a creative mind, and placed onto the printed page for reader consumption but also “en-gendered,” specifically infused with feminized and masculinized features in its geographical, national, and textual landscapes for the reader to recognize. Fowles and Barnes’s oeuvres are also symbolic textual Edens in that they can be read as “perfect” examples of gender experimentation on multiple interpretive levels. They are also a starting point, a representative beginning place rich with possibilities and provocative new theoretical ideas, for British and other post-postmodern novelists to refer to and yearn for as they both write the future and write of the future.

A study of gendered landscapes in Fowles and Barnes’s novels can lead the reader to question the hereafter of the British novel. In some respects, depictions of geographical landscapes in the British novel may not change drastically in the near future, though literary depictions of motivations behind them probably will. Generally, such places in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century novel are enticing but dangerous and feminized via a number of techniques as the ideal Victorian woman, an impossible erotic, virginal, maternal figure who fulfills masculine fantasies. The protagonist actively quests

into the unknown landscape in search of something, and he or she (usually he in my study) projects both romantic ideals *and* the desire for metaphorical return to the safety of the womb onto the landscape. In the late twentieth-century novels, the protagonist generally runs *from* something, stumbling into a similarly exotic landscape that he or she then feminizes as simultaneously erotic and virginal but more often as an alluring but dangerous womb. From the landscape, he or she gains a new perspective on the dangers of idealizing inauthentic relationships. The principle difference between the two sets of novels examined above is the reason why the protagonist leaves one landscape for the eventually feminized one, which affects the ways he or she subsequently genders the newly discovered landscape and the former one.

In the future, it is likely that experimental authors will depict characters venturing forth into unknown territories, for the thrill of discovery in otherworldly, forbidden, or mysterious landscapes in the adventure story continues to capture readers' attention; the popularity of comparatively recent fiction such as J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* saga, and Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* attests to this prediction. They will also presumably create characters who try to escape their conventional surroundings, flee, and find themselves unexpectedly in Edenic worlds. The "perfect" natural landscape continues to draw in the explorer. In both possible cases, the protagonists will probably continue to idealize their geographical surroundings and seek romantic perfection and a return to innocence in a specific place. However, I anticipate a proliferation of large-scale merged landscapes, and I was surprised to find only one definitive one within Fowles and Barnes's novels in my study. The humility that Fowles and Barnes's postmodern protagonists eventually exhibit may become a

rarity. As humanity continues to invent ways to annihilate all life with technological “advances,” to refashion geographical landscape on a cataclysmic scale, the entire world could become a merged landscape again and again via authors’ pens. Technological developments could also mold humanity’s image of Eden, forever altering literary use of the mythic metaphor. Science and medicine may allow “return to the womb” by further uncovering the mysteries of prenatal psychological development and the unarticulated links that form between mother and unborn child. Likewise, landscape-as-tomb may become a concept of the past as scientists continually seek ways to outsmart death, combat disease, and increase longevity. The desire to overcome death could be realized.

In attempting to predict the future of depictions of geographical landscapes in the British novel, it is important to remember the role that fiction plays no matter the time or place in which it is written or read. Novels can be retellings of the past, negotiations with the present, predictions of the time to come, or pleasurable ways of “escaping” the imagined future. Fowles and Barnes’s oeuvres accomplish all four of these goals. Their depiction of a post-apocalyptic landscape, for example, is *not* an indication that they believe they are painting the future but rather an imaginative, possibly tongue-in-cheek way of presenting a potential future problem and one way of dealing with it. Novelists are not (solely, intentionally) prognosticators; they are entertainers, educators, and examiners of the human condition. They reflect the societal concerns of their time and will undoubtedly continue to do so.

I am hopeful that Fowles and Barnes’s abundant use (and inherent critique--a beneficial, forward-looking step) of male protagonists who overtly feminize geographical landscapes, building on a well-established tradition steeped in supposed nature/culture

divisions as explained above, will give way to an even more conscientious literary alternative. I do not exclusively suggest the creation of female protagonists associating masculine characteristics with their physical surroundings, directly countering earlier gendering models. To do so seems to “solve” one problem by merely replacing it with another. Instead, I advocate either the complete removal of gender associations attached to geographical landscapes or the continued deliberate mingling of gender associations that I argue both Fowles and Barnes employ. Either option dismantles issues of control that lock one gender into an undeserved subservient position.

I am equally hopeful that national landscapes in future British novels will resist rigidly dualistic gender labels that condemn each gender to stereotypical characteristics. While England is not overtly gendered in the turn-of-the-twentieth- or twenty-first-century novels in nearly the same overt way that geographical landscapes are (i.e. via pronoun references, intense emotional reactions, references to female anatomy, and identification with female characters), the country across time serves as both a masculine and feminine national landscape. While characters may continue to cling to the land they deem their home as a “mother country,” for the need for a “homeplace” continues to resonate, they may also continue to exhibit authentic changeable attitudes toward the national landscape. While Fowles and Barnes evade overly simplistic male/female binaries and celebrate postmodern fragmentation in their novels, one can hope that such honest treatment of gender will continue as the world external to the novel, though faced with human conflict, strives for peace.

Fowles and Barnes’s most exciting re-envisioning of landscape is that of the textual landscape as the authors dispute an ingrained recognition of literary plot as a

masculine process of desire. As discussed above, their textual landscapes do not fit neatly into either an Oedipal narratological model or one fashioned by a feminist narratological viewpoint. Fowles and Barnes unabashedly lump together characteristics of both models. Their innovations should lead to other novelists attempting to do the same, perhaps even more overtly, and to scholars reexamining other novels from an androgynous narratological perspective.

If my work is read as a textual landscape, its reader is an explorer in both senses of the word as used throughout my study. The reader's eyes traverse the text as the reader follows my arguments. I hope that he or she also finds intellectual pleasure in encountering the textual body just as Fowles and Barnes's polymorphously perverse reader discovers pleasure, often unexpected, in encounters with their postmodern novels. As a work of criticism rather than fiction, however, my text cannot be examined thoroughly for gender markers in the same way as the fictional works of Fowles and Barnes can. My project includes no geographical or national landscapes of my own creative design--no Bourani, no Undercliff, no England, England--and as a carefully "plotted" work adhering to graduate school writing conventions, it cannot freely experiment with standards of form and argumentation. I cannot write a fictional piece of extensive analysis. But my purpose is not to break stylistic boundaries. My purpose is to uncover and articulate the intricacies of gender within multiple landscapes of geography, nation, and text to thereby show how the reader is pushed to be more critically aware and theoretically androgynous by choice.

Besides uncovering Fowles and Barnes's foundation of intricately gendered landscapes on which future novelists can build in my own textual landscape, a study of

gendered geographical, national, and textual landscapes in Fowles and Barnes's postmodern novels is significant because it challenges readers to negotiate further with the tangled theoretical issues that underpin their texts, especially postmodern psychoanalytic theory, re-consideration of nature-as-woman, and challenges to biological essentialism. Used carefully with recognition of biased aspects, psychoanalytic theory can continue to provide valuable critical perspectives of literature. Especially because it is linked to the excavation of place, the uncovering of character motivations, celebration of fragmentation, and the creation of polymorphously perverse readers, it remains a relevant discourse.

Similarly, my study opens the metaphorical door to reconsideration of nature-as-woman, building on the extensive studies of woman-as-nature. With the proliferation of gender studies and growing prevalence of identity issues within academia, Fowles and Barnes's gendered novelistic landscapes may begin to facilitate the dissolution of opposition between a feminized nature and masculine culture, reason, and art. The authors' complicated presentations of landscape certainly challenge each of the belief system "options" available to feminists, especially ecofeminists--positions they are pushed to espouse. In postmodern fashion, they suggest that deliberate, obvious fragmentation of the nature-as-woman analogy is most fruitful in battling biological essentialism. As Fowles and Barnes recognize the shortcomings of biological essentialist viewpoints but acknowledge their ingrained status and use them parodically and in combination to undermine them, they create a new understanding of gender and its fluidity within text.

Perhaps the dissolution of biological essentialism will begin external to the literary world and greatly influence the literary world rather than the other way around. Again, as humanity continues to develop sophisticated technologies and broaden its understanding of human biology, will genders begin to merge and morph more readily? Already the distinctions between “traditional” notions of femaleness and maleness, between femininity and masculinity, are dissolving steadily. The reader lives in a society in which the medical profession carries out successful gender reassignment surgeries, women engage in armed combat for the United States government, and “the Pregnant Man” Thomas Beatie gave birth and is pregnant again. Perhaps notions of “feminizing” and “masculinizing” will become obsolete.

My study of gendered landscapes in selected postmodern novels by Fowles and Barnes is the equivalent of standing at the gates of a garden, peering down the path inside that leads through it. Multiple future extensions of the study are possible: an in-depth examination of geographical, national, and textual landscapes in all of Fowles and Barnes’s novels and examination of other postmodern novels, both British and other nationalities. Each would broaden our contemporary understanding of gender and its complicated roles within literature. Perhaps someone in a hundred years will look back at Fowles and Barnes’s novels and conduct a similar study of gendered landscapes, comparing them with novels written at the turn of the twenty-second century, just as I have looked back a century and examined the past to better explicate the present and predict the future of landscape depictions in the British novel. Via their sophisticated geographical, national, and textual landscapes, Fowles and Barnes leave a literary legacy:

novels that, in postmodern fashion, create pleasure-seeking readers-as-explorers who celebrate the certainty of gender uncertainty.

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