The Collector by John Fowles is about a clerk called, Clegg who develops an obsession with a young art student, Miranda. When Clegg wins the pools, he uses the prize money to devise a plan to kidnap and hold Miranda his prisoner. The Collector has persuaded me to feel sympathy for and understanding of the mind of a sexual predator through the characterisation of Clegg.

Point of view has been used to persuade me to view Clegg as a victim. Clegg persuades us to believe he is a victim because in Part 1 he explains how he has always struggled to maintain relationships with women and has been rejected by them in the past. ‘I know I don’t have what it is that girls look for…’ Clegg explains that his mother was a prostitute and abandoned him forcing him into his Aunt’s care, with whom he does not have a healthy relationship with. Clegg also admits that he is unable to perform sexually with a woman. According to Clegg he has been mistreated by women his whole life which provides reasons for me to feel sympathy for him. When Clegg kidnaps Miranda, I almost agreed with Clegg that his actions were justified.

Like typical sexual predators, Clegg feels powerless and rejected by women. Most sexual predators feel powerless as they are usually unable to have a healthy relationship with a woman or perform sexually. These feelings of powerlessness lead Clegg to indulge in
voyeurism. Voyeurs gain sexual gratification by watching their victims whilst in a private moment, such as undressing etc. Clegg is a voyeur and takes pictures of Miranda after he has drugged her, ‘I can take my time with the pictures, they don’t talk back to me.’ Clegg does not have to perform as a loving partner and he does not have to communicate with a living woman. He can impose his fantasy onto the pictures and put himself into a position of power. This portrayal of Clegg assisted me to understand how the minds of sexual predators work.

After reading The Collector I almost feel sympathy for sexual predators. Due to this novel, I can understand that it is feelings of powerlessness that lead sexual predators to commit sexual crimes.