

Neo-Victorian Materialisms in John Fowles's *The Collector*

John Fowles'un *Koleksiyoncu* Romanında Neo-Viktorya Dönemi Materyalist Yaklaşımı

Emine AKKÜLAH DOĞAN*

Abstract

While John Fowles's (1926-2005) *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) is studied frequently as a neo-Victorian novel, his first published novel, *The Collector* (1963), is ignored in the critical analyses of neo-Victorian studies. This is mostly due to the fact that *The Collector* is neither a re-writing of a Victorian novel nor sets in the nineteenth century. However, a critical reading of the novel demonstrates how Fowles explicitly manifests the continuation of the Victorian materialist obsession in this particular novel. In other words, albeit the contemporary setting of the novel and the critical appreciation of it as a feminist fiction, the protagonist, Clegg's obsession with the material objects echoes Victorian cultural materialisation in a way that leads him to collect butterflies and women. Drawing an analogy between these two collections, it is mostly argued by the critics that Fowles discusses the issues on gender in this particular novel. From a different perspective, it will be argued in this study that Fowles actually illustrates the obsession with the material objects with respect to both the dead butterfly collection and also to the commodification of the female body as the material object. From this vantage point, the aim of this study is to analyse *The Collector* as a neo-Victorian novel revisiting the material culture of the Victorian period and the repercussions of the traumatic relation between the human and the object in the twentieth century.

Keywords: Neo-Victorian studies, John Fowles, *The Collector*, Victorian materialisation.

Öz

John Fowles'un (1926-2005) *Fransız Teğmenin Kadını* (1969) adlı romanı neo-Viktorya dönemi romanı olarak sıkça çalışılırken, ilk romanı olan *Koleksiyoncu* (1963) neo-Viktorya dönemi çalışmaları alanında genellikle göz ardı edilmiştir. Bunun nedeni *Koleksiyoncu* romanının bir Viktorya dönemi romanının yeniden yazımı olmaması ve de 19. yüzyılda geçmemesidir. Buna rağmen, romanın eleştirel bir gözle okunması Fowles'un bu romanda Viktorya dönemi materyalist takıntılarını gözle görünür bir biçimde ortaya koyduğunu göstermiştir. Diğer bir deyişle, romanın çağdaş ortamına ve feminist bir kurgu olarak eleştirilmesine rağmen, ana karakter, Clegg'in maddi nesnelere takıntısı Viktorya dönemi kültürel nesne bağımlılığını, kelebekleri ve kadınları toplamasına yol açacak şekilde, yansıtıyor. Bu iki koleksiyon arasında bir analogi çizerek, eleştirmenler çoğunlukla Fowles'un bu romanda cinsiyet meselelerini tartıştığını öne sürüyor. Farklı bir perspektiften bakmak gerekirse, bu çalışmada, Fowles'un aslında hem ölü kelebek koleksiyonuna hem de kadın bedeninin maddi nesne olarak metalaştırılmasına ilişkin maddi nesnelere olan takıntıları ele aldığı savunulacaktır. Bu noktadan yola çıkarak, bu çalışmanın amacı, *Koleksiyoncu* romanını, Viktorya dönemindeki materyal kültüre ve bunun yirminci yüzyıldaki travmatik etkilerine bakarak bir neo-Viktorya dönemi romanı olarak incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Neo-Viktorya Dönemi Çalışmaları, John Fowles, *Koleksiyoncu*, Viktorya Dönemi Materyalist Yaklaşımı

Introduction

While John Fowles's (1926-2005) *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) is studied frequently as a neo-Victorian novel, his first published novel, *The Collector* (1963), is ignored in the critical analyses of neo-Victorian studies. This is mostly due to the fact that *The Collector* is neither a re-writing of a Victorian novel nor sets in the nineteenth century. Yet, an analysis of the novel from the critical perspective drawn by neo-Victorian studies reveals that, in this particular novel, Fowles employs the characteristics of the Victorian fictional writings and adapts them to a twentieth-century setting. Evolving from both romantic love stories and gothic fictions of the nineteenth century, *The Collector* stands in that limbo point between the nineteenth and the twentieth century with respect to its portrayal of material obsession. Moreover, by creating such an obsession in the twentieth century, Fowles sheds light upon the con-

* Res. Assist., Hacettepe University, Faculty of Letters, English Language and Literature Department, emineakkulah@gmail.com

temporary problems of material obsession including the commodification of the female. According to Thomas C. Foster, Fowles, in this particular novel, also pinpoints the conditions of the twentieth-century “New People” who are “the materialistic, upwardly mobile members of the working and lower classes who are destroying the culture and the landscape, who are happy with their cars and televisions, and who are taking over from the formerly stable privileged classes” (1994, p. 21). From this vantage point, the aim of this paper is to analyse *The Collector* as a neo-Victorian novel revisiting the material culture of the Victorian period and the repercussions of the traumatic relation between the human and the material object.

It is important to indicate that neo-Victorian studies is a relatively new field that is dedicated to the analyses of texts revisiting the issues of the Victorian period in new contexts. Put differently, a neo-Victorian work reinterprets and rewrites the political, social and economic agenda of the century in order to shed light upon the contemporary events. The reason for this kind of turning back to past is due to the changing dynamism of the Victorian period and its effects on the forthcoming centuries as explained by Marie-Luise Kohlke:

Increasingly, the period is configured as a temporal convergence of multiple historical traumas still awaiting appropriate commemoration and full working-through. These include both the pervasive traumas of social ills, such as disease, crime, and sexual exploitation, and the more spectacular traumas of violent civil unrest, international conflicts, and trade wars that punctuated the nineteenth century. (2008, p. 7)

As can be observed in Kohlke’s explanation, the Victorian period is marked as a liminal time in history in which the changing atmosphere, together with the social, political and economic unrest, is experienced by the people of the age due to the developments in the industry and growing imperialism. Additionally, it can be argued that the period reflects a point in history in regard to the traumas of the people not only in that period but also afterwards. Accordingly, Christine Krueger proposes that the 9/11 attacks in the United States

brought into popular consciousness the long and largely Victorian – history of the ‘great game’ of empire [...] and did more than any cultural critic could have [done] to impress upon us the urgent need to address our role as heirs of continuous historical process.

Even without these traumatic reminders of the legacy of Victorian empire, fascination with Victorian culture could certainly have been noted as a sign of our times. (2002, p. xi)

Krueger emphasises both the growing awareness about national identity on a political level and also the undeniable fascination with Victorian culture on a social level by claiming that the people of the twentieth century are post-Victorians (2002, p. xi). In the same vein with both Kohlke and Krueger, Dinah Birch emphasises the need to return to Victorian in order to understand the contemporary problems that are believed to be rooted in the Victorian period (as cited in Llewellyn, 2008, pp. 164-5). Therefore, Neo-Victorian writing can be regarded as a didactic project that “is actively involved in consciousness-raising and witness-bearing” (Kohlke, 2008, p. 9). That is to say that the Victorian period is regarded as a turning point in the history in that it leaves its marks surviving in the twenty-first century. Therefore, turning back to the Victorian means turning back to the roots of recent problems, rediscover and regenerate them in a new fashion; as Mark Llewellyn argues: “[T]he neo-Victorian text writes back to something in the nineteenth century, it does so in a manner that often aims to re-fresh and re-vitalise the importance of that earlier text to the here and now” (2008, pp. 170-1). Moreover, by recalling the gothic fame of the century, Llewellyn attracts the attention to the fact that “as we move further away from the Victorian, the ideas of the period come to haunt us more deeply and in unexpected ways” (2008, p. 172). Capitalising on this need to go back to the Victorians, this paper digs into the roots of the contemporary obsession with the material in the Victorian period.

It is surely beyond doubt that the change in the Victorian period cannot only be explained by the ill conditions of the age but also with the growth of the aesthetic taste in the people of the time, which paves the way for a number of literary works to be published on the interest of the material. Accordingly, Mark Blackwell observes that the Victorian age has “a thing about things” (2007, p. 9). It should be noticed that the main reasons for this variety of things are technological achievements and mass market productions. This period sees the inventions of many small objects which are positioned in the centre of the life of the Victorians who love their things and fill their homes with objects which are either decorations or collections under the influence of Aesthetic Movement. As pointed out by John Plotz, Victorians are famous for “the accumulation and harmonious arrangement of possessions; [in other words] home decoration” (2008, p. 1). With the critical turn towards the material and its fugitive meaning rather than the allegorical, the Victorian social life and the fictions that show this life in a realistic manner begin to be looked at in detail. That is why anyone who studies a Victorian novel cannot ignore the centrality of the things that the lives of the characters are shaped around. Accordingly, Victorian novelists include material objects in their works and deal with the undeniable “objectness” of these objects beyond their allegorical status, as well. Elaine Freedgood argues that “[t]he mid-Victorian novel is a particularly rich site for tracing the fugitive meanings of apparently nonsymbolic objects” (2006, p. 4). The objects in Victorian fiction are portrayed in detail, which extends their visibility and their reality behind the allegorical symbols. Yet, there is a very thin line between seeing things as allegories and seeing them as they are. Differentiating an allegorist from a collector, Walter Benjamin explains how a collector sees the material object:

The allegorist is, as it were, the polar opposite of the collector. He has given up the attempt to elucidate things through research into their properties and relations. He dislodges things from their context and, from the outset, relies on his profundity to illuminate their meaning. The collector, by contrast, brings together what belongs together; by keeping in mind their affinities and their succession in time, he can eventually furnish information about his objects. (as cited in Freedgood, 2006, pp. 2-3)

Thus, Victorian novels should be studied from the eyes of a collector who sees the materiality of them and brings them together because of “their affinities and their succession in time” (as cited in Freedgood, 2006, p. 2). By referring to this difference, Freedgood points out that “to see the object as it is” can be accomplished by “avoid[ing] the temptations of allegory and follow instead the protocols of collector” (2006, p. 3). Keeping this in mind, Fowles’s *The Collector* portrays a character who is engaged in collecting things as they are rather than reading their allegorical meanings and a character traumatised by his relationship with the material. Focusing on this interpretation of the novel, it is assumed that Fowles creates an analogy between the Victorian and the twentieth-century materialities.

The Collector holds a particular place in the author’s career in that his understanding of realism changes from a conventional perspective to “alternative modes of interpreting” since the story is told from the perspectives of two different characters (Phillips Buchberger, 2012, pp. 144-5). While Clegg is an uneducated working-class male with lower-class taste in art, Miranda is an art student from a middle-class background. Therefore, Perry Nodelman claims that there is a variation in narrative and also variation in characterisation in *The Collector* (1987, p. 333). However, it can be observed through the psychological analysis of the diaries of each character that there is actually no variation in the characterisation of the novel. That is to argue that Clegg and Miranda share similar traumatic experiences caused by society even though they are depicted as having different personalities. Disregarding their class and gender, both of them are characterised as having the same views of constructed gender roles. Both Clegg and Miranda are the victims of society, the imposed roles and set codes prevailing in their environment. From this perspective, it can be argued that the

conventional readings of the novel focusing on only the victimisation of the female seem to ignore the traumatic case of Clegg and also the aesthetic claim in the story. Yet, the emphasised point in this paper is not to deny the gender issue consisting much of the novel but to note that the female is not the only victim in this novel. In addition to that, the death of the female protagonist at the end of the novel is just a reflection of Clegg's vulgar taste on art and aesthetics rather than the mere representation of male violence.

Taken at its broadest, *The Collector* is the story of a traumatised character, Clegg and his obsession with the dead material objects. Due to this obsession, Clegg kills and collects butterflies in their most innocent and beautiful forms, which later paves the way for his collecting young girls, keeping them in a cell of his house and finally killing them in their most innocent and beautiful forms. While the issue of male domination and female entrapment in the novel become the main focus of most studies so far, this study is intended to take a different perspective by analysing murdering and collecting from an aesthetic eye, which contributes to the study of material obsession in humans. From the critical stance this work stands, Clegg is also a victim of a highly materialised society, which results in his obsession with the dead objects. His traumatic experiences of the early phase of his life are reflected in his obsession with the death objects as the title indicates:

The Collector is dominated by the theme of having, possessing, or in short collecting. Fowles's treatment of this question, however, assimilates it to a larger one, that of the contrast between masculine and feminine ways of thinking. Fowles sees collecting as a specifically masculine aberration. For him, one aspect of the opposition between the sexes can be summed up as the contrast between having and being. (Loveday, 1985, p. 24)

Simon Loveday's explanation of the title proposes that the main theme in the novel is the act of collecting and the act of being, which are constructed in the genders of the characters. That is to argue that while Clegg is the collector, the butterflies and Miranda are the collected beings. However, the point ignored by Loveday is that such a juxtaposition is not based only on their genders since Clegg does not have any aim of sexual assault. Clegg's obsessed nature stems not only from his gender, as suggested by Loveday but also from his inferiority complexes regarding the social class he belongs to. Accordingly, his views on art and aesthetics are also shaped according to the class, which makes him the "creator of debased anti-art" (Cooper, 1991, p. 25). Therefore, whether degraded or not, Clegg's collection of butterflies functions as an aesthetic object or home decoration similar to those in the Victorian age rather than the manifestation of his masculine power. In the same vein with Victorian novels, Fowles emphasises an obsession with the material object and the traumatic background which precedes it.

The reason for Clegg's obsession stems from his traumatic experiences of the past as Loveday comments on the first chapter of the novel told by Clegg: "Its hints of privilege, of class resentment, and of jealous possessiveness, prepare us for the part these factors will play in the book as a whole" (1985, p. 13). He comes from a working-class background and, most importantly, he both lacks a family and a mother figure in his life, which is interpreted as an "Oedipus Complex"*** as demonstrated in his relationship with Miranda after the kidnap. As a matter of fact, Miranda is the embodiment of everything he lacks in life as noted by Foster: "She is beautiful, talented, well-off financially, popular, confident. Indeed, it is the collection of these traits which makes her initially attractive to him, because she is such a rarity in his

*** This twentieth-century theory is named after the famous Greek tragedy *Oedipus, the King* (c. 429 BC) by Sophocles (c. 497-406 BC). In the play, the king Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother. Basing his argument on Oedipus's fate, Sigmund Freud puts forward that the male child has always this intuition to hate his father since the father poses a threat to the son's power by possessing the mother (2008, p. 202).

world” (Fowles, 2004, p. 26). Therefore, by kidnapping and possessing Miranda, Clegg believes that he manages to compensate the lacks in his world. He compares himself to the higher-class people and tries to compensate his weaknesses through the money he wins in the pools because, as he states, money equates power for him (Fowles, 2004, p. 24). In point of fact, he justifies his antagonistic act through money asserting that this is what everybody would do if only they had money (Fowles, 2004, p. 24). It is only after he has money that he finds the strength in himself to be near Miranda and to kidnap her. Therefore, while the lack of education and wealth are compensated with the collection of butterflies and the money he wins in the early phase of his life, later he attempts to compensate the lack of the family and the mother through the family portrayal with Miranda he draws in his mind: “I used to have daydreams about her, I used to think of stories where I met her, did things she admired, married her and all that” (Fowles, 2004, p. 10). The time he spends with Miranda in the novel unravels the fact that Miranda functions as a mother figure in his life as she admits: “I got up, we were lying on the sofa, and knelt by him and told him not to worry. Mothered him” (Fowles, 2004, p. 242). This lack of love in his life leads Clegg to associate love with possessing and having and he ends up to believe that he loves what he possesses. Therefore, he attempts to gain Miranda’s love by possessing her: “What she never understood was that with me it was having. Having her was enough. Nothing needed doing. I just wanted to have her, and safe at last” (Fowles, 2004, p. 95). As she puts in her diaries, Miranda herself understands the fact that Clegg does not want to assault her sexually or kill her, but he just wants to keep her, possess her but nothing else. Therefore, both butterflies as the living entities and Miranda as a lover lose their meanings and change their functions in order to stand as material possessions in Clegg’s world.

Clegg’s obsession with the material entities is first revealed through his interest in butterfly species as he collects butterflies since his childhood as a hobby. Even though the butterflies are dead, the collection has many claims about Clegg not in an allegorical meaning but in their fugitive reality. The butterflies become everything Clegg lacks in his childhood, such as a loving family, parents and love. On the other hand, they are the substitute for the lack of education in Clegg, since he believes his collection gives him a kind of feeling of authority in the world of art. Although he thinks that his collection of butterflies is loved by Miranda, his vulgar taste in art and aesthetic is slapped in his face by Miranda who associates collecting with killing:

‘I hate scientists,’ she said. ‘I hate people who collect things, and classify things and give them names and then forget all about them. That’s what people are always doing in art. They call a painter an impressionist or a cubist or something and then they put him in a drawer and don’t see him as a living individual painter any more.’ [...] ‘They are dead.’ She gave a funny look sideways. ‘Not these particularly. All photos. When you draw something it lives and when you photograph it it dies.’ (Fowles, 2004, p. 55)

Ostensibly, Miranda’s views on art which praises liveliness differ from those of Clegg who appreciates the beauty of the death. However, she forgets that what Clegg values is not the liveliness of the things in its literal meaning, but the beauty of the possession and his ability or power of collecting them. In other words, what matters for Clegg is not the function of the butterflies, but the fugitive meanings, as Freedgood explained (2006, p. 4). Even though they lose their function as the animals and the beauty of nature, the collection stands as it is, as a thing that asserts its agency in his life. From a different perspective, Loveday describes this as a paradox of collecting:

Fowles brings out the special paradox of collecting. The collector seeks to possess things of value; yet the value of what he seeks resides precisely in the fact that it was free and alive. In the things the collector covets, what can be possessed is not what is valuable. (1985, p. 24)

Furthermore, focusing on the meaning of the word “butterfly” in Greek as “soul,” Loveday concludes that Clegg kills the souls of the beauty and imprisons them in an objectified state (1985, pp. 24-5). Hence, it can be observed that Loveday ascribes value and beauty to the liveliness and freedom. Yet, while the collection loses its beauty and value in a conventional way, it exists as a material possession for Clegg. The word “soul” loses its meaning for the butterflies, but the butterflies are now valued and possessed as dead, soulless material entities.

Furthermore, as he has the money he needs, Clegg’s obsession turns into collecting women instead of butterflies. The objectification and dehumanisation of the female protagonist are one of the frequently dealt issues in this novel in that the problematic and unconventional feminism of the author is questioned by the critics. The female characters created by Fowles are passive and under the control of male power, even though he himself claims that “[m]y female characters tend to dominate the male. I see man as a kind of artifice, and woman as a kind of reality” (as cited in Miller, 1994, p. 4). In stark contrast to Fowles’s claim, Miranda is a woman who would like to be dominated by a man, yet, her refusal of Clegg stems from Clegg’s weaknesses and social inferiority. Instead, Miranda would like to feel the domination of a powerful and educated man like George Paston (G.P.). Foster comparatively analyses the choice of Miranda claiming that

[t]his is more than just sexual snobbery; rather, it represents a sense that for a relationship to work the man must be at least as strong as the woman and that being stronger is all right for him. Her [Miranda’s] willingness to be dominated introduces a strong element of sadomasochism into her relationship with G.P. [...] her disgust with Clegg sometimes stems from his refusal to act strong, particularly in light of his role as her jailer. (1994, p. 35)

Thus, Miranda is not a strong feminist character raising her voice against the male domination, but a woman who tries to be accepted by the society by marrying an already accepted male figure. On the other hand, Michelle Phillips Buchberger labels Fowles’s feminism as “pseudo-feminism” because “he perpetuates the idea of woman as ‘other’” (2012, p. 133). From a different approach, Mahmoud Salami resembles the relationship between Clegg and Miranda to the one between the Occident and the Orient: “Miranda is socially produced, constructed as demonized ‘other,’ misrepresented, oppressed, segregated, and written as inferior to Clegg in his male discourse” (1992, p. 59). Thus, the female character of the novel is frequently studied as the weak and the other, similar to the representations of the women in the Victorian period. Making an analogy between the woman and the animal in this particular novel, Fowles seems to indulge in these arguments although he claims to create powerful images of women in his novels as stated above.

At the beginning of the novel, Clegg observes Miranda just as he observes the butterflies and he says “I marked it in my observation diary” (Fowles, 2004, p. 9). It is clear that Clegg never sees Miranda as a woman and a human being but just an object of his dreams where there is nothing nasty and nothing sexual. The fact that Clegg’s image of Miranda out of the sexual context ostensibly refers to the objectification of Miranda in a new context, in other words, in a Victorian context in which the concept of “Angel in the House”^{††} prevails. Accordingly, Karen M. Lever states that “the Fowles protagonist [...] suffers from that infamous Victorian problem, the Madonna/whore complex. He separates love and sex, dividing into two types to match” (1976, p. 90). That is to argue that, just like his butterflies, Clegg also categorises women according to their behaviours as whores or as angels. In these categorisations, Miranda is classified as an angel in the beginning “with her hair in a long pigtail”

^{††} The concept is based on a narrative poem first published in 1854 by Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) with the same title. The poem emphasises the ideal womanhood and motherhood in the Victorian period by representing the woman as the angel.

(Fowles, 2004, p. 9). Thus, the image of Miranda in Clegg's mind is drawn as an innocent school girl, an angel in the house. However, when his expectations do not match what he sees in real Miranda, he classifies her as a whore and justifies his indirect act of killing through this classification. Therefore, dehumanisation of Miranda is first observed in Clegg's image and his idea of keeping her as one of the butterflies in his collection. He never sees her as a human being but a beauty that he must possess:

Seeing her always made me feel like I was catching a rarity, going up to it very careful, heart-in-mouth as they say. A Pale Clouded Yellow, for instance. I always thought of her like that, I means words like elusive and sporadic, and very refined – not like the other ones, even the pretty ones. More for the real connoisseur. (Fowles, 2004, p. 9)

The image of Miranda as a rare beauty in the world paves the way for Clegg to kidnap and keep her. Recollecting the paradox of collecting stated above, Loveday makes a similar comment also for Miranda: "You cannot collect people; and if you succeed in doing so, then what you have got will not in any worthwhile sense be a person" (Loveday, 1985, p. 25). Miranda stops being a human and a woman for Clegg but she turns into a being which gains her meaning in a new context with the butterflies. Comparing herself to the butterflies, Miranda also realises that

I know what I am to him. A butterfly he has always wanted to catch. I remember (the very first time I met him) G.P. saying that collectors were the worst animals of all. He meant art collectors, of course. I didn't really understand, I thought he was just trying to shock Caroline—and me. But of course, he is right. They are anti-life, anti-art, anti-everything. (Fowles, 2004, p. 123)

Therefore, associating Miranda with the animals or the other, both Clegg and Fowles dehumanise and reduce the woman in the position of an object, which echoes the Victorian understanding of woman as the innocent angel. However, the difference in Fowles's work lies in the conceptualisation of women as an artistic object. While reducing Miranda in an objectified state, Clegg does not want to assault or kill her but just wants to practice his art and suppress his obsession for keeping things. In other words, he would like to keep her as a home decoration.

On the other hand, Clegg's obsession with taking photographs is another tool for him to dehumanise the lively things. He wants to see Miranda passive and in need of protection, and that is why he takes her photos, cuts her face and masturbates while looking at the photos, which gives him complete authority over her. Interpreting Clegg's camera as a phallic object since he is sexually impotent, Pamela Cooper focuses on Clegg's exercise of power through photography (1991, p. 24). According to Cooper, both collecting and photography are pornographic activities which kill organic beings and turn them into passive objects:

Remembering the double meaning of the word 'take' for Clegg, this suggests that in *The Collector* the urge to photograph is both sexual and aggressive, the desire to punish and kill through violation. Thus the static debased images of Miranda created during her illness represent a spiritual death suffered before her physical death occurs. The camera becomes an erotic instrument for Clegg. (1991, p. 28)

Through photography and pornography afterwards, Clegg kills Miranda and leads her to be transformed into a thing rather than a human being. He destroys the vitality of the human by taking photographs and makes it an artistic image, depersonalises them by cutting the faces of Miranda. By comparing Clegg's two obsession, William Palmer argues that "[c]ollecting, photography, and pornography—in Fowles's novel all three motifs represent different kinds of killing and all are different kinds of perversion of the life-art relationship" (1974, p. 40). Following this comment, Foster also makes a connection between these three motifs stating that all of them turn living beings into things "over which Clegg can assert his dominance" (1994, p. 34). In a way, the Victorian act of collecting and keeping things for their own sake

are replaced by photography which is an act also associated with collecting in this novel. Yet, it would be wrong to claim that the only function of these three motifs is to kill because they also regenerate and revitalise the living things in new art forms. That is to argue that both butterflies and women lose their initial status and meanings for Clegg as the lively animal and human but acquire new forms in new contexts as artistic beings.

To conclude, rather than the feminist readings of the novel, this study is intended to focus on the concept of material obsession from a Victorian perspective. It can be argued that Clegg's obsession caused by his traumatic past to the material things and his hoarding mentality echo Victorian understanding of materiality. On the other hand, while recollecting Victorian materialism and material culture, Fowles also touches upon the material obsession in the twentieth century, which is reflected in the objectification of women. Even though his work lacks the feminist approaches of the time it is written in, it can be argued that going back to the Victorian womanhood, Fowles sheds light upon the continuation of women commodification in a dark tone. In hindsight, *The Collector* can be interpreted as a neo-Victorian novel with respect to the obsessions of the character with the material and his creations of the material through killing the lively beings and regenerating them in new fashions as an indication of his aesthetic taste.

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