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Original Articles

The Energy of Creating: The Conceptualised Framework and Its Illusion in John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

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【Abstract】

John Fowles's, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), is one of the most important works of the twentieth-century British literature. This postmodern novel can offer its readers concepts from several theoretical schools and the opportunity to develop an awareness of cultural, social, and textual structures hidden beneath the text. A theoretical perspective transformed a broad range of literary tendencies and movements during the twentieth century. It has provided students of literature at universities with a bright beacon over the past three decades. On the other hand, there have been criticisms of the rigidity with which such theories have been used in criticism of literary works. Although a theoretical reading of this text is a convenience, this method of reading cannot understand the novel fully or in depth. This paper will explore the extent to which any reading can provide dynamic findings, apart from a conceptualised method of reading, as the author depicts the breakdown of a framework that can be read structurally from past documents and literary theories.

Key words: English literature, British culture, Literary theory, John Fowles

研究論文

創作へのエネルギー
－ジョン・ファウルズ『フランス軍中尉の女』における概念化された枠組みとその幻想－

中妻　結[1)*]

【要　旨】

ジョン・ファウルズの『フランス軍中尉の女』は、20 世紀に成立した文学理論の影響を作者自身が自覚的に反映したポストモダニズム文学の代表作である。構造主義や記号学、マルクス主義文学批評やフェミニズム論など多様な理論は、作品の背景に置かれた文化や社会を見つめながら文学を構造的、論理的に読むことを可能にした。現代に至るまで文学評論、文学批評に、そして大学の文学部の教育に多大なる影響を与えている。一方で、批評理論による読みは、文学作品を硬直化させていくことへの批判もある。本論文は、ヴィクトリア朝の様々な書物から意識的に造形された記号的な登場人物や、20 世紀初頭の実存主義や 1960 年代に成立したインターテクスチュアリティの理論によって概念化された物語構造を持つ『フランス軍中尉の女』の中で、批評理論そのものが概念化された物語の枠組みからはずれていく現象を解き明かす。一方で、作者が過去の書物や文学理論から構造的に読み解くことができる枠組みの破綻を描きながらも、文学の世界に悲観的に向き合うことなく、創作し続けるエネルギーを作品中で生み出していることを指摘する。

キーワード：英文学、イギリス文化、文学理論、ジョン・ファウルズ

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1. Introduction

A theoretical perspective, which transformed a broad range of literary tendencies and movements alongside modern literary theory and cultural studies during the twentieth century, has provided students of literature with a bright beacon over the past three decades. One admirable aspect of this modern trend is the fact that students now interpret literature systematically, in line with Culler's famous 1997 definition of literary theory as "the systematic account of the nature of literature and of the methods for analysing it" (p.1). Another important element is that, due to the introduction of deconstruction, feminist theory, psychoanalysis, Marxist criticism, and postcolonialism, deeper, subjective interpretations can relate literary texts culturally, politically, and historically to readers.

Eagleton affirmed the achievement of literary theory in his well-known and remarkable introduction to literary theory in 1996:

> There are those who have 'literary values' in their bones, and those who languish in the outer darkness. One important reason for the growth of literary theory since the 1960s was the gradual breakdown of this assumption, under the impact of new kinds of students entering higher education from supposedly 'uncultivated' backgrounds. (p.viii)

Eagleton (1996) asserts that literature and the arts are always shaped by social and political practices: theory is interested in the "human meaning, value, language, feeling and experience"' of these artefacts, as cultivated by "broader, deeper beliefs about the nature of human individuals and societies, problems of power and sexuality, interpretations of past history, versions of the present and hopes for the future" (p.170). Bertens (2014), the famous author of a guide to literary theory, argued that we could not return to the time before theory "with the illusion that our home is theory-free" (p.3), even if some complain about its difficulties or claim that theory has no direct effect on what really occurs in society. Theoretical approaches can indeed help students of literature read texts of various kinds analytically because they place readers in a relationship with literature, observing the reflection and influence of literature and society, their real world.

This paper argues that reading John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* can allow students to explore concepts from several theoretical schools and the opportunity to develop an awareness of cultural, social, and textual structures hidden beneath the text. The main character, Charles, is a Victorian gentleman who devotes himself to Darwinism. Believing that he can become a new man, liberated from Victorian respectability and beliefs, he searches for his love for Sarah, a mysterious, sophisticated woman, and his free self. The author makes three alternative endings after he seeks for her. Salami (1992) has defined this novel aptly, arguing that it invites its readers "to verify the 'truths' of narrative and to compare and construct the 'realistic' Victorian norms and styles of narrative with a self-conscious, postmodernist narrative technique" (p.18). According to Acheson (2013), the book "is partly an existential, partly a metafictional, partly a postmodern and partly a historical novel" (p.6). Although a theoretical reading of this text is a convenience, this method of reading cannot understand the novel fully or in depth. Literature is not a conceptualised set of past documents or theoretical schools. As Fowles's novel consists of Victorian documents and modern theoretical documents, this paper will explore the extent to which any reading can provide dynamic findings, apart from a conceptualised method of reading.

2. The Victorian framework

2.1 Rewriting the Victorians

Fowles relied on a huge number of written sources, drawn from Victorian society, culture, and people, when he created Charles's inward narrative. Lowenthal (1985), who notes that fiction differs from history in its way of dealing with the past, argues that "some novelists relegate historians to the 'outside' of the past while arrogating to themselves the 'inner' undocumentable truths" (p.227). Fowles, however, unfolds "documentable" truths to create his fiction. The narrator can pretend "to know [his] characters' minds and innermost thoughts," provided that he is "writing in (just as [he has] assumed some of the vocabulary and 'voice' of) a convention universally accepted at the time of [his] story" (Fowles, 2005, p.97).

Fowles's dependence on Victorian documents enables him to consciously narrate Charles's inner self. His relationship with Sarah and his conflict between her and "the right girl," Ernestina, who is his fiancé, are novelistic. His inner conflict leads to his moralistic lesson and is resolved with "a thoroughly traditional ending" (Fowles, 2005, p.327) in Chapter 44. This traditional ending is borrowed from Victorian novels with happy endings, such as Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield and Great Expectations*: for, according to Schweizer (2011), Dickens reflects his personal inner crisis in his life on his characters' conflicts and provides them with "the virtuous path of Victorian self-improvement and earnestness to happiness" (p.146). The ending, immediately rejected by the narrator in the next chapter, includes a didactical message: "one learnt to be what one was" (Fowles, 2005, p.324).

In describing the typical Victorian "double mind" of Charles, whose body is wickedly sexual, undermining the Christian ideal of life while he pretends to be a man of integrity, the narrator explains that the minds of Victorian men can be understood better by "the deletions and alterations of their autobiographies than from the published versions" or they can be quoted from poems by poets such as "Tennyson, Clough, Arnold, Hardy" (Fowles, 2005, p.354). Charles is a character constructed from Victorian texts, including diaries, poems, and novels.

As well as Charles, all of the characters, except Sarah, are assumed to be straightforward and conclusive, as if they existed in documents containing realistic and typical characters from the Victorian period. As Foster (1994) observes, "one of the attractions of the Victorian society as subject matter for Fowles is its strong impulse toward unipolarism, toward unthinking conformity" (p.76). His characterisation of typical Victorian people reflects the use of words that associate them with a single pole. For instance, there is the repellent Mrs Poulteney, who shows off her charity in a haughty way by employing Sarah. Although she combines numerous aspects of the villainous female characters in Victorian novels, the important point is that Mrs Poulteney's belief in Christianity depends on facts and statistics. She believes that her fate after death will be determined by the number of charitable activities she carried out in her lifetime:

> As she lay in her bedroom she reflected on the terrible mathematical doubt that increasingly haunted her; whether the Lord calculated charity by what one had given or by what one could have afforded to give. Here she had better data than the vicar. She had given considerable sums to the church; but she knew they fell far short of the prescribed one-tenth to be parted with by serious candidates for paradise." (Fowles, 2005, p.27)

She is contemptuous even of the vicar because her mathematical data is more accurate than his religious

mind in defining an advantageous transaction with God. Her belief in "data" makes her a kind of mother to Fowles, who creates his characters from the sum of knowledge drawn from historical documents.

Ernestina, the wilful daughter of a wealthy and self-made Victorian merchant, is also described using a methodical adverb. She is a typical girl of the Victorian period, having "the right face for her age . . . in Phiz's work, in John Leech's" (Fowles, 2005, p.31): "her acuteness was largely constituted, intellectually as alphabetically, by a mere cuteness" (Fowles, 2005, p 147). Both Ernestina and Mrs Poulteney are systematically described using terms that relate to methodical procedures: "mathematical" and "alphabetically."

Sam, a Charles's servant, also has a relatively simple personality, based on a characteristic element of Dickensian characters. In the earlier scene, he is compared to Sam Weller in Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* because he is a typical man, called "a snob" because of his dandified cockney form, derived from the stage version of Dickens's novel (Fowles, 2005, p.46). Later, his master Charles "begin[s] to wonder if there [isn't] something of a Uriah Heep begging to erupt on the surface of Sam's personality; a certain duplicity" (Fowles, 2005, p.316) because he mentions his rebellious idea of opening a shop in the near future.[1] Sam is designed to enact an identity shaped by Victorian novels that reflects typical statements of the age. Charles, Sam, Ernestina, and Mrs Poulteney are all described using words that categorise them as particular characters.

Conversely, Sarah is a sort of agent, who redeems other characters from captivity within categories. For instance, she releases Sam from a class distinction shaped by the dichotomy between himself and Charles the master. Landrum (1996), who explains Sam's "emancipations and class struggle" in Marxian terms,[2] observes that his frustration with the innocent master "who wins the undying loyalty of his servant," causes "his 'revolution' against Charles" (pp.106–107). Since his "revolution" begins when he watches Sarah and Charles in the Undercliff with Mary, his lover, "the sexual liaison [⋯] between Charles and Sarah begins to form the path to emancipation for Sam and Mary" (Landrum, 1996, p.109). He succeeds in transforming himself from a mere servant serving the middle class to a self-made merchant because of Charles, who has fallen for Sarah's sexual charms. Through the presence of Sarah, Sam, originally a Victorian traditional servant, traces a different path from his original character in the Dickens's Victorian novel.

2.2 Diverging from the Victorian framework

While Charles's first ending can be categorised as a textual child of the Victorian novel, the narrator living in the 1960s offers, in place of the didactical ending, two alternative final scenes, in which Charles's life unfolds before him as if he had the right to choose the ending of the novel. The other two endings release him from that fictional Victorian world because Sarah has disrupted the traditional pathway of his life. The narrator shares his own opinion of the reality of the novel and our world in Chapter 13:

> I could fill a book with reasons, and they would all be true, though not true of all. Only one same reason is shared by all of us: we wish to create worlds as real as, but other than the world that is. Or was. This is why we cannot plan. We know a world is an organism, not a machine. We also know that a genuinely created world must be independent of its creator; a planned world (a world that fully reveals its planning) is a dead world. (Fowles, 2005, p.98)

The world, composed of typical Victorian people and planned using Victorian novels, is shaken up by Sarah, who redeems Charles from the "planned world." She leads him to her stage, urging him to choose a free way of life. Her stage, or the author's, is (in the 1960s) a world in which people create independent selves. Charles is free of the Victorian ending and the single-pole category drawn from old documents.

To liberate him from the framework as a categorised character, Sarah paradoxically creates herself as an "outcast" in the Victorian period. She walks to Ware Common, exposing herself to the public and playing the role of a disreputable woman. This identity, which she enacts as a French lieutenant's woman, reflects Sarah's intention to become a fallen woman because she is not, in fact, a lieutenant's mistress.[3] Her identity is revealed in the brotherhood-unit discussion between Dr Grogan and Charles, who "undermine the reified edifice of gender identity and question the cultural institution of distinct, oppositional difference" (Raaberg, 2001, p.534–535).[4] As the other characters are categorised as typical personalities, the doctor treats her as a "mad woman" by using his study of madness. When he warns Charles that Sarah has deceived him, he gives him a book, in which "after analysing the evidence brought before the court [of a woman with a propensity], the Herr Doktor proceeds […] to explain the mental illness we today call hysteria" (Fowles, 2005, p.226). Dr Grogan is a typical Victorian in his belief in absolute documented evidence; from his perspective, a female outsider should be categorised with a single word: madness. Sarah lends herself to an identity constructed by a book of Victorian medical science.

Charles rejects Dr Grogan's scientific volume because Sarah is "to him both an innocent victim and a wild, abandoned woman" (Fowles, 2005, p.172). Although the choice is made by his "conscience," it is "the path formerly led by Sarah" (Fowles, 2005, p.234). What is interesting is that, after he makes his choice, Dr Grogan, who gave Charles the book about madness, is portrayed as a character in the other book. He is recognised as the noblest of King Arthur's knights, "Sir Galahad," who is "shown Guinevere [as] a whore" by Charles (Fowles, 2005, p.230). Sir Galahad caused the collapse of the Round Table by denouncing the illegitimate relationship between King Arthur and Guinevere, his mistress. For Charles, his study of madness could destroy his relationship with Sarah. If the operator of Charles's life is Sarah, the story (replaced by Dr Grogan's scientific volume) is offered by her. Because of Sarah, Charles can escape from the Victorian framework established by Dr Grogan's volume, leaving the doctor inside the other traditional story. Although Charles is perplexed by Sarah's mysterious presence, he has the pleasure of driving himself to leap into a new age by linking with her wilderness and "subliminal" (Fowles, 2005, p.248) power.

Hutcheon (1986) observes that Sarah is "an allegory of the narrator-novelist's freedom of creating of the novel itself" (p.128). Drawing on Fowles's argument about human art, McSweeney (1983) notes that Fowles, in his literary practice, "denies that the function of art is self-expression, a doctrine he regards as tyrannizing the modern artist and leading to depreciation of the craft of art" (p.104) because "the essential value of the productions of the imagination" is freedom in art (p.111). The freedom to create is a pivotal axis in the novel, allowing Sarah to create a plot in which Charles has free will. Charles's struggle with and alienation from the Victorian society is a feature that he shares with Dickens's Pip and Hardy's Tess and Jude. As Foster (1994) wrote: "The chief difference between their situations and Charles's is that his creator possesses an adequate terminology to

discuss his plight” (p.73). Sarah, who has the modern terms needed to interpret Charles's Victorian struggle, leads him toward the Victorians' future, which will be experienced by modernists and existentialists in the twentieth century, by using the theoretical account of his life. He is forced to enact his modern identity through the next double endings.

3. The framework of twentieth-century theories

3.1 Enacting a modern identity through the endings

In the first of the two additional endings, it is obvious that Charles's life is moved by Sarah's “parables,” which he can never understand. Here, he asks Sarah, “Shall I ever understand your parables?” and her “head [···] shakes with a mute vehemence” (Fowles, 2005, p.439). The various stories, which she has produced to direct his life before this ending, are all lessons, illustrating ways for him to gain her love. Her present-day life among the Pre-Raphaelites, who led an art movement against the Victorian rigid morality and virtues, is one of the parables of a future life which she shows Charles.

The plot of the second one of the double endings diverges from the first. In this ending, Charles leaves Sarah because he notices that his life is following a plot that she has written. He “[sees] the reality” : “She could give only to possess; and possess him” (Fowles, 2005, p.443), so he “has at last found an atom of faith in himself, a true uniqueness, on which to build” (Fowles, 2005, p.445). He gains his free self, which no one can transform into the hero of a story. Hutcheon (1986) observes that there are “three gods in the second ending: Sarah, the narrating novelist, and Fowles – whose various worlds each logically allow only this ending – in structure, artistic terms and in thematic, moral ones” (p.132). The three gods attempt to liberate Charles from a plot written by an author or a god, using the terms of their era, and imposing “a true uniqueness” on his subjectivity. The “uniqueness” of his free self is structured by the modern gaze. Having ‘a true uniqueness’ becomes the code for a standard life in the discourse and logic of the 1960s. The final ending is the story of his new identity, infused by other hands.

3.2 Fictionalising a modern notion: existentialism

In view of all this, the key to understanding *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is to analyse theoretical modes because the book consists, not only of classic realism, but also of the modes of modernism and postmodernism. For example, Charles's lust for freedom and individuality is based on existentialism. Fowles (1998) admitted that he was a novelist drawn to an existential concept that he discussed in a 1969 essay: “I chose ten years ago to be a writer – chose in the existentialist sense of the act of choosing” (p.6). For Fowles, the Victorians after 1850 are undifferentiated from the existentialists of the 1960s because they had already faced “personal dilemmas” in “infinite space and time” after “a Victorian seriousness of purpose and sensitivity” and “the great iron structures of their philosophies, religions, and social stratifications” were gradually destroyed, due to Darwin's theory of evolution (p.18). In this novel, Fowles resolves, through the lives of typical Victorians, the existentialist idea that a character has the right to choose his or her own life. In this concept, nobody manipulates another person's life or defines another person's identity.

The most remarkable episode, which is linked to an existentialist novel, Sartre's *Nausea*, is the moment when Charles vomits in a shabby brothel at the end of his journey to the depths of despair. This journey derives from an image of the voyage to hell, depicted in many narratives from Ancient Greek

mythology. The descent to the Underworld is traditionally accompanied by resurrection into the world of mythology.[5] In the Underworld, as in hell, a mythological hero experiences suffering to purge his original sin (Dowden, 2011, 288). Charles's mythical narrative journey could have been a journey of salvation: the acquisition of a new self, an existentialist's free self.

However, he chooses the wrong way to purge his sins and his purification fails. His determination to take this journey to the Underworld is blunted by sexual desire: "he needed a woman, he needed intercourse. He needed a last debauch, as he sometimes needed a purge" (Fowles, 2005, p.291). The sin he creates for himself is an offence against the morality of Victorians like Mrs. Poulteney. He does not fall into hell under the ground of a new world but into the depths of Victorian civil society.

During his descent into Hades, in despair over his destiny to marry Ernestina and be employed by her father, Mr. Freeman, Charles travels to the edge of debauchery, drinking (during a chaotic scene) with aristocrat friends in a club, to which men with trades, like Mr. Freeman, cannot belong. He feels despair because engaging in trade is repugnant to him. "He gained a queer sort of momentary self-respect in his nothingness" (Fowles, 2005, p.285) and thus "the pursuit of money was an insufficient purpose in life" (Fowles, 2005, p.284). Not only has he failed to understand that the dream he has created – pursuing freedom with Sarah – does not fit within civil society in the Victorian capitalist economy, he has also failed to see the real world, where nothingness is a kind of a "queer" state even if it can be celebrated in the moment. He knows that the village of Lyme Regis has labelled Sarah a prostitute who sells her body for money because of its real-world money sense. In return, he considers this view an example of rigid Victorian morality and hypocrisy, turning a blind eye to the fact that civil society has already reached its pinnacle in a capitalist economy. Charles spends a night of chaos in the gentleman's club, which clearly reflects his social class. Unable to escape from the Victorian class system, his destination, on the descent into the Underworld, is a brothel, a lucrative place of women's sexual exploitation in a capitalist society.

Charles expects to be existentially purged after his depraved sin in the brothel because he desires a free self, as a modern intellectual man in the Victorian era. The episode of nausea, adapted from Sartre's *Nausea*, is consciously chosen in his "Underworld" as a kind of suffering. In *Nausea*, the main character, Roquentin, feels nausea when he realises that everything and everyone around him exists, but their existence is excessive and disgusting. In an entry in his diary Roquentin has lunch with the Autodidact in a café, surrounded by many men engaged in business (Sartre, 2000, p.151). The Autodidact, a rational clerk pursuing knowledge and humanity, is a symbolic representation of modern intellectuals. Roquentin feels nauseated when he abandons his argument with the Autodidact, who is confined by his belief in humanism (loving mankind): "You must love people. People are admirable. I feel like vomiting – and all of a sudden, there is it: the Nausea" (Sartre, 2000, p.175-176). He realises that "[t]hing[s] just are (contingent), bearing no necessary relation to each other (superfluous), and are, hence, devoid of meaning (absurd)" (Martin, 2006, p.67). Thus, everyone – including himself and the talkative man – is isolated. Not only this armchair man's "superfluous" talk (Sartre, 2000, p.177), but every gentleman reminds him, like the commercial traveller in the café, of his existential realisation because they are "eating and drinking to preserve our precious existence, and [⋯] there's nothing, nothing, absolutely no reason for existing" (Sartre, 2000, p.162).

By contrast, Charles feels nausea because of the burden of his real life, his responsibility as a man living in society, and every social and economic relationship with the people and things around him: "Charles's was the very opposite of the Sartrean experience" (Fowles, 2005, p.309). The existentialist's nausea motif is broken down. "His first wave of nausea" hits him in the brothel when the prostitute undresses in a business-like manner and offers him her body. His vomiting is triggered again when he finds out she is named Sarah. His desire for Sarah, whom he expects to take to a new, modern world, is equal to a man's sexual desire for a prostitute, who labours for money in a brothel. He does not understand why he is nauseous at that moment and his nausea does not produce an existential realisation; instead, it turns him into a representative gentleman in a capitalist, male-dominant society. He gives the prostitute so much money that she thanks him through tears (Fowles, 2005, p.309). This descent into the Underworld does not bring a resurrection. His romantic notion of wanting to be a free agent is transformed into the story of a man who engages in trade, an economic activity, like the Autodidact or the commercial traveller in the café in Sartre's *Nausea*, in the first ending.

Ironically, the second and third endings, introduced to overcome the literary conventions in the Victorian novel, also represent a failure of existential realisation. At the end of the second ending, the last sentence appears to celebrate the romantic union of Sarah and Charles with the sound of "a thousand violins", but this ending nauseates the narrator because the sounds "cloy very rapidly without percussion" (Fowles, 2005, p.439). In fact, many critics have read the second ending as a cynical statement. For example, as Rankin (1973) has pointed out, Fowles seems to include this violin to "conclude on a sardonic note" the reunion between the two lovers (p.204). According to Loveday (1985), this sound is another "triumph of the Victorian-romantic side of Charles's personality" (p.59). Stephenson (2007) recognises "a degree of irony" in its mimicry of a Victorian romantic love story (p.22). This ending does not provide Charles with his free self; it is simply a rewritten version of the Victorian love story.

After the double endings, Charles is left in "the river of life, of mysterious laws and mysterious choice" on "a deserted embankment" (Fowles, 2005, p.445). In his emptiness and hopelessness, without anyone to guide his life, his soul is carried "upon the unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea" (Fowles, 2005, p.445) in the last sentence of the novel. The phrase is quoted from Matthew Arnold's "To Marguerite" (1853), the poem that represents Charles's feelings when he goes abroad after his love for Sarah is ended in the previous chapter. He does not encounter his uneasy "fragmented self" for first time here; in fact, he has experienced it before. His empty soul in the distant, bleak world has no new feelings, conceptualised by a twentieth-century existentialist, but references Arnold, a Victorian poet: it sinks into a historical sea whose demarcation cannot be distinguished.

3.3 Fictionalising a modern notion: intertextuality

The narrator's repeated references to modern philosophers provide another example of theoretical modes: the notion of intertextuality. The way that Fowles uses past texts is a theoretical practice, remarkably woven throughout the novel, that relates to Kristeva's insight. Kristeva was the first person to publish a monumental work on intertextuality, "The Bounded Text," in 1969,[6] the same year the *The French Lieutenant's Woman* was published. Her notion of intertextuality has contributed to theoretical and literal development from the 1970s onwards. The theory of intertextuality has had the same impact on the literary world in offering the insight that

numerous texts derived from past writings overlap in present-day texts. Lechte (1990) has argued that Kristeva approached what the critics of the 1960s never considered in their semiotic accounts of language. While they focused on language as a systematic and discrete product, due to the development of structuralism, Kristeva was aware of "the 'outside' of language" in a text (p.99). The place "became its non-systematizable, dynamic, and even non-formalization aspect – the aspect of 'play, pleasure or desire'" (Lechte, 1990, p. 99). It is not the surface of language as a sign, but is located outside the "homogeneous" aspect of language. As language has a place that is not a signifier, Kristeva (1980b) places texts at "the intersection of *language* (the true practice of thought) with *space* (the volume within which signification, through a joining of differences, articulates itself)" (p.65). A text constructed from the fixed signs of language has a space that opens toward three dimensions: "writing subject, addressee, and exterior texts" (Kristeva, 1980b, p.66). It is particularly important for her to discover the space of "imperfect semiological systems" under the signs of language and "relations among larger narrative units" in a text (Kristeva, 1980b, p.66). The space of a text produces the potential multiple layers for intertextuality, which implies a way to overlap different texts and writing subjects.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the representation of the woods of Ware Commons above the Undercliff epitomises the textual space. The text is the town of Lyme Regis, observed by Fowles, the narrator, or Sarah from a modern point of view. The town is represented as "a picturesque congeries of some dozen or so houses and a small boatyard" (Fowles, 2005, p.10), a description that jumbles together different elements from past documents. The Victorian town of 1869, based on an enormous quantity of past texts, is waiting for disgust at the moralistic and prudish Victorians to be awakened among fin-de-siècle and twentieth-century modernists. The text hidden in the town is constructed of "exterior texts," one of the three angles that form the textual space outside language.

The Undercliff, deposited in fossil-bearing strata, highlights the Darwin's discovery of the theory of evolution in the Victorian era. By contrast, Ware Commons is a sphere with ambiguous functions, operating as the site for a mysterious woman, Sarah. Wilson (2006), writing from an ecocritical perspective, observes that Ware Commons is one of "the sacred combe" (natural woods or spaces), depicted in Fowles's novels: it is "fecund, mysterious, and also numinous" and placed "outside the normal world" (p.27). The narrator, writing from the standpoint of 1969, says that the wood "lends the area its botanical strangeness – its wild arbutus and ilex and other trees rarely seen growing in England" (Fowles, 2005, p.71). The land, full of native English plants for Charles, is transformed into a complicated ground mixing foreign and native plants. The mysterious and ambivalent woods, ignored by the Victorians, alongside the text – the town of Lyme Regis – are formed and observed by twentieth-century people. The space, accompanied by "exterior texts," is Kristeva's intertextual space. Sarah emerges from the space of Ware Commons in front of Charles to make him, the typical Victorian gentleman, go beyond the town and the era. Although Kristeva established the notion of intertextuality in theoretical terms, Fowles fictionalises the same space in the setting of this novel.

However, that the woods are a mysterious and ambiguous site is an illusion. The woods on the top of the cliff have been symbolic of the Victorian progress beyond bygone days and the British Empire's cultural and social domination of colonies around the world. Charles has the pleasure of being at the top of human civilisation, within the ideas of

social Darwinism and utilitarianism, by excavating wild and natural fossils. For the villagers of Lyme Regis, Ware Commons is linked to "infamy": "among the more respectable townsfolk one had only to speak of a boy or a girl as 'one of the Ware Commons kind' to tar them far like" (93). The blot adjoining the typical town established the residents' legitimacy and respectability. The site is, however, changed into a mysterious place by Sarah. Before Charles escapes from Sarah in Ware Commons as "a worldly Victorian gentleman" in Chapter 18, she asks him to leave her "as if the clearing [is] her drawing-room" (Fowles, 2005, p.144). This explanation fails because it implies that, if the woods are her home, Ware Commons is equivalent to a man-made house: a counterpart to Mrs. Poulteney's drawing-room or a prostitute's drawing-room in a brothel. For the narrator and Charles, whether or not they are aware of it, Ware Commons is a binary counterpart to Victorian legitimacy and respectability, not an oscillative site at all.

4. Receding from the conceptualisation of twentieth-century notions

Thus, what this novel observes, through its analysis of theoretical modes, is Fowles's narrative irony. Salami (1992) concludes that "the narrator's trickery and duplicity is aimed at freeing the reader from the narrative illusion by actually providing him/her with further illusions" (p.133). However, these theoretical modes (existentialism and intertextuality), introduced self-reflectively by Fowles and used by critics to analyse the novel, reach a dead end.

The truly peculiar feature of this novel is, therefore, the energy, imperceptibly posted in the last ending: it is expended on making stories. Although the last image of Sarah has rarely been discussed, apart from her need to be mysterious, her last appearance in the novel is suggestive. When Charles "turn[s] and look[s] back at the house he [has] left," a white curtain on the window of the studio "fall[s] back into place".

> But it was indeed only a seeming, a mere idle movement of the May wind. For Sarah has remained in the studio, staring down at the garden below, at a child and a young woman, the child's mother perhaps, who sit on the grass engaged in making a daisy-chain. There are tears in her eyes? She is too far away for me to tell; no more now, since the windowpanes catch the luminosity of the summer sky, than a shadow behind a light. (Fowles, 2005, p.444)

The author of Charles's life stops writing because Sarah has led him to a conclusion, in which he has gained "a true uniqueness" For this reason, she no longer pursues him, but looks out, in a bright glow, at a new character, a child's mother, who is "making a daisy-chain."

The representation of the daisy-chain is significant because it conflicts with the notion of having a unique self. The argument of the chain is raised during the scene at Ware Commons, where Charles prefers "possessing" a nature as a typical Victorian man, although he also feels pain for nature "spoiled by civilization":

> in essence the Renaissance was simply the green end of one of civilization's hardest winters. It was an end to chains, bounds, frontiers. Its device was the only device: What is, is good. It was all, in short, that Charles's age was not; [···]. (Fowles, 2005, p.72)

The age before the Renaissance parallels the Victorian period, which is bound by artificial chains. Nature, devised by the development of civilisation, belongs to a world with "chains, bounds, frontiers."

The mother making a daisy-chain on the grass outside Sarah's window can be seen as a Victorian woman, a moral and innocent mother. Sarah finds a new subject, who must be released from the chains created by artificial devices, in place of Charles.

Alternatively, Sarah may see herself in that mother, although she seems so submissive. This possibility cannot be excluded because, in the first ending, Sarah has a child, Lalage. The chain that she is making is the thread of her story. She recognises herself as the storyteller of her favourite plot, in which she leads Charles towards a modern, rational way of living. She rejects the chain of Victorian life, constructed by prejudice against female sexuality, and the Darwinist's ambition to hold all lives below human beings. To deny the Victorian ideological code, she has made the new chain of a twentieth-century plot beyond the past. Then, throughout the whole story of Charles, the chain becomes a fresh logic, a distinct form of fiction. For this reason, she must continue to make another chain that slips away from the structure of twentieth-century theories.

Sarah's story is not complete because she watches herself still "making the daisy-chain." Fowles claimed that he continued writing this fiction in his essay, "Notes on an Unfinished Novel," which was written while he was composing *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. In the essay, Fowles (1977) comments on writing novels: "Writing is like eating or making love; a natural process, not an artificial one" (p.138). Writing is a physical and essential activity. Compared to cinema, the novel brings the "necessary co-operation between writer and reader" for Fowles (1997) because it "evokes a different image in each reader" (p.145). A novel produces a direct transfer from the writer's imagination to that of the reader aroused by it. Direct communication from the writer to the reader is sustained by continuing to make a story. The author cannot stop writing because it is a human activity, like "eating and making love." The writer thus creates a "daisy-chain" fastening the character's life, as Sarah does.

5. Conclusion

Thus, these three endings provide readers with the conventional frameworks of the Victorian novel and the modern theories. The first ending describes a Victorian gentleman; the second presents a modern man living from the fin-de-siècle to the early twentieth century; the final is of 1969. The first and second endings stop the flowing sequence of time in Charles's life: in the first, he is embedded in ammonite (Fowles, 2005, p.321); and in the second, he is printed in "a photograph in flash" (Fowles, 2005, p.437). However, these three endings are not separated in parts, but rather linked fragmentally with each other. A watch chain, freed by Charles to give to the baby of Sarah the prostitute in the first ending (Fowles, 2005, p.308), can symbolically represent the daisy-chain of the woman under the window of Sarah's room in the last ending. "A kind of faith in himself" (Fowles, 2005, p.308), which he fails to catch in the first ending, returns to Charles as "an atom of faith in himself, a true uniqueness" (Fowles, 2005, p.445). The cycle of fragments in this novel is endless. Fowles warned, in his essay, that his readers tended to consume a book as if it were "a kind of crossword puzzle" in which "all the answers have been given to all the clues" (Fowles, 2005, p.149). The novel is a self-criticism of the vain repetition of both Victorian documents and twentieth-century literary theories, both of which provide its characters with a persona and life of conceptualisation. The peculiar last page reveals the dilemma faced by later novelists attempting to create novels within an unresolved, continuing circle of cultures.

Notes

1) Charles's anxiety is caused by Sam's rebellious power to his master. As his political and economic power has been frequently compared with the power of the working class based on Marxism (Landrum, 1996; Finney, 2013), the characterisation of Sam is conceptualised by the double points of view: the Victorians' and the twenty-century writer's.
2) According to Landrum, the relationship between Sam and Charles is based on Sam Weller and his master, Mr Pickwick, who are the main characters in Charles Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers* (1837).
3) Many critics have noted that Sarah creates herself as a fallen woman. According to Hutcheon (1986), Sarah's identity as a French lieutenant's whore is "fictional" (p.127). Warburton (1996) also observes that her "self-created" identity is her "performance," which is "all the more powerful for Sarah's captive audience by being a fiction" (p. 177). Raaberg (2001), defining the role of 'French lieutenant's woman' as "her cryptic guise," observes that Sarah is "the unknown Other [⋯] in patriarchal Western culture" (p. 527).
4) Foster (1994) observes that Sarah is "a text" to be read by Charles and Dr Grogan (p.81–82). Their observation, however, is based on the scientific notions of the Victorians. They read her because she can be categorised as a strange, deviant woman for them.
5) Representations of the descent into the Underworld in Ancient Greek mythology are discussed in Dowden (2011). According to Dowen, "the myth had taken of something of the quality of a katabasis, a descent to and return from the Underworld, and it became more explicitly about the conquest of death and the achievement of a future for men that had hitherto been terminally mortal" (p.285).
6) Kristeva revised the essay in *Desire in Language* (1980).

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