

*Writing the Feminine: John Fowles's Modern Myth*

Priscilla Peichin Lin, Fongshan Elementary School, Taiwan

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Fowlesian women struck me as being courageous and other-worldly upon my first reading of them. Rather than voiceless sources of male creativity, John Fowles's women characters tend to be vivid practitioners of the arts, presiding over all the arts which constitute civilized life. In Fowles's works, he invokes a mythic struggle for the emergence of the independent and self-defining voice of modern women as both thinkers and creators. He reflects on "sexual differences"<sup>1</sup> and explores relationships between men and women, and has built his major themes around the contrast between masculine and feminine mentality. Despite his technical experimentation and stylistic diversity, Fowles exhibits a thematic consistency in his advocacy of feminism.<sup>2</sup> His preoccupation with the individuals's place in the world of social and sexual relations generates a number of recurring motifs. Of these, the question of freedom and the search for a valid foundation on which to base one's choices have in fact occupied much of Fowles's works.

Taken as a whole, he has created multi-leveled romance fiction of considerable complexity and depth. Labeled a "fellow-traveller with feminism,"<sup>3</sup> Fowles has always constructed his fiction upon the principle that women are intrinsically better, more authentic, and freer than men. In his fiction, women tend to appear as the representatives of a humanizing force (Lenz 224). Through the interrelationships of his male and female characters, Fowles depicts the endless conflict of the opposite sexes, and at the same time, renders the possibility for some degree of harmony and cooperation.

Gender difference, especially in terms of masculine and feminine ways of knowing, is particularly important to Fowles. He advocates an increased respect for "the womanly way of seeing life" in the interests of promoting a more balanced social perspective (Lenz 6). Therefore, Fowles sees feminine qualities as a requisite part of civilized society. He recognizes that both men and women can appropriate ontological and epistemological characteristics from the other sex.

The notion of femininity features in Fowles's fiction inspires the male questers both sexually and creatively. In his "Personal Note" following *The Ebony Tower*, Fowles suggests that the idea of quest and discovery is the basis of all fiction extending from Celtic myth to his own (118-19). As it is, the formula which dominates almost all of Fowles's fiction, and much of his other comments on these issues, is that of the male pursuit of higher truths. These are embodied in an elusive, existentially authentic female character offering the salvation of female values. In the novels, it is the disappointment of the male hero's quest which brings about any self-awareness; his very failure to contain the autonomy of the woman he pursues (Woodcock 14). In posing the issues this way, Fowles is also representing a realigned version of a key male myth and idealism reimposing in a new form the old redemptive role which sees women as a corrective force in relation to men.

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<sup>1</sup> Hélène Cixous especially likes to specify the plural form of the word "difference." See Cixous, *The Portable Cixous*, ed. Marta Segarra (New York: Columbia UP, 2010) 19.

<sup>2</sup> Fowles tells Jan Relf that the business of feminism came to him when he was still at Oxford. See "An Interview with John Fowles" (1985) in *Conversations with John Fowles*, ed. Dianne L. Vipond (MS: U of Mississippi P, 1999) 123.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Woodcock in his *Male Mythologies* terms Fowles a "fellow-traveller with feminism," but, in opposition to men's aggressive, confrontational, and fiercely individualist impulses Woodcock also points to Fowles's guilt that he still remains subject like all men to the social and psychological paraphernalia of male sexual fantasies and a fear that he will be "deeply misunderstood" (149).

This aspect of Fowles's thinking marks a progressive<sup>4</sup> recognition that men must change, and a nostalgic desire that women should do the job for them. In an interview with James Campbell, Fowles answers that in all his novels the men have been, so to speak, blind at first and they later come to greater awareness of women's real selves in the arms of the women, especially in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (42). For Fowles, the courtly love phenomenon expresses "a desperately needed attempt to bring more civilization and more female intelligence into a brutal society (Huffaker 24-25). In the course of his career, Fowles's works demonstrate a progressive process through which he attempts to investigate the alternative perspectives that arise from his women characters. While showing his male characters as needing educating out of their maleness, Fowles reproduces the very design of the male fantasy of woman as the repository of higher truth.

In *The Aristos*, Fowles's self-portrait and ideas in an 1964 collection of several hundred philosophical aphorisms, he presents a key viewpoint on male and female roles. In one section entitled "Adam and Eve," for instance, Fowles states clearly that "The male and female are the two most powerful biological principles; and their smooth-interaction in society is one of the chief signs of social health" (*Aristos* 165). This view of male and female as biological principles co-exists within Fowles's explicit support for women as "progressive" in contrast to the conservative male. In "Adam and Eve," Fowles says a number of laudatory things about the idealization of the feminine. The female or "Eve is the assumption of human responsibility, of the need for progress and the need to control progress," while the male or "Adam" principle is defined as "hatred of change and futile nostalgia for the innocence of animals" (*Aristos* 165). Fowles's model of masculinity is representative of the schematic stereotyping of patriarchal orthodoxy in that "Adam societies are ones in which the man and the father, male gods, exact strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behavior," while "Eve societies are those in which the woman and the mother, female gods, encourage innovation and experiment, and fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling" (*Aristos* 166). In his works, Fowles makes extensive use of his female characters and deliberately creates impressive and compelling women characters who provide the impetus for his novels.

Fowles's admiration for feminine intelligence and his claims to feminist consciousness are further explained in his "Notes on an Unfinished Novel," in which he says: "My female characters tend to dominate the male. I see man as a kind of artifice, and woman as a kind of reality. The one is cold idea, the other is warm fact. Daedalus faces Venus, and Venus must win" (23). This characterization of women as "warm fact" is precisely the quality Fowles emphasizes in his fictional characterizations of women: at their best, Fowles's female characters represent progression, vitality, creativity, independence, and authenticity. When we look at Fowles's writing about men and women, not only is an analysis of contemporary femininity and masculinity possible, but it is in the wilderness of gender and sexuality that the novels really flourish.

In dealing with his characters, Fowles evidently values women for their sexually alluring mystery and the intuitive way of seeing and knowing. Therein lies the

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<sup>4</sup> Formulating his ideas as an individual without affiliation with the feminist movement, Fowles recognized that he was successively remarkably progressive and rather regressive in his advocacy of feminism (Lenz 2).

potential to expand the inauthentic male subject's consciousness and quality of life. Fowles's efforts have generally been directed at changing male attitudes toward women from selfish and criminal objectification in *The Collector* and *The Magus* to a fuller understanding and appreciation in *Daniel Martin* or *A Maggot* (Foster 14). Although the protagonists and even the narrative voices in his novels are overwhelmingly male, Fowlesian heroes, in the midst of strongly male quests, have to come to terms with the strongly female characters that are essentially unknowable. In their baffling confrontations with representatives of nearly pure anima, the female archetype, they must also confront issues of their own identity and behavior. Expanding his articulation of the Jungian-influenced feminist perspective, Fowles focuses on the anima as the chief Other. Such encounters carry with them both an element of terror and the possibility of creative inspiration (Foster 11-12). In the anima-animus dichotomy, the purely female and purely male attributes encounter each other. The protagonists, from Clegg in *The Collector* to Henry Ayscough in *A Maggot*, find their encounters with the Other unsettling, mystifying, and provocative both sexually and creatively. The women Fowles presents have ranged from the subservient Diana in *The Ebony Tower* to the highly outspoken Rebecca Hocknell and the strong-willed Sarah Woodruff. Since the differences between men and women are thoroughgoing, men in these encounters are goaded into changing their lives, their works and their understanding of themselves. Although such changes may not be pleasant, the possibility for personal growth exists.

The sexual education which each of Fowles's heroes must undergo can now be seen to consist of two elements. On the one hand, he must learn that the girl he is in love with is a real human being, with all that implies with regard to respect for her rights and identity. On the other hand, he must simultaneously learn that his love is not only for another person, but also for an aspect of himself—an intangible that can never be owned, nor shut up or caged in a cellar as if it were being conditioned. It is the enchanting women characters who, like Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (*FLW*) or Alison and Lily/Julie in *The Magus*, provide the romance relationship which enables the male protagonist to be awakened from the kind of existential torpor and finally come to terms with his own identity. Sarah, for example, is a fictional character with a life of her own who forces the protagonist Charles into predicaments, obsessing him, denying his omniscience, and forcing him to admit that "Modern women like Sarah exist, and I have never understood them" (*FLW* 97).

Peter Conradi, one of Fowles's most recent critics, has commented on this oddly complacent kind of feminism: "For Fowles the *ewig Weibliche*<sup>5</sup> repeatedly subserves the male by modifying, civilising, forgiving and educating the stupefying power of masculine brutality and egoism, and women tend to appear in his romances as tutors, muses, sirens, nannies and gnostic trustees of the mysteriousness of existence" (91). Through the depiction of inspiring women, Fowles emphasizes his faith in women's ways of knowing and being, and attempts to explore women's narratives, which he first advanced in *The Collector* and *The Magus*. It also suggests an attempt to balance men's problems with his muse. These explorations of the women characters nonetheless serve to confront Fowles's archetypal conceptions of masculine authority and feminine creativity.

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<sup>5</sup> "Das ewig Weibliche" is a phrase from Goethe that describes eternal female figures that "zieht uns hinan" guide us. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Selected Poetry of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, trans. David Luke (London: Penguin Books, 2005) 246.

Fowles reflects more carefully on his relationship with feminism in an interview with Katherine Tarbox in 1988: "In historical or social terms I've always had great sympathy for, I won't quite say feminism in the modern sense, but for a female principle in life" ("Interview with John Fowles" 165). Furthermore, Fowles expands on this articulation of his Jungian feminist perspective in his 1988 interview with Susana Onega:

I am not a "feminist" in the fiercely active sense it is usually used in England and in America nowadays, but I have sympathy for the general "anima," the feminine spirit, the feminine intelligence, and I think that all male judgments of the way women go about life are so biased that they are virtually worthless. ("Fowles on Fowles" 180-81)

Fowles's reverence for "the feminine intelligence," which he associates with emotion and intuition, assumes a force both in his fiction and non-fiction writings. Fowles's female characters encourage, support, awaken, and honour those divine feminine qualities. Due to his genuine feminist sympathies, Fowles attempts in his fictional works to explore women's sensibilities and to advocate women's ways of knowing and being.

As for the "female principle," Martha Celeste Carpentier in *Mother, Maid, and Witch: Hellenic Female Archetypes in Modern British Literature* traces in detail how the female principle, for many centuries perceived as a threat to man's spiritual well-being, became in the span of approximately 50 years a source of spiritual reaffirmation for a generation of writers who found an answer to the "futility and anarchy" of their world in the "mythic method"(16). According to Martha Carpentier, there began to appear the power of matriarchal goddesses in pre-Olympian Greek religion. Setting out to pursue the female archetype, Frazer in *Golden Bough* discovers that at the basis of ritual sacrifice lay fertility cults, and at the basis of fertility cults stood powerful primitive mother-goddesses, which he then delineated as his purpose required (Carpentier 9-10).

The "female principle" represented by myths begins to permeate modern works with a sense of renewal and hope (Carpentier 10). Modern female archetypes bear the qualities of traditional forms and begin to loom large in the literary imagery of the modern period. These modern female archetypes bear many of the qualities and functions of the three traditional archetypal female forms found in myth: earth-mother, witch, and virgin (or temptress). Carpentier further observes that "the female principle" has been traditionally embodied in Nature: the "male principle" in God and the female in Earth. Nature is the ultimate female principle. From this, Carpentier deduces that the female principle is life itself—"all that moveth"—physical and mutable, while the male is life after death—spiritual and eternal. The female is Chaos and anarchy; the male, order and divine purpose; the female is dynamic, based on change and process, while the male is static, based on knowledge and revelation (10-12). The idea that "the female is dynamic" while the male is static echoes what Fowles has remarked in *The Aristos* that in the Genesis myth "Adam is stasis, or conservatism; Eve is kinesis, or progress" (166). What is most remarkable in Fowles's fiction is the woman archetype who motivates and defines the quest. Fowles's practice and inclusion of strong and powerful female characters provide explicit criticism of masculinity.

During the course of his writing career, Fowles professes his feminist sympathies a number of times in his essays and interviews: “I [Fowles] am a feminist—that is, I like women and enjoy their company, and not only for sexual reasons” (“I Write Therefore I Am” 8). Fowles expounds his growing awareness of the “feminine principle” in an interview with James Baker: “I am certainly not a feminist in the militant sense, ...I have great sympathy for the general feminine principle in life. I find very little ‘heroic’ about most men, and think that quality is far more likely to appear among women in ordinary, non-literary life” (“John Fowles: The Art of Fiction CIX” 194). The universe, as Fowles explains to James Campbell, is “female in some deep way. I think one of the things that is lacking in our society is equality of male and female ways of looking at life” (“An Interview with John Fowles” 42). These comments demonstrate an archetypal idealization of women and an admiration for and allegiance to women. Indeed, in a 1995 interview with Dianne Vipond, Fowles expands the formulation of his feminist sympathies by saying that “True humanism must be feminist” (“An Unholy Inquisition: John Fowles and Dianne Vipond” 212). Furthermore, Fowles formulates his feminist advocacy in the 1999 interview with Dianne Vipond: “I am very much a feminist and ...yes, I think the world would be a happier place if women had more power and consideration” (“A Dialogue with John Fowles” 235).

As a male writer claiming feminist advocacy, Fowles’s attempts to exhibit his convictions are under much investigation by feminist scholars. Contemporary feminists object to Fowles’s demonstrated lack of understanding of the history of the feminist movement. Brooke Lenz sums up three immediate problems with this adulation. The first is Fowles’s absolute characterization of men as rational and women as emotional; the second, a problem interwoven with the first, is Fowles’s tendency to use the terms “women,” “female,” and “feminine,” which suggests a rather simple and traditional essentialism that confines women within rigid gender prescriptions; and the third is Fowles’s obliviousness to the possibility that his own convictions might fit his description of male judgments of women: “all male judgments of the way women go about life are so biased that they are virtually worthless” (3). The endeavor to verify the extent to which Fowles is a feminist has caused thus much stir among critics.

Most feminist critics have not been satisfied with Fowles’s formulation of feminist advocacy. A number of critics have even noted problems with Fowles’s attitude towards women. Pamela Cooper refers to Fowles’s “masculine fantasies” and that his implied admiration for his heroines restrict them within male-defined bounds. This, at times, not only conditions but creates the attractiveness of these women, and thus encodes them as masculine fantasies (221). Doris Kadish and Constance Heatt, for example, point out that Fowles’s enthusiasm for rewriting *Ourika* and *Eliduc* is complicated by the way he dismisses their authority and uses them to explore masculine concerns. In fact, it has been exclusively male problems that Fowles has centered on in his romances. The quest motif in Fowles’s works, according to Margaret Bozenna Goscilo, has rendered female characters dehumanized archetypes or idealized symbols of femininity (73). Whereas the quest motif provides the general framework for Fowles’s works, feminist critics argue that as the male hero pursues the mysterious, inspirational female he occupies the centre of attention, while the female characters are relegated to a marginal existence as catalyst for the hero’s quest.

Conradi along with other critics<sup>6</sup> note that Fowles remains caught within a conventional gender framework in that “the sexual idealization of women [in Fowles’s fiction] has acted as the destructive condition under which their repression could continue unabated” (91). Despite Fowles’s professed admiration for women’s sexually alluring mystery and “the womanly way of seeing,” feminists object to the implication in Fowles’s fiction that what is most valuable about women is their ability to improve men. Accordingly, this pattern in his fiction reflects a problematic gender ideology. Although Fowles attempts to include strong and apparently powerful female characters in his novels, the female heroines’ relegation to the role of helpmeet to the male hero diminishes their importance and undermines their authority (Lenz 8). Fading into the background of the male quest for enlightenment, Bruce Woodcock attacks Fowles’s stance as a feminist writer as “a posture” for what he is really doing is promoting the very myths of masculinity. Fowles’s response to this is “I don’t feel that I am doing that....I daresay by that standard I do fail” (“An Interview with John Fowles” 123). While critics claim Fowles’s advocacy of women writers ultimately serves his larger purpose of exploring problems typically associated with men, Fowles attempts to advocate the improvement of women’s condition and to promote women writers who have been neglected.

While feminist critics have pointed to the limitations of Fowles’s feminist advocacy through critiques of his treatment of women writers and characters, Fowles is acutely aware of his situation as a man and as a writer. At the same time, he also creates impressive and compelling women characters who provide the impetus for his novels. Rather than traditional roles that cast women as merely muses, Fowlesian women strive for their self-integrity in the patriarchal society that confines them. In Fowles’s reversed romances, women take the initiative by enchanting the protagonist into her service through their beauty. Writing from a male viewpoint, Fowles tries hard to uplift women’s consciousness in a society that is dominated by male values. These women characters become modern Ariadne who will lead the protagonists out of the modern maze.

Paradoxically committed to exploring perspectives that he associates with women and to inscribing men’s nympholepsy, Fowles’s texts are fraught with tension between men’s competing desires to understand and to idealize women (Lenz 32). In a way, Fowles presents his feminist advocacy by offering inexplicable women characters. In each of his works, Fowles characterizes the dilemma of modern women when they aspire to liberty but are enslaved by physical processes. It is at this point that Fowles’s preoccupation with freedom meets his overwhelming interest in femininity and sexuality. He is thus offering a promising study of the relationship between feminism and men, a relationship that serves to redefine women’s status and image.

The portrayal of women stems from a genuine admiration and a desire to venerate women’s unique discernments. In his depiction of women characters, Fowles uses his protagonist’s perspective to frame and organize the narrative. Fowles demonstrates in his works the admiration for women and his acute dissatisfaction with masculinity. Peter Wolfe writes that “women in Fowles not only make men see what is under their noses; they also see deeper purposes and more loving uses for the

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce Woodcock, *Male Mythologies: John Fowles and Masculinity* (Sussex: Harvester, 1984) 15.

prerogatives men almost always usurp” (*John Fowles, Magus and Moralist* 39). Furthermore, Fowles’s female characters demonstrate “that the masculine ethic of capitalism which rules our age needs an infusion of the feminine virtues of intuition, subtlety, and experiment. Unless society learns to balance male and female principles, it cannot grow into civilization” (Wolfe, *Magus and Moralist* 41). Fowles deals with issues concerning the need to appreciate the healing, comforting influence of women. The industrial West, he believes, has failed to temper the male virtues of bravery, ambition and endurance with female benevolence and gentleness. The imbalance between male and female principles has had damaging reverberations, for besides blocking the interchange and freedom necessary to the formation of a civilization, it also thwarts mankind’s best hope: evolution (Wolfe, *Magus and Moralist* 12-13). The availability of the Fowlesian heroines is a crucial part of their greater capacity for faith and imagination. Fowlesian women have healthier instincts than their male counterparts. Fowles’s feminist advocacy thus determines his subject matter, characterization and narrative technique. In fact, Fowles’s attention to men’s problems coupled with his feminist advocacy provides a textual territory that deserves close attention. In analyzing Fowles’s women characters, we use a methodology informed by feminism in the context of social and political situations of men and women. One approach we could embrace is Fowles’s postmodern, unconventional characterization of his women characters in terms of myth, the journey, and the goddess archetypes.

A recurring pattern of Fowles’s characters is that the protagonists often begin with false, provisional identities and end as freer, more authentic beings. In their journeys toward wholeness, Fowles’s modern questers grow toward self-knowledge. The goal is to integrate oneself within the world. However, this kind of interpretation again reflects the role of woman as the Jungian anima. Woman is thus related to the male protagonists who will gain new understanding of themselves and of the world through their relationship with the female archetype. Such a characterization of the mysterious and inspirational female as helpmeet to the male hero denies women’s importance and their authority. While the quest motif Fowles employs does require a remarkable woman to refine it, these women do not merely fade into the background of the male heroes’ quest. They also journey toward self-awareness. These women characters thwart the protagonist’s consciousness and loom large in the quest motif. The extraordinary prominence of these Fowlesian women is best described, to quote Annis Pratt, as the “primal forces leading the personality through growth towards maturity, as necessary to human development as intellectual growth and the opportunity for significant work” (*Archetypal Patterns* 74)

The central concern of this paper is Fowles’s implicit demand that his characters (both male and female) journey toward self-awareness and achieve whole sight, and at the same time that the readers of his works see “whole.” The major guideline Fowles insists on in his fiction is one’s right to an authentic personal destiny. The evolving myth of womanhood is placed in the context of the role of women specifically associated with clarity and creativity. Women in Fowles not only make men see what is under their noses, they also see deeper purposes and more loving uses that few men can match. Along with these gifts expressed intuitively in women, this study also examines the transition from authorial manipulation to accepting multiple perspectives. Lenz points out that as the respect for women’s alternative approaches to self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, and social reform develops, Fowles



becomes more self-reflexive, more willing to surrender complete authorial control, and more interested in entertaining multiple perspectives in his work (223).

In his romances, Fowles remains woman-centered. The shift from the exploitation of women's perspectives in *The Magus*, through the sexually emancipated and independent women in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, to the reverence for the evocative insights of the women in *Daniel Martin* and *A Maggot* demonstrate Fowles's interest in the ways both men and women could achieve their full human potentials.<sup>7</sup> To this end, Fowles is concerned with the images of women in Fowles's romances, paying close attention to Fowles's changing patterns of female imagery. In Fowles's works, sexuality and gender repeatedly play a vital role. Most of the significant relationships depicted in his work involve some sort of balanced society that values women's ways of knowing and being. Since Fowles handles his romance structure in an ironic, open-ended or subversive way, conventional quest romance genre is seen as inadequate to render such works to the full. More to the point would be an exploration of how Fowles's claims for the feminine could contribute to contemporary "brutal society." As for the feminist critics, rather than continuing to reprimand Fowles for his masculine prejudice towards women, a new approach must be found to apply to Fowles's work that both negotiates the problematic quest myth and new possibilities in an old form.

In *The Magus*, several women are mentioned in relation to the protagonist Nicholas Urfe's modern quest of self-knowledge. Aspects of and attitudes to female sexuality and identity are presented through Fowles's portrayal of young people in London in the early 1950s. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* the theme of moral responsibility, men and women, love, and the feminine principle are examined. The work's most outstanding character, Sarah, takes on herself the role of an "outcast" as part of a new identity. Here, Fowles is presenting a woman character whose unconventional attitudes and actions allow her to embody a more emancipated status independent of dominant ideologies. In *Daniel Martin*, the protagonist Dan's commitment to whole sight confirms Fowles's attempt to transcend the singularity and dominance of masculine authority. Fowles both explores and integrates women's alternative perspectives into his pursuit of whole sight. Fowles's final published novel, *A Maggot*, offers a culmination of all of Fowles's most cherished conceptions of femininity and feminism. Rebecca, the central female character of *A Maggot*, combines eroticism, mystery, and seduction like that of Sarah in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. She engages in a dominant mode of discourse that challenges the manipulative tyrannies of abstract and fragmented perspectives. In finally creating a heroine who explodes the dominant discourse, Fowles demonstrates a truly feminist commitment that values women's ways of knowing and being.

As a male writer dealing with the characterization of significant women, Fowles is not using "feminism" in a strictly political sense.<sup>8</sup> Thus feminist approaches to Fowles's romances also show an inadequacy in rendering accurately his female characters. Looking at the quest patterns and literary symbols as employed in

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<sup>7</sup> According to Brooke Lenz, Fowles has advocated feminism precisely because that women appear as the representatives of a humanizing force in opposition to men's aggressive, confrontational and fiercely individualist impulses (224-26).

<sup>8</sup> Surveying Fowles's advocacy of feminism, Lenz concludes that Fowles's feminism is clearly characterized not political activism but chiefly by admiration for and allegiance to women (4).

Fowles's romances, we discern a tendency towards male protagonist's coming to terms with the Jungian sense of the "anima," the feminine other-half at the bottom of the hero's psyche. In fact, Fowles admits the strains of influence in his fiction in a letter: Carl Jung's use of the archetypes and T. S. Eliot's idea of the myth of the questing hero.<sup>9</sup> The the psycho-mythological development of Fowles's female heroines is in fact reflected in patterns of symbol and myth. Although myth criticism has its own history and methodology, several feminist writers criticize Jung for his lack of treatment of the female developing psyche. They offer intriguing explications that are useful to liberating the status of women which has been confined within the patriarchal tradition. Along with the feminist myth criticism, Fowles in his works centers the discussions on the goddess image and other female archetypes, viewing these figures that can offer hope and wholeness against the powerful effects that cultural stereotypes had on the repression of women.

As a male writer projecting a voice from the imagined perspective of the opposite sex, Fowles writes the feminine by speaking in the voices and describing the innermost thoughts and feelings of his female characters. The cultural effects which Fowles has produced, as Hélène Cixous writes in "The Laugh of the Medusa," imply that gender is negotiable and may be aligned with either of the two sexes: "it's up to him to say where his masculinity and femininity are at" (247). Unlike feminist critics who see men's writing of the feminine as a reaffirmation of their masculinity, Fowles attempts to criticize masculinity through adopting a feminine position. At the same time, Fowles's depiction of his women characters is fraught with postmodern theories in his effort to analyze how the feminine is represented.

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<sup>9</sup> In a letter of 1975, Fowles wrote, "Both Jung and Eliot were very important to me in the 1950s ...because it is arguably the most 'Jungian' and quest-like" (qtd. in Barnum, *Archetypal Patterns* 2).

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