TREATMENT OF FEMININE MADNESS AS AN APPARATUS TO TRAIN
THE OTHER IN SYLVIA PLATH'S *THE BELL JAR* AND JEAN RHYS'S
WIDE SARGASSO SEA

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ABSTRACT

TREATMENT OF FEMININE MADNESS AS AN APPARATUS TO TRAIN
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This thesis aims to discuss Female Gothic fiction in terms of its treatment of feminine madness and how Female Gothic challenges the relationship between phallogocentric discourse and its use of madness as an apparatus to train the subject. I claim that Gothic in literature is a form where fantasy dominates reality in an attempt to speak the unspeakable, voice the unreason that is silenced in the eighteenth century, with an aim to blatantly attack the logocentric structures of modernity. Female Gothic, on the other hand, is configured by women writers to explore the female experience through strategies of deconstructing and subverting the binaristic logic that is constructed by phallogocentric discourse. The study bases its discussion on Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), which is considered a roman à clef and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), a feminist rewriting of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. The thesis argues that both *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* foreground a subversive representation of feminine madness which is deliberately used by patriarchy as an apparatus to train the female other. The novels open up another space of signification for women in order to challenge the relationship between madness and

phallogocentrism in a way that both novels critique and problematize the representation of feminine madness through which the discourse and reason of male logic are deliberately deconstructed.

ÖZ

SYLVIA PLATH'İN *THE BELL JAR* VE JEAN RHYS'IN *WIDE SARGASSO SEA* ROMANLARINDA KADIN DELİLİĞİNİN ÖTEKİYİ EĞİTMEK İÇİN BİR APARAT OLARAK İŞLEYİŞİ

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Bu tez, Kadın Gotik kurgusunu, kadın deliliğini ele alışı ve Kadın Gotik'in 'phallogocentric' söylem ile deliliği özneyi eğitmek için bir araç olarak kullanması arasındaki ilişkiye nasıl meydan okuduğu açısından tartışmayı amaçlar. Edebiyatta Gotik'in, modernitenin logosmerkezci yapılarına bariz bir şekilde saldırmak amacıyla, dile getirilmeyeni, on sekizinci yüzyılda susturulan aklın sınırları dışında kalan ögeleri seslendirme girişiminde fantezinin gerçekliğe hükmettiği bir biçim olduğunu savunuyorum. Öte yandan Kadın Gotik, kadın yazarlar tarafından, phallogocentric söylemin inşa ettiği ikili mantığı yapısöküme uğratma ve yıkma stratejileri aracılığıyla kadın deneyimini keşfetmek üzere yapılandırılmıştır. Bu çalışma, tartışmasını Sylvia Plath'ın *The Bell Jar* (1963) ve Jean Rhys'in Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre* romanının feminist bir yeniden yazımı olan *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) romanlarına dayandırıyor. Tez, hem *The Bell Jar* hem de *Wide Sargasso Sea*'nin, ataerki tarafından kadın ötekini eğitmek için kasıtlı olarak kullanılan kadın deliliğinin altüst edilmiş bir temsilini ön plana çıkardığını öne sürüyor. Sözü geçen romanlar, erkek mantığının, söyleminin ve aklının kasıtlı olarak yapısöküme uğratıldığı, kadın deliliğinin temsilini eleştiren

ve sorunsallaştıran bir şekilde, delilik ve phallogocentrism arasındaki ilişkiye meydan okumak için kadınlara başka bir anlam alanı sunar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın Gotik, Kadın Deliliği, Jean Rhys, Sylvia Plath, Ideolojik Aparatlar

To my mother, Nilgün…

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Aim and the Scope of the Study

This study aims to discuss the literary treatment of feminine madness as an ideological apparatus[1] to train the female Other in two novels from the Female Gothic tradition. This thesis consults Female Gothic tradition in order to foreground a deconstructive reading of the binary mode of thinking that has been established within phallogocentrism. Although Gothic emerged as the first tradition to position itself against the backdrop of Romanticism and modernity, it can be argued that from the perspective of phallogocentrism it failed to act as an alternative to deconstruct the binaristic structures that latently disguise the logocentric mode of thinking which is deeply ingrained in Western epistemology. However, from Female Gothic onwards women writers have found strategies to expose logocentric structures and subvert binarisms in an attempt to take the incarcerated subject out of the trap.

Sandra Gilbert argues by referring to Robert Bly that there is a correlation between the female psyche and the 'mythological mode': women writers, "when they're writing *as women*, have tended to rely on plots and patterns that suggest the obsessive patterns of myths and fairy tales" (*Shakespeare's Sisters* 248). Fairy tales play themselves out as "a womanly way of coming to terms with reality, the old matriarchy's disguised but powerful resistance against the encroachments of the patriarchy" (248). Gilbert draws similarities and argues that Female Gothic, too, embodies the characteristics of a mythological genre,

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[1] 'Apparatus' is a term adopted by Louis Althusser to refer to methods and violence used by the ruling class to dominate the working class (Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*)

that is, "it draws heavily upon unconscious imagery, apparently archetypal events, fairy-tale plots, and so forth" (248). There she raises the question: "Why do so many women writers characteristically work the mythological vein?" She responds to this critical question as a matter of a quest for self-representation. Gilbert argues as follows:

> Women as a rule, even sophisticated women writers, haven't until quite recently been brought to think of themselves as conscious subjects in the world. Deprived of education, votes, jobs, and property rights, they have also, even more significantly, been deprived of their own selfhood. "What shall I do to ratify myself - to be admired - or to vary the tenor of existence" are not the questions which a woman of right feelings asks on first awaking to the avocations of the day. (249)

Female subjectivity, which has been the quagmire for so many women writers, is perhaps the reason behind women writers' alignment with mythological forms when it is *herstory* that is at stake. From Mary Shelley to Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë to Emily Dickinson, and Virginia Woolf to Sylvia Plath, women writers both figuratively and literally wrote the story of the female myth, which is their own story, a *herstory*. Those writers are acutely preoccupied with an 'anxiety of authorship'[2] that pervasively haunts their writing with Others, doubles, and strategies such as flight, starvation, escape, and killing their husband and fathers. Their writings reveal an initiation of female myth, a search for selfhood that struggles to divorce itself from the contamination of patriarchy in an attempt to define female subjectivity. In this sense, Female Gothic tradition can be seen as the battleground for women writers who straddle to reach purgation or come to terms with their exploration of female subjectivity with feminizing strategies

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[2] Harold Bloom argues regarding literary genealogies that the literary history is driven by the artist's 'anxiety of influence', that is, ''his fear that he is not his own creator and that the works of his predecessors, existing before and beyond him, assume essential priority over his own writing." The correlation between a ''strong poet'' and the ''heroic warfare'' he must engage in so as to invalidate his poetic father and prove his literary power is argued as literary Oedipal struggle. Gilbert and Gubar argue that instead of feeling ''anxiety of influence'' female poet experiences ''anxiety of authorship'' - "a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a 'precursor' the act of writing will isolate or destroy her" (Gilbert and Gubar 47-49). I can also argue that *The Bell Jar* reveals such an anxiety that captivated Sylvia Plath both figuratively and literally.

such as madwoman[3] that burns down the patriarchally marked house as in the case of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and/or foregrounding a liberating image of the split-self as in the case of *The Bell Jar*.

It is with this subversion and transgression of the patriarchal matrix that Female Gothic distinguishes itself from traditional Gothic. While traditional Gothic is unable to go beyond the binary trap, Female Gothic departs from it by transgressing its confinements. It is with this departure from the juxtaposition of the oppressor and the oppressed with which traditional Gothic is insistent to emphasize that Female Gothic shifts towards subversion of the mechanisms that create those binarisms. In this sense, what makes Female Gothic run ahead of traditional Gothic is its capacity to dethrone logos that marks *her* as the Other. While traditional Gothic foregrounds and glorifies the repressed, Female Gothic gives room to the voice of the repressed in a way that subverts the phallogocentric structures. Female Gothic neither glorifies the victimization of women nor romanticizes the depressed and terrified women who are deprived of self-representation but it acutely dismantles these presupposed conditions that are forged by patriarchy. Henceforth one of the most subtle distinctions between traditional and Female Gothic is that while traditional Gothic gives representation to the repressed, Female Gothic divorces the repressed from the binaristic trap that it is located in. It is due to this subversion that this thesis theorizes the demystification of phallogocentric mechanisms within Female Gothic fiction. Instead of looking at the distinction between the oppressor and the oppressed, this thesis discusses the working mechanisms of the binary mode of thinking that establishes the oppressor/oppressed, center/periphery, presence/absence, same/other, being/nothingness dualisms. In doing so, this study bases its arguments mostly on French philosopher Jacques Derrida in an attempt to foreground a deconstructive discussion through the readings of the novels.

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[3] This is not the literal reference to a mad woman but it is the category of the madwoman.

Jacques Derrida's essay *Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* (1967) provides a fruitful ground for such a poststructuralist discussion on the representation of feminine madness against the background of Female Gothic tradition. Derrida's deconstruction of logocentrism foregrounds the idea that Western tradition tends to define categories by what they are against the background of what they are not. This logocentric habit of governing the elements within the ontological and epistemological system by the valorization of hierarchies is what poststructuralist tradition undermines and challenges. Derridean deconstruction opens up space for overturning the binary oppositions that demarcate the female as the Other to the self. In a similar strand of thought, Althusserean perception of ideology hints at the unconscious working mechanisms of ideology that latently govern subordinate elements within the same epistemological and ontological system. What is foregrounded in ideology is then associated with the compulsory mode of thinking that is compelled by a presence-to-itself logic that valorizes its working principles against the background of absence/nothingness/otherness. In this respect, this thesis discusses the configuration of categories that are embedded in ideology such as madness, marriage, family, as well as marginalization in an attempt to theorize and deconstruct the working principles of these latent organizations. The constructedness of these categories shows that they are designated as ideological apparatuses to train the female Other in the patriarchal domain. In this sense, ideology and patriarchy operate on similar working mechanisms that aim to subjugate the female subjects pervasively and unconsciously. A deconstructive reading of these categories against the backdrop of Female Gothic tradition opens up a doubly subversive and transgressive space of signification for further discussion in this thesis.

Chapter 2 starts with the historical development of Gothic with a specific focus on the space of signification it occupied from the eighteenth-century to the twentieth century. The chapter gives insights into the emergence of the term Gothic and what it referred to both historically and geographically in the course of years. Beside the settings, stock features, thematic and stylistic characteristics

in different eras, the chapter discusses Gothic with a specific focus on the works of pioneering female writers of their times. These writers are particularly emphasized in order to forefront how they overturned and subverted the patriarchally marked categories. The study reveals that where Gothic was assigned to the return of the repressed, Female Gothic objectifies the return of the patriarchally repressed. In this respect, looking into the genealogy of Gothic is particularly important in order to foreground both the distinction and significance of Female Gothic in the literary tradition. The chapter continues with the representation of madness as a subversive site of act in Female Gothic by undermining the constructedness of the female Other within the epistemological and ontological system. It is argued that the trope of the madwoman in Female Gothic occupies a transgressive space of signification that undermines phallocratic categories. The theoretical background of the thesis foregrounds the idea that Female Gothic gives room to women writers for subversive strategies to demystify the phallogocentric mechanisms.

Chapter 3 focuses on the discussion of *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* regarding the configuration and treatment of feminine madness. The chapter starts with a discussion of feminine madness by looking into the working mechanisms of the patriarchal mode of thinking that is key in the establishment of the trope of the madwoman. It is discussed that feminine madness is ideologically conditioned in an attempt to have the female Other genuflect the paternal laws. Madness is much less a female malady than the ideological conditioning of patriarchal methodolatries.

Chapter 4 discusses the categories of marriage and family as ideological apparatuses to train the female Other in the light of Derrida and Althusser. Both novels undermine the phallogocentric categories that present themselves as ideological apparatuses. A deconstructive reading of sexual politics overturns the alliance between man and reason. Marriage is discussed as a man-made ideological institution. Law and order are designed to empower androgenic relations.

Chapter 5 is based on the marginalization of the female Other by exposing the historical and political parameters around which race and gender are treated. The inability to navigate between binaries or the definition of binaries against the background of logocentrism paves the way for heroines' marginalization.

Chapter 6 makes up the conclusion of this thesis. It underlines that the madwoman in Female Gothic offers a glance from the flip side of the coin to the phallogocentric structures that are deeply embedded in the epistemological and ontological systems. It will discuss that a strand of thought that neither victimizes the madwoman nor reduces it to a spectacle opens up subversive possibilities in feminist terms.

1.2. The Significance of the Study

Plath's and Rhys's works of fiction have been studied in relation to mental illness and feminine madness. For example, the BA thesis ''Under *The Bell Jar* and across the *Wide Sargasso Sea*: women's mental health and wellness in novels by Sylvia Plath and Jean Rhys'' by Courtney Kjar dwells on the psychological implications of sexist stereotypes and studies the ways of pressures on the protagonists. Kjar looks into the notions of chastity, purity, wifehood and motherhood as well as the sociological milieu to discuss the psychological results for women. Another significant work, ''Divinest Sense: the Construction of Female Madness and the Negotiation of Female Agency in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*'' written by Stephanie De Villiers describes madness as a revolt against the oppression of patriarchal societies with a specific emphasis on metaphors and images. She suggests that woman's madness is sympathetically depicted as a reaction to patriarchal oppression and rebellion against it. She studies psychological discourse by Laing, *The Divided Self* and focuses on anti-psychiatry movement and changing conventional definitions. Another article that looks at Sylvia Plath and Jean Rhys within the context of madness is ''Madness in Women's Fiction: A Reading of Subversive/Redemptive Strategies in Three

Novels by Jean Rhys, Sylvia Plath, and Margaret Atwood'' written by Saba Marwan Suleiman argues that insanity is foregrounded as a remedy for insane women. Furthermore, she suggests that women writers seek to objectify their experience of being culturally muted by giving the crazy woman voice in their own writing. She bases her study mostly on language, identities and hysteria to investigate the novels. She also suggests that madness can be a choice against patriarchal oppression. Similarly, it is discussed in the thesis ''Madness as an Anti- Authoritarian Agent in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Bell Jar*'' written by Hüseyin İçen that the madness of female characters is a result of authoritarianism which is embodied as patriarchy in *The Bell Jar* and colonialism in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. He adopts the Bhabhaian Third Space of enunciation to refer to the way how heroine's seek seclusion in mirrors. Besides, Hüseyin İçen also studies in the article ''Madness as Anti-Colonial Agent in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Bell Jar*'' the representation of the metaphor of mirror as a third space of enunciation where he draws parallels between a fractured sense of self that is a result of patriarchy in the case of Esther and colonialism in the case of Antoinette. He argues that economic powerlessness, emotional vulnerability, sexual dismissal as well as depression and suicide are results of the pressures of the social conventions. Thus, heroines seek seclusion in the mirrors. In "We Are All Mad Here: Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* as a Political Novel" Laura de la Parra Fernandez approaches the novel from the perspective of political complexity regarding the problems Esther encountered in post-WWII and 1950s American society. Fernandez draws parallels between the institution of psychiatry and the politics of that time. She argues that ECT and lobotomy were used as strategies to gain control over women. Finally she looks into the correlation between Cold War politics, gender and the institution of psychiatry in *The Bell Jar* to critique the notions of conformism and consumerism in the 1950s. She links the institution of psychiatry to politics in a way that madness was used as a medium to take control over women. On the other hand, in the article "Method and Madness in '*A Question of Power*' and '*Wide Sargasso Sea*' " Rajeev S. Patke discusses these two works from the perspectives of race, gender, and familial

constructs, and looks into their repercussions in feminist, psychoanalytical and postcolonial discourses. In order to do so, he consults paradoxical fables.

Although there are studies focusing on the theme of madness in *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the correlation between these novels within the tradition of Female Gothic fiction and the treatment of feminine madness as an ideological apparatus that shapes the subjects has not received attention. Looking at the studies that explored feminine madness, I noticed a gap in the discussion of madness against the background of phallogocentric structures as well as Female Gothic. In order to contribute to scholarship, I focus on a deconstructive reading of the novels with an aim to demystify the logocentric mode of thinking. Therefore, this study is particularly significant as it attempts to discuss and theorize the relationship between phallogocentrism and the representation of feminine madness within Female Gothic tradition. Both novels that are selected to be discussed in this thesis are examples of the return of the patriarchally repressed, a characteristic particular to Female Gothic tradition, and deal with the madwoman in a deconstructive and subversive treatment. This thesis focuses on Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* because in both novels the configuration of the female Other against the background of phallogocentrism has a common point in foregrounding feminine madness as a subversive site of act. *The Bell Jar* is set in 1945s America and *Wide Sargasso Sea* is set in the aftermath of the Emancipation Act of 1833 in the West Indies. Whereas the former foregrounds the category of woman from the perspective of post WWII politics that is current in American society, the latter offers a glance to the condition of the woman in Victorian society. I am aware that these two novels tell the story of women in two rather distinct historical and cultural contexts although both novels were published in the same decade, one in 1966 and the other in 1963. Despite the huge cultural and historical gap between their contexts, it is interesting that the novels treat the category of woman and its configuration and how they are trapped by the phallogocentric system in identical lines of thinking. That is, these women live in different centuries and cultures but what they go through have overwhelming similarities. This might be

either due to the fact that how women are configured in patriarchal discourses is through some universal rules so that geographical or historical differences do not make much difference in their process of configuration. Another reason of this similarity might be the fact that despite the different historical and cultural contexts in the novels, they are the product of the same zeitgeist. One writer locates the problem in the eighteenth century and the other in the twentieth century but their vantage points are identical. Whether the source of similarity is the first or the second reason, or maybe both of them, putting these two novels into a dialogue indicates that there has been some element of universality in the configuration of women throughout centuries. The case of Antoinette accounts for this point as she was stigmatized by both the Western discourse and the dominant discourse of her native culture. The interesting thing about her discrimination is that there are other markers like racial or geneological that work with patriarchal mechanisms. This testifies to the fact that patriarchal mechanisms collaborate with other forms of discrimination, which leads to the consolidation of its ideology. It is because of this collaboration that putting these novels which tell their stories from different historical and cultural frames into a dialogue that proves to be more fruitful for my argument in this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAME

2.1. The History of the Development of the Gothic

Gothic is a term that stands out in various fields such as literature, architecture, history, music, cinema, and has endorsed several meanings and applications over the course of the years.

Before literature, the term Gothic was used in architecture. Gothic showed itself mostly in medieval architecture, primarily ecclesiastical edifices such as churches and cathedrals. During the late eighteenth century, it was used to refer to the ready-made buildings with a distinct medieval taste that were built by the aristocrats. Perhaps one of the most iconic Gothic buildings was Horace Walpole's house in Twickenham, named Strawberry Hill, a castle that Walpole built from scratch without having any prior modeling. Strawberry Hill is considered as the standpoint of Gothic Revival[4] in England as well as Gothic fiction where he found the source of inspiration for his novel *The Castle of Otranto*. Within a literary context, the term 'Gothic' basically refers to the novels that were written between the 1790s and the 1820s with pioneers such as Horace Walpole, Ann Radcfliffe, Matthew Lewis, C. R. Maturin, and Mary Shelley.

Gothic fiction lived its heyday in the mid-1790s during a time when domestic, political and cultural spheres were chaotic due to fear of invasion. The literary market was overflown with novels that did not directly reflect the anxieties of real life and were preoccupied with remote geographies and actions. Three major

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[4] Architectural movement that started in England in the late 1740s.

works that stand out during the 1790s are Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Italian* (1797) and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796). Radcliffe and Lewis were seen as distinguished representatives of Gothic fiction. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* marks the beginning of the critical use of the term Gothic when the novel was published in 1764. Emerging at a time when classical unities of space, time, and unified characters as well as public decorum, reason and causality were in total harmony with Augustan ideals, the publication of his novel foregrounds some of the core aspects of the Gothic fiction that located itself in the margins of the Enlightenment and revealed characteristics of this new genre such as a feudal background, supernatural elements, nobleness as well as mysterious and archaic settings. In Rosemary Jackson's words it was with the Castle of Otranto that "the demonic found a literary form in the midst of Augustan ideals of classical harmony, public decorum and reasonable restraint" (*The Literature of Subversion* 57). A typical setting of a Gothic tale or fiction comes from an antiquated place, commonly a castle, abbey, graveyard, vault, prison, decaying factory, an underworld or derelict buildings where the characters are haunted by internalized and externalized terrors physically and psychologically. These hauntings usually reveal themselves in the form of ghosts, vampires, monsters or specters by opening up different realms and attaining supernatural elements.

David Punter suggests in *The Literature of Terror, A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* that the origin of the term 'Gothic' dates back to the Goths, barbarian northern tribes that appeared after the collapse of the Roman Empire. Although the first use of the term was to do with its geographical significance, seventeenth and early eighteenth century writers had little knowledge about who the Goths were. Because they only knew that the Goths came from the north, they associated the term with aspects of 'Germanic' and 'Teutonic' and came up with barbaric resonances. However, from the eighteenth century onwards, there was a departure from its geographical implications and a shift towards its historical significance that hinted at the reinvention of the term Gothic (4-5). David Punter argues that the common

ground of the early Gothic novels' feature "is to do with their relation to history" that only later, in 1790, Gothic was associated with terror. He argues the difficulty of making a distinction between Gothic fiction and historical fiction since Gothic itself is preoccupied with history (4-5). He argues:

> In the 1770s and 1780s, several different kinds of new fiction arose to challenge the realist tradition, but what they all had in common was a drive to come to terms with the barbaric, with those realms excluded from the Augustan synthesis, and the primary focus of that drive was the past itself. (Punter, *The Literature of Terror* 52)

It can be argued that Gothic was fueled by an archaic return of the repressed whose darkness lended the visibility of a forgotten past. The juxtaposition of a barbaric past and a heterogenous present as well as reality and fantasy brushes off the return of the repressed in a way that the past finds itself a representation. Thus, Gothic can be seen as a gestalt that is reshaped and configured with what was forgotten and repressed. Fred Botting suggests in *In Gothic Darkly: Heterotopia, History, Culture* that "the Enlightenment, which produced the maxims and models of modern culture, also invented the Gothic" (*A New Companion to the Gothic* 13). The Enlightenment that called itself the cradle of modern culture was also the locus of the Gothic. Similarly, the Enlightenment and the neoclassical values that dominated society were also invented by ideas reemployed from Greek and Roman writers. In the aftermath of the Renaissance, classical tradition identified itself with highly civilized, aesthetic values and humane relations, and considered its feudal past as barbarous and primitive. It was with the Enlightenment period that a new mode of thinking foregrounded a cultural revival of the Gothic and a reconnection of its forgotten past shaped the artistic representation of the Gothic. As a result, the term came to be used in contrast to 'classical'. Because eighteenth century writers referred to their present as modern, historical elements of the Gothic signified a "barbarous, medieval and supernatural past" (Longueil qtd. in Punter 13). This is where the Gothic endorses its strong meaning as David Punter puts it: "Where the classical was well-ordered, the Gothic was chaotic; where simple and pure, Gothic was ornate and convoluted; where the classics offered a set of cultural models to be

followed, Gothic represented excess and exaggeration, the product of the wild and the uncivilised" (Punter, *Literature of Terror* 5). Thus, it can be argued that Gothic came to be known in its opposition to classical values with insistence on post-Roman barbarism and lack of reason. It is to be found in the reluctance to submit to rationalism that was put forth in the Enlightenment. In other words, eighteenth century representation of Gothic marks a time when the term attained derogative resonances that were in nonconformity with neoclassical ideals. Punter argues:

> Attractions of the past and of the supernatural become similarly connected, and, further, in which the supernatural itself becomes a symbol of our past rising against us, whether it be the psychological past - the realm of those primitive desires repressed by the demands of closely organised society - or the historical past, the realm of a social order characterised by absolute power and servitude. (*The Literature of Terror* 47)

Emerging at the peak time of industrialism and embourgeoisement[5] Gothic fiction can be seen as a reaction to historical events by endorsing meanings that were at odds with the epistemological categories of the eighteenth century. By voicing what was repressed on psychological and political levels, it functioned as a leitmotif that provided relief against the backdrop of social fears and anxieties. Rosemary Jackson argues in *The Literature of Subversion* that although the roots of fantasy can be seen in 'ancient myths', 'legends', 'folklore' and 'carnival art', a more imminent origin lies in the "literature of unreason and terror" where the Gothic emerges during a time when Enlightenment epistemology silenced unreason. She argues by referring to Foucault as follows:

> What the classical period had confined 'was not only an abstract unreason but also an enormous reservoir of the fantastic.... One might say that the fortresses of confinement added to their social role of segregation and purification a quite opposite cultural function...they functioned as a great, long, silent memory.' (*Madness and Civilization* 210 qtd. in Jackson 57)

It is argued that these 'fortresses of unreason' were confined to the margins of Enlightenment and its dominant classical order, however, it configured a latent

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[5] The process of adopting or shifting to bourgeois values and characteristics.

pressure against it (57). The eighteenth century foregrounded a major shift in the perception of self and knowledge. Notions of 'reality', 'human nature' and 'wholeness' were put under scrutiny, and the result was that there was no overlap between the signifier and signified, and that signs were carried out without their ends. Thus, the period saw the loss of signification that hinted at a frenzy attempt to afford emptiness. In other words, the Gothic haunted the reason and morality of the eighteenth century. By departing from the epistemological categories of the Enlightenment, the Gothic performed an attack on the bourgeois ideals as well as reason, morality and the representation of art and nature with an emphasis on fears and anxieties that marked cultural transformation. Jackson suggests: "Gothic is seen as being a reaction to historical events, particularly to the spread of industrialism and urbanization. It is a complex form situated on the edges of bourgeois culture, functioning in a dialogical relation to that culture" (57). It can be argued that fears and anxieties that were carried out in a dialogical relation had a subversive effect. What this dialogue involved in itself was, as Punter puts it "the potential of revolution by daring to speak the socially unspeakable; but the very act of speaking it is an ambiguous gesture" (*The Literature of Terror* 417). It can be argued that, by threatening to subvert the epistemological categories, the Gothic conveyed uncertainty that disturbed the margins of the real. In a similar manner, it threatened to disturb the real with the return of the repressed. It was the reality or the elements that shaped the reality under scrutiny by threats that would potentially subvert, overturn or dethrone it. Those threats showed themselves in different thematic forms and engagements.

Although at first glance Gothic fiction appears as a homogenous mode of writing, when put under scrutiny, it becomes obvious that it is indeed quite a scattered and fragmented genre that played itself out on different thematic and stylistic characteristics in different eras. Fred Botting argues in *Gothic* as follows:

> Spectres, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats, monks and
> nuns, fainting heroines and bandits populate Gothic landscapes as suggestive

figures of imagined and realistic threats. This list grew, in the nineteenth century, with the addition of scientists, fathers, husbands, madmen, criminals and the monstrous double signifying duplicity and evil nature. (Botting 2)

Beside these stock features that foregrounded the fears and anxieties, the embodiment of landscapes were also 'desolate' and 'alienating'. While in the eighteenth century the setting of Gothic fiction was brought up with "wild and mountainous locations", later Gothic architectural components were also combined with the modern city suggesting the menace and violence in those places (2). Early Gothic fiction forefronted castle as its locus which also extended into forms such as 'abbeys', 'churches' and 'graveyards'. Botting suggests:

In later fiction, the castle gradually gave way to the old house: as both building and family line, it became the site where fears and anxieties returned in the present. These anxieties varied according to diverse changes: political revolution, industrialisation, urbanisation, shifts in sexual and domestic organisation, and scientific discovery. (2)

Gothic fiction foregrounded a tendency to subvert the mores and values that were embodied by reforms, revolutions and organizations. It was with this return of the repressed anxieties that stock features and settings embodied the desires untamed by reason.

It can be argued that what this tendency to engage in supernatural or unnatural elements in fantastic form had at its disposal was being at odds with reality and its categories. Rosemary Jackson argues by referring to Todorov's diagrammatic representation that the fantastic went through different forms and economies of ideas in the course of years. Fantastic tradition starts from the marvellous where supernatural elements dominate the climate and moves onto purely fantastic without offering an explanation for the unnaturalness. Finally, the uncanny[6] takes over the narrative where unconscious psychic material and psychological forces haunt the characters (*The Literature of Subversion* 14). Jackson suggests:

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[6] A term that has been used philosophically and psychoanalytically to refer to the disturbing strangeness in the ordinary.

"The very notion of realism which had emerged as dominant by the mid-nineteenth century is subjected to scrutiny and interrogation" (15). It was in the nineteenth century when the stage was ready for supernatural elements to slowly flow into 'reality'. Jackson argues that early pieces of Gothic are closer to the marvellous rather than pure fantasy with its employment of supernatural elements such as ghosts and magic in order to enhance social order and justice with a longing for replacing the one that was devastated by the emergence of capitalism. Because the world has become highly secularized since the eighteenth century, Gothic preoccupied itself with the anxieties of the absence of a fixed religious sign and changing cultural and political conditions. Where the eighteenth century was assigned to terror and sublime, nineteenth century provoked horror and uncanny that hinted at ambivalence and uncertainty. Botting suggests:

> Gothic became part of an internalised world of guilt, anxiety, despair, a world of individual transgression interrogating the uncertain bounds of imaginative freedom and human knowledge. Romantic ideals were shadowed by Gothic passions and extravagance. External forms were signs of psychological disturbance, of increasingly uncertain subjective states dominated by fantasy, hallucination and madness. The internalisation of Gothic forms reflected wider anxieties which, centering on the individual, concerned the nature of reality and society and its relation to individual freedom and imagination. (Botting 7)

Through these transformations, during the nineteenth century, Gothic started to posit new concerns of fear such as individuality, nature of reality, freedom and imagination. It slowly flows into a literary form where the emphasis falls on the unconscious material and psychological problems against the background of social contradictions. As Jackson puts it:

> The subject is no longer confident about appropriating or perceiving a material world. Gothic narrates this epistemological confusion: It expresses and examines personal disorder, opposing fiction's classical unities (of time, space, unified character) with an apprehension of partiality and relativity of meaning. (Jackson 58)

It can be argued that Gothic finds itself a representation at the crossroads of a material world and an underworld that is at odds with it. The setting of a city, building or labyrinth was no longer a medium to convey terror but it was the terror and corruption itself that was thematised. The family, on the other hand, was used as the locus of threat and uncanny where everyday life was estranged and haunted by the return of the repressed. Uncanny was at the heart of nineteenth century Gothic fiction as it used human identity as a stock device to expose the disturbing nature of the fragmented self. Botting suggests on the human subject and its representation in Gothic that:

> Signifying the alienation of the human subject from the culture and language in which s/he was located, these devices increasingly destabilised the boundaries between psyche and reality, opening up an indeterminate zone in which the differences between fantasy and actuality were no longer secure. (Botting 8)

It can be argued that by presenting the human subject as divided and disintegrated, Gothic foregrounds an incredulity towards the category of a unified sense of self. The Gothic subject denies the demands of embourgeoisement and is in no sense controlling its wild desires and fantasies. By introducing the duplicity of self and Other such as Gothic doublings and doppelgängers, it foregrounds a shift from supernatural to psychological forces that haunt the subjects. By undermining the dominant mode of thinking that is established by realism during the nineteenth century, Gothic disturbs the categories that dominate epistemology. It hollows out the real world so as to threaten to undermine the notion of probability and realism by strategically estranging it. Jackson argues that it would be equally wrong to regard fantastic mode of writing as an alternative literary form because many novelists whose primary concern was realistic forms also inclined towards non-realistic modes. For example, texts of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Dickens, Balzac, Wilkie Collins, Dostoevsky, Hardy, James, Conrad incline towards 'Gothic', 'sensationalism', 'melodrama', 'Romance', and 'fantasy' in a way that they overthrow a 'monological vision' (73). Jackson further argues:

An uneasy assimilation of Gothic in many Victorian novels suggests that within the main, realistic text, there exists another non-realistic one, camouflaged and concealed, but constantly present. Analogous to Freud's theory of the workings of the Unconscious, this inner text reveals itself at those moments of tension when the work threatens to collapse under the weight of its own repression. These moments of disintegration, of incoherence, are recuperated with difficulty. They remain as an obdurate reminder of all that has been silenced in the name of establishing a normative bourgeois realism. (Jackson 73)

It can be argued that Gothic fiction foregrounds a pervasive haunting of the return of the repressed which poses an attack on bourgeois realism. It subverts the working mechanisms of the dominant ideology by transgressing the norms of the Enlightenment. The unconscious plays itself out and is at odds with the reality in a way that it always finds intricate ways to remind itself. Past and present or in later fiction future as well, are in an inextricable relationship in a way that the repressions of the past are always projected onto present/future.

That is why Botting calls this history in which Gothic lies a 'fabrication' of the eighteenth century as its discourse is established on "the feudal orders of chivalry and religiously sanctioned sovereignty to the increasingly secularized and commercial political economy of liberalism" (*A New Companion to the Gothic* 15). In this sense, Gothic is deciphered as the 'mirror' that reflects the values of the eighteenth century. Botting puts it as follows:

'Gothic' functions as the mirror of eighteenth-century mores and values: a reconstruction of the past as the inverted, mirror image of the present, its darkness allows the reason and virtue of the present a brighter reflection. In Foucauldian terms, this version of the Gothic mirror operates utopically as "the inverted analogy with the real space of society." (*A New Companion to the Gothic* 15)

It can be argued that the metaphor of mirror conveys two sorts of reflections that are namely the juxtaposition of a conflicting present and the visibility of a discontinuous past that is reflected through a 'sort of shadow' that lends its visibility to the present. In this intermingling space, Botting applies the

Foucauldian term 'heterotopia'[7] in order to refer to this counter-site that is enacted in Gothic fiction. Punter argues:

> The main features of Gothic fiction, in neoclassical terms, are heterotopias: the wild landscapes, the ruined castles and abbeys, the dark, dank labyrinths, the marvelous, supernatural events, distant times and customs are not only excluded from the Augustan social world but introduce the passions, desires, and excitements it suppressed. (*A New Companion to the Gothic* 19)

Gothic functions as a heterotopic mirror that shows a tangential reality by juxtaposing familiar/unfamiliar, past/present from a space of otherness. In this respect, the Gothic mirror occupies a counter space in the present by disturbing the aesthetic values that are assigned to it and circulates within an unreal space of signification. It breaks the demands of the Augustan ideals of mimesis by reflecting the terrors of an underworld which exceeds the limits of reality instead of uplifting Romantic aesthetic representations of nature and art. Consequently, the heterotopic mirror foregrounds a discontinuous reflection of past onto present. It transgresses the demands of reality and possibility by challenging the reason that is established in the Enlightenment. The unnaturalness that it withholds undermines the physical laws and subverts the rational codes both culturally and aesthetically. Botting suggests:

> As well as recasting the nature of social and domestic fears, Gothic fictions presented different, more exciting worlds in which heroines in particular could encounter not only frightening violence but also adventurous freedom. The artificiality of narratives imagined other worlds and also challenged the forms of nature and reality advocated by eighteenth-century social and domestic ideology. (*Gothic* 4-5)

By opening up alternative spaces of signification for the heroes and heroines, Gothic celebrates transgressing power and desire. It puts the values and social codes under scrutiny and upsets the margins of cultural limits. As a result, it undermines the binary oppositions in a way that the reason/unreason, good/evil, civilized/barbaric, light/darkness are reconfigured against the backdrop of each

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[7] Heterotopia is a concept coined by Michel Foucault in order to refer to culturally and discursively othered spaces that mirror and upset what is outside.

other. Margin and center are redefined in their relation to social and historical parameters. As Botting puts it: "Gothic fiction is less an unrestrained celebration of unsanctioned excesses and more an examination of the limits produced in the eighteenth century to distinguish good from evil, reason from passion, virtue from vice and self from other" (Botting 5). It can be argued that Gothic opens up space for the examination and transgression of the logocentric mode of thinking. It functions as the locus of attaining visibility to the less visible. Moreover, Gothic foregrounds an ambivalence in conventional hierarchies by performing an attack on the symbolic with the antagonism it performs. It is with these dichotomous oppositions that Gothic disturbs the symbolic order as it threatens to overturn it.

During the twentieth century, the anxieties that circulate around metanarratives and their link to cultural, social and historical formations are condensed in the postmodern Gothic. Botting argues: "Gothic shadows flicker among representations of cultural, familial and individual fragmentation, in uncanny disruptions of the boundaries between inner being, social values and concrete reality and in modern forms of barbarism and monstrosity" (*Gothic* 102). It can be argued that what is at the heart of the postmodern Gothic is demystification of modernity's categories in a way that their meanings and signification spaces are put in question. Cultural, individual and familial disintegrations are foregrounded with new forms of terror and monstrosity particular to the twentieth century. For example, scientific devices and experiments have been used as objects of fear since *Frankestein*; however, from early twentieth century onwards science stops projecting fears onto the present and starts reflecting onto future. Besides, the implications of scientific themes are no longer "opposed to spiritual or religious modes of understanding or organizing the world" but the emphasis falls onto the "ideas of human individuality and community that are sacralised in horrified reactions to science" (102). The jeopardy that is posed by science is to neither spirituality nor desacralization of religion but to 'sense of human wholeness' which bears the potential to be dismantled and lost in an oppressively regulated world. Dehumanised environments signify a fragmented sense of self and

alienation of the subject as a result of a disturbing reality. Disturbances such as loss of human identity and alienation are linked with modern categories. Botting argues as follows:

> These disturbances are linked to a growing disaffection with the structures and dominant forms of modernity, forms that have become characterised as narratives themselves, powerful and pervasive myths shaping the identities, institutions and modes of production that govern everyday life. In this 'postmodern condition' the breakdown of modernity's metanarratives discloses a horror that identity, reality, truth and meaning are not only effects of narratives but subject to a dispersion and multiplication of meanings, realities and identities that obliterates the possibility of imagining any human order and unity. (102)

Commensurate with the previous centuries' Gothic tradition, twentieth century Gothic poses an attack on the categories that are put forth in the Enlightenment, too. Notions of 'progress', 'rationality', and 'civilization' are in suspension; however, with new forms of terror and excess. Thus, it can be said that the conflicts that surrounded the eighteenth century continued to show themselves in postmodern Gothic and revealed anxieties emerging with modernity.

Similar to the anxieties, stock features and writing styles of the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century Gothic writing preoccupied itself with an akin writing style. Early manifestations of objects of fear come to fruition through "cities, houses, archaic and occult pasts, primitive energies, deranged individuals and scientific experimentation" all of which created terror and horror (103). For example, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) questions the mechanisms of modernity by juxtaposing civilization and the otherness of a dark continent. On the other hand, Botting argues, the most disturbing embodiment of twentieth century Gothic fiction finds its representation in the writings of Franz Kafka as he thematically establishes individual alienation and the fragmented sense of everyday life (103). Disturbances related to family, society and psychological conditions make allusion to "darker Romantics like Godwin, Shelley, Hogg and Poe" (103).

Twentieth century Gothic fiction usually shows the interplay of narratives in order to undermine the production of meaning in terms of family, sexuality and identity. Grand narratives are put in question and new narrative styles emerge in this new mode of writing. Postmodern Gothic fiction opens up space for an interplay of different forms such as "myth, fairytale and everyday realism" all of which condense under the same narrative. For example, Angela Carter in her novels deliberately uses different fragments of "fairytale, legend, science fiction and Gothic" in a way that she reshapes the 'reality' and 'identity' that hint at "the production of meanings for sexuality" (110). It can be argued regarding postmodern Gothic fiction that the constructedness of grand narratives and hierarchies of meaning are put in question and universal notions are revisited in order to be demystified and reshaped. Playfulness with multiple forms and uncanny feelings function like a hinge around which the meaning and unified notions dissolve. Botting argues that uncanny feelings, terror and horror were the results of things that turn out not being what they seem to be (111). Objects of fear play themselves out on cultural boundaries and are foregrounded as a medium to play with axis of limit and transgression in order to provoke emotional ambivalence. Botting puts it as follows:

> It involves a pervasive cultural concern—characterised as postmodernist—that things are not only not what they seem: what they seem is what they are, not a unity of word or image and thing, but words and images without things or as things themselves, effects of narrative form and nothing else. Unstable, unfixed and ungrounded in any reality, truth or identity other than those that narratives provide, there emerges a threat of sublime excess, of a new darkness of multiple and labyrinthine narratives, in which human myths again dissolve, confronted by an uncanny force beyond its control. (Botting 111)

It can be argued that by putting the ontological status of things in question, postmodern Gothic opens up a realm of polysemy where it overturns the cultural definition of limits. By showing what cannot be, Gothic also exposes the cultural definition of what can be within the epistemological and ontological matrix.

It can be deciphered from the historical development of Gothic that from the late eighteenth century onwards, Gothic performs an attack on epistemology by

threatening to subvert the classical unities of time, space and the unified sense of self. It not only hollows out the real but also disturbs the symbolic and exposes the unconscious material of the subject. As Jackson suggests: "By attempting to transform the relations between the imaginary and the symbolic, fantasy hollows out the 'real', revealing its absence, its 'great Other', its unspoken and its unseen" (113). It can be seen as an invitation to transgress the culturally defined boundaries of the real in an epistemological and metaphysical system. By welcoming multiple realisms, it refuses to be reduced to homogenous and totalizing reason. Yet again, the juxtaposition of self and Other foregrounds resistance to the unified notion of self. As opposed to traditional categories, Gothic subject is divided and disintegrated. Gothic cherishes possibilities of the other: other realms, other selves, other histories etc.

2.2. Female Gothic

Similar to Gothic that has been a hard to define category except that it came to be known in its predominance of certain modes such as unnatural over natural, fantasy over reality and uncanny over ordinary, acknowledgement of Female Gothic as a separate category was equally if not more, challenging. When Ellen Moers first coined the term 'Female Gothic' in 1976, she suggested what she meant as "the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic" (Moers, *Literary Women* 90). Moers's definition of the term is at the heart of the notion of "possession of their own tradition" as she puts it *(Literary Women* 42). She argues, while male writers were encouraged to produce their own literary tradition, women writers were not only excluded from the literary arena but also isolated in the domestic sphere. Moers finds it indiscriminately important to draw parallels between the work, propriety and gender. Hence, Female Gothic can be seen as the restoration of a lost tradition and an act of women's liberation. Having emerged during the second-wave feminism, Moers' work as well as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) contributed to the second phase of

feminist literary tradition as they made the 'quest for self-definition' (76) a central subject to feminist criticism.

Female Gothic has been discussed by numerous feminist critics on different levels in the UK and North America. Starting with a brief reference to these works would be a fruitful ground for further discussion in this chapter. Firstly, Diane Long Hoeveler comes up with a new definition of Female Gothic as "Gothic Feminism" as she suggests:

> What I am calling "gothic feminism" was born when women realized that they had a formidable external enemy-the raving, lustful, greedy patriarch-in addition to their own worst internal enemy, their consciousness of their own sexual difference perceived as a weakness rather than a strength. (*Gothic Feminism* 10)

She focuses on the works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Charlotte Dacre, Mary Shelley and Ann Radcliffe with a specific focus on the problematization of issues of gender, patriarchy and feminism and how they influenced Female Gothic tradition. On the other hand, Diane Wallace in *Female Gothic Histories* focuses on how Gothic historical fiction was developed and used by women writers. In *Teaching the Gothic,* a compilation of essays edited by Anna Powell and Andrew Smith, it is argued that while some critics based their discussions on works of lost women authors, others looked at them within the historical and cultural contexts. Beside the historical and cultural approaches, other feminist critics engaged theoretical approaches in Gothic studies. Anne Williams, for example, adopted Kristevan theory in her *Art of Darkness: a Poetics of Gothic* (110). Gilbert and Gubar looked into the psychoanalytic representation of the female psyche and based their arguments on 'anxiety of authorship'. In addition, they brought up the representation of the Gothic doubling of Jane and Bertha Mason in order to foreground a new space of signification for the madwoman. Psychoanalytic theory has been widely consulted in Female Gothic studies because it is hard to assign one meaning to the metaphors used in Gothic novels. For example, the metaphor of a ghost or a castle is hard to pin down to a specific interpretation. On the other hand, it is argued that many academics working on

the Gothic studies of women writers critiqued the feminist literary approaches of the 1980s with their tendency to render female characters passive and victims. It is argued that those representations seemed to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes that confined women's lives. It was only after that the image of "autonomous, powerful, and transgressive" female characters found themselves a critical emphasis. Avril Gorner and Sue Zlosnik argue:

> That word "transgressive," carrying a then glamorous resonance of the work of Lacan, gave Female Gothic a new currency in the 1990s: Female Gothic, according to Elaine Showalter in 1991, could be seen as a mode of writing which corresponded to "the feminine, the romantic, the transgressive, and the revolutionary''. (*Teaching the Gothic* 111)

It can be argued that it was with this call for feminist politics that Female Gothic opened up space for writers to explore "forms of power and authority" as well as " literary, familial, political" resonances. Feminist theorists started to raise concerns related to gender relations and women's positioning in a patriarchal and capitalist Western culture which itself was a dire challenge to the Enlightenment values. As Lauren Fitzgerald puts it; "Feminism . . . was instrumental in institutionalization of Female Gothic tradition" *(The Female Gothic* 14). In other words, Feminism not only helped critics better reincarnate the politics of representation but also gave room to come up with multiple coinages of Female Gothic.

As the term Female Gothic was circulated among the literary critics, a number of other coinages were suggested as alternatives or to make the genre more specific such as 'women's Gothic', 'feminist Gothic', 'lesbian Gothic', 'Gothic feminism and 'postfeminist Gothic' (Wallace 1). Juliann Fleenor suggests in *The Female Gothic*: "There is not just one Gothic, but gothics" (4), as it is hard to reduce it to a homogenous form since different forms and writers expose the genre to a constant flux. Although the meanings and implications it points out are diverse, one thing remains certain that Female Gothic is a product of the 'second phase' feminist literary criticism that hinted at the regaining of the lost property of women's literature.

It can be argued that Female Gothic was adopted by women writers as a medium to convey a new signification space for the female experience by revealing the historical reality of women in a patriarchal society. Diana Wallace suggests by referring to Margaret Anne Doody as follows: "It is in the Gothic novel that women writers could first accuse the 'real world' of falsehood and deep disorder. Or perhaps, they rather asked whether masculine control is not just another delusion in the nightmare of absurd historical reality in which we are all involved" (qtd. in *Female Gothic Histories* 19). Wallace argues that Female Gothic can be seen as the locus of feminist politics as the novel opens up space for feminine protest. Wallace further argues that Female Gothic tradition and women's liberation movement have been quite intertwined as there are obvious overlaps between the waves of feminism and literary tradition. For example, the Gothic realism that is enacted in Charlotte and Emily Brontë overlaps with late nineteenth century first wave feminism that led to the suffragette movement (19). Thus, it can be argued that Female Gothic tradition allowed for an articulation of women's symbolic relation with culture and that the texts voiced the feminine experience. Perhaps it was this particular experience that marked off the difference between Male and Female Gothic traditions.

In *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic,* Anne Williams juxtaposes the distinction between male and female formulas that show up in the Gothic tradition. She argues that the difference between Male and Female Gothic is related to their plot, narrative technique and the treatment of the supernatural. Firstly, while Female Gothic is based on the female point of view and "generates suspense through the limitations imposed by it", Male Gothic uses multiple points of view to create dramatic irony. Secondly, ghosts are given an explanation in Female Gothic wheares Male Gothic foregrounds the supernatural as part of the reality. Third, it is argued that Male Gothic plot hints at a tragic plot, however, the female plot is based on a happy ending, usually foregrounded with a conventional marriage. Besides, Female Gothic heroine celebrates marriage and rebirth as she wakes up to a world where there is love and she acquires a new identity and name. On the contrary, Male Gothic protagonist

either fails and dies or the narrative's ending remains uncertain. Finally, while Female Gothic plot revolves around terror, Male Gothic makes use of horror and focuses 'on female suffering' (Williams 102, 104). In a similar strand of thought, Maggie Kilgour in *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* adds to the distinction by arguing that Male and Female Gothic traditions differ from each other regarding gender which suggests 'political implications'. While the Male Gothic plot foregrounds a 'revolutionary' ending, "a story of a rebel who resists the pressures of society that would repress individual desire", Female Gothic is 'reactionary' as it allows for space to ''reach the joys of ultimate conformity'' in our imagination. Where the Male Gothic is assigned to "a revolutionary aesthetic, often associated with romantic art which defamiliarizes and alienates reality in order to make us see anew" Female Gothic "suggests a bourgeois aesthetic, as it creates a circle of defamiliarisation and estrangement followed by the re-establishment of conventional life" (Kilgour 38). Kilgour also argues that Female Gothic plot renders the private world a house of horror and "the domestic realm appears in distorted nightmare forms in the images of the prison, the castle, in which men imprison helpless passive females, angels" (Kilgour 38). Kilgour argues that although the bourgeois home is portrayed as a Gothic prison for the heroine, the conditions that pave the way for her nightmare go back to normality in the end which suggests the continuity of the female incarceration in male dominated spaces (38). Conversely, Horner and Zlosnik argue that although such formula on the Male and Female Gothic traditions work when applied to most novels produced in the eighteenth-century as well as some "drugstore" texts, none of these criteria seem to work for novels such a Charlotte Brontë's *Vilette*, Jean Rhy's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* as they neither resist an unhappy ending nor make the distinction between terror and horror. On the other hand, Angela Carter and Charlotte Dacre do not follow the criteria to explain the supernatural in their novels as they represent it as part of reality. In other words, although some works followed the pattern of a standard Female Gothic, others were less likely to negotiate between Male and Female Gothic. Indeed, Gothic was instrumental for them in destabilizing the boundaries that seemed to tackle female writers (*Teaching the Gothic* 112).

Thus, it can be argued that Female Gothic comes with a multiplicity of definitions that are hard to identify with restrictive formulae. Indeed, Female Gothic should be seen in a dialogical relation with the historical, political and cultural moments that shape the reality of women. Female Gothic can be seen as the voice of the patriarchally repressed. Especially in the postmodern Female Gothic, generalizations and essentialist perspectives were seen as a trap for Gothic studies and generic categorizations.

Indeed, if there is one thing that is at the heart of Female Gothic plot, it is the female psychic material, the female anxieties, lost mothers, tyrannical male figures, imprisoned heroines escaping from Gothic houses and castles. Female Gothic writers challenged and undermined their confinements to the margins of patriarchy in their writings. Eugenioa C. Delamotte argues in *Perils of the Night* that the heyday of Gothic fiction was a time when the cultural positioning of women was a matter of debate and that these debates were attempts to confine women to the domestic sphere in a way that they would only be preoccupied with duties of home. She argues: "Women's Gothic in general speaks for women's feelings of vulnerability in a world where their only power was the power of influence" (151). It can be argued that the nightmares women voiced in their fictive nocturnal worlds were a reflection of their everyday experiences and relations that were socially and politically dominated by male vice and violence. Delamotte argues that the suffering of women was foregrounded with the institutions that oppressed them and made them feel alienated. Those institutions can be listed as "the patriarchal family, the patriarchal marriage, and a patriarchal class, legal, educational, and economic system" (152). For example, in *The Bell Jar* Esther is institutionalized in the asylum by the ideological agents of patriarchy and is forced to be domesticated in an attempt to act and think commensurate with the dominant discourse. The mental asylum can be regarded as a Gothic prison within which Esther is trapped. In an attempt to escape an uncongenial reality whose categories and signs are at odds with Esther, she finds herself hospitalized, electrocuted and trapped. Delamotte argues that:

> Gothic romances tell again and again this story of the woman hidden from the world as if she were dead, her long suffering unknown to those outside – or sometimes even inside – the ruined castle, crumbling abbey, deserted wing, madhouse, convent, cave, priory, subterranean prison, or secret apartments. (*Perils of the Night* 153)

Beneath all these escapist Gothic possibilities there lies the mother of the Gothic, Ann Radcliffe, who set the stage ready for heroines to escape male tyrants and patriarchal castles as of the 1790s. In doing so, Radcliffe paved the way for what we identify as Female Gothic today. Radcliffean female characters commonly personify entrapment and imprisonment in a male-dominated world as well as foreshadowing the later representations of the Victorian form of the madwoman in the attic. What is at the heart of the Radcliffean tradition is fertile ground for the feminine body to transgress masculinist boundaries to take on journeys that their forefathers have already taken. Moers calls this 'traveling heroism' and argues within the literary tradition of Ann Radcliffe, the greatest practitioner of the Gothic novel (Moers 126). Radcliffe's awareness of female selfhood foregrounds a distinct mode of heroine as Moers suggests: "It was not the thinking woman, not the loving woman, but the traveling woman: the woman who moves, who acts, who copes with vicissitude and adventure" (126). It is argued that Radcliffe used Gothic as a medium to convey transgressing female bodies:

> For Mrs. Radcliffe, the Gothic novel was a device to send maidens on distant and exciting journeys without offending the proprieties. In the power of villains, her heroines are forced to do what they could never do alone, whatever their ambitions: scurry up the top of pasteboard Alps, spy out exotic victas, penetrate bandit-infested forests. And indoors, inside Mrs. Radcliffe's castles, her heroines can scuttle miles along corridors, descend into dungeons, and explore secret chambers without a chaperone, because the Gothic castle, however much in ruins, is still an indoor and therefore freely female space. (126)

Moers argues what Mrs. Radcliffe paved the way for was ultimately a feminine picaresque where heroines could take over the adventures that masculine heroes had monopolized (126). Thus, Radcliffean Gothic novel foregrounds traveling heroism that later gives way to indoor and outdoor travel. Important to Mrs. Radcliffe was that when she wrote *The Mysteries of Udolpho* she had never been

29

out of England and that the depictions of Italy mostly came from the paintings and travel books by men. Moers argues: "Women were only beginning to be travelers in the eighteenth century, especially highly placed women like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu" (128). Mrs. Radcliffe was fully unconventional with the travel motif she foregrounded in the Gothic through exotic, impossible landscapes. Later, many women writers published books under the influence of traveling heroinism: *The Wanderer* (Fanny Burney), *Lettres d'un voyageur* (George Sand), *The Wide Wide World* (Susan B. Warner), and *The Voyage Out* (Virginia Woolf) (128). As opposed to indoor travel, outdoor travel in Gothic is a transport that is combined with 'rapture' and an 'imaginary planetary travel' (127, 129). Indoor travel, on the other hand, marks off a more serious affair within the Gothic setting of Mrs. Radcliffe. Moers suggests for indoor travel that "in the long, dark, twisting, haunted passageways of the Gothic castle, there is travel with danger, travel with exertion - a challenge to the heroine's enterprise, resolution, ingenuity, and physical strength" (128-129). The Gothic interior in which the heroine proves herself while facing traps and dangers is what makes her a Gothic heroine.

Later, Mary Shelley took over the Gothic tradition by bringing up science fiction in 1818 with *Frankenstein* and gave life to a female myth which was the myth of birth. Moers argues that the importance of bringing the subject of giving birth into women's literature was radical:

> With the coming of Naturalism late in the century, and the lifting of the Victorian taboo against writing about physical sexuality (including pregnancy and labor), the subject of birth was first brought to literature in realistic form by the male novelists, from Tolstoy and Zola to William Carlos Williams. (*Literary Women* 92)

Tolstoy who had thirteen children at home and Williams who was a poet and a Naturalist as well as a doctor with countless deliveries were both very knowledgeable on the account of birth in their writings. However, Mary Shelley departed from them with her uniqueness. Her originality lay at the heart of bringing the concept of birth into literature not by realism but fantasy as she

subverts the patriarchally constructed emotions that are assumed to spark after birth. For example, the cultural representation of birth foregrounds emotions of ecstasy, fulfillment and unworldly happiness. Shelley radically undermines these maternal reactions by exposing the traumatizing effects of birth when Frankenstein as the mad scientist abandons the newborn monster that he created in the laboratory in terror and dread. Moers argues:

> Fear and guilt, depression and anxiety are commonplace reactions to the birth of a baby, and well within the normal range of experience. But more deeply rooted in our cultural mythology, and certainly in our literature, are the happy maternal reactions: the ecstasy, the sense of fulfillment, and the rush of nourishing love which sweep over the new mother when she first holds her baby in her arms. (93)

The myth of birth, a nameless monster created by a mad scientist was the standpoint of what many young novelists and poets today felt the trauma of 'inexperienced and unassisted motherhood' (97). Mary Shelley herself became an unwed mother at sixteen years old without financial or familial support. As well as having become pregnant five years in a row, she lost most of her babies after they were born. Thus, the birth myth can also be forged in her mind as she felt the chaotic experience of it. Moers suggests: "The sources of this Gothic conception, which still has power to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart, were surely the anxieties of a woman who, as daughter, mistress, and mother, was a bearer of death" (98). It can be argued that because Gothic is imminently prone to return as it always disturbs either the present or the future, it can be seen as the return of the patriarchally repressed. In other words, where Gothic is assigned to the return of the repressed, Female Gothic can be seen as the return of the patriarchally repressed. Horner and Zlosnik argue that Female Gothic allows for an exploration of "the representation of women's experience, particularly in relation to the family dynamic and female roles within it; economic dependency or independence; the relationship between law, property, and gender" (*Teaching the Gothic* 116). It can be argued that Gothic opens up space for changing ideologies and their resonances in women's relation with the social sites. Marriage, childbirth, and fears that are related to body as well as

31

female desire are at the heart of the Female Gothic. Although such issues can also be traced in non-Gothic fictions as well, Female Gothic departs from them with the terror that intensifies the female experience by objectifying the repression of women physically, emotionally and politically.

Those anxieties played themselves out through different figures/figurations, metaphors and tropes in different years. While eighteenth century writers preoccupied in their writings with monsters and supernatural elements, twentieth century Female Gothic writers revealed their anxieties not through monsters but through freaks, lunatics, transvestites, masqueraders. Monsters were replaced by freaks in the modern female Gothic. Twentieth century women's writing started to reflect the internalization of an impasse by female subjectivity. Moers argues:

> The savagery of girlhood accounts in part for the persistence of the Gothic mode into our own time; also the self-disgust, the self-hatred, and the impetus to self-destruction that have been increasingly prominent themes in the writing of women in the twentieth century. Despair is hardly the exclusive province of any one sex or class in our age, but to give visual form to the fear of self, to hold anxiety up to the Gothic mirror of the imagination, may well be more common in the writings of women than of men. (107)

It can be argued that what makes the distinction between traditional and Female Gothic is a particularly unique female experience which is in search of self-reflection.

Helene Meyers argues in *Femicidal Fears* that there are parallels between gender and female victimization, and puts different approaches of sexual politics in different ages under scrutiny (Meyers 19). She argues that while nineteenth century Female Gothicists "explored the domestic violence that was officially repressed in order to maintain the ideology of the home as a safe haven, contemporary Gothics critically engage with feminist discourse on violence against women" (19). Thus what lies at the heart of contemporary feminism is perhaps not the relationship between femininity and Gothicism but the feminism and Gothicism as Meyers suggests by referring to Rita Felski that "it is during

the second-wave movement that women defined themselves as an oppressed group'' (Felski 1 qtd. in Meyers 19). Contemporary Gothicists such as Margaret Atwood, Angela Carter, Joyce Carol Oates, and Edna O'Brien revisited the tropes of their own tradition in order to address the sexual politics. Meyers argues that:

> While Ann Radcliffe ultimately affirms the status quo and strives to show women the ephemeral nature of Gothic horrors, Mary Wollstonecraft uses Gothic conventions to expose the physical, economic, and psychological hardships that women routinely endure. Jane Eyre brings together these two contradictory impulses by combining feminist tract with a revamping of heterosexual romance. In Brontë's hands, the Gothic heroine becomes not just adventurous and curious, but also defiant and independent - in order words, a prototypical feminist. (33)

In this sense, it can be argued that Female Gothic comprises a history of women by reflecting the experiences women had in different periods of history. It can be seen as a medium of representation that voices the unvoiced in the social sphere by bringing it up through literature. It gives room to the return of the patriarchally repressed and lends self-representation. In this sense, Female Gothic not only hints at a tradition of their own but also a politics of enunciation. Changing the mechanisms of ideologico-political spheres paves the way for Female Gothic to become fruitful ground for feminism to challenge and undermine the patriarchal configurations. Thus, it is through the text that Female Gothic in its relation to feminism performs itself as a meta-language that exceeds the social, cultural and historical limits.

2.3. Madness as a Subversive Site of Act in Female Gothic

French philosopher Jacques Derrida argues in his essay "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" published in 1967 that Western metaphysics along with Plato is based on a totalizing principle called "logocentrism" which foregrounds the idea that presence-to-itself of a center subordinates all the other recognizable elements within the same epistemological and ontological system. The notion of 'center' gives shape to a structure that

presupposes metaphysical certainty. Center is not within the structure but inside and outside of it at the same time by governing all the rules and organizing principles of it. Poststructuralist thought argues that this centering desire called 'logocentrism' operates on omnipotent principles such as reason, essence, man, God, truth, nature, consciousness etc. In other words, it is the metaphysics of certainty through which this logic of center governs the philosophical thought by foregrounding dichotomous oppositions such as man/woman, absence/presence, identity/difference, same/other, nature/culture that ultimately leads to a latent valorization towards hierarchies. The hierarchy between binary oppositions inevitably ends up creating center over periphery with one pole being more privileged and regarded as the 'positive' in contrast to the other. Thus, the other side of this binaristic opposition is always doomed to be the subordinate, marginal, the unnatural or the negative. Logocentrism, therefore, can be seen as a latent design that dominates Western epistemology in a way that it excludes one pole by rendering it different, other or the Otherness itself. Henceforth, logocentrism systematically produces hierarchies of meaning and functions as the locus in the production of the Other. It deliberately inscribes subjects into ideology in a way that one is associated with either the other or the natural. In a male dominated society, the category of woman is the Other by the characteristics that are assigned to her, by what he is not. What makes her different lies at the heart of man's need to give her an identity so that he could exclude, subordinate and transgress her on both epistemological and ontological levels. In this binaristic logic, man therefore is also dependent on the woman in order to assert himself by the values that are inscribed to him. Derrida argues on this set of binaristic principles that deconstruction, which is a critical operation, could be a starting point in order to exhaust the hierarchization of meaning which is deeply embedded in our ways of perceiving. Terry Eagleton states in *Literary Theory An Introduction* that "deconstruction has grasped the point that the binary oppositions with which classical structuralism tends to work represent a way of seeing typical of ideologies" (115). With that being said, it can be argued that deconstruction is a certain way of unfolding the working mechanisms between hierarchies by looking into which side of the binarism latently benefits from the

other in order to manifest its existence commensurate with its agendas within ideology.

This is just where Derridean thought and Althusser agree with each other. Both Derrida and Althusser hinted at the constructedness of subjects from a political and philosophical perspective. Derrida argued that logocentrism establishes binaristic structures so as to create hierarchies and play its role out in the process of producing the Other. Althusser found the roots of this production deeply hidden within the working mechanisms of ideology. Ideology is at the heart of Althusserean theory. He sees ideology as a medium through which one performs his/her relation to the society in order to convey a sense of meaning and value that are lended to the subject. It is with this value and meaning that individuals locate themselves within ideology and this locating process usually requires individuals to stick to certain beliefs or perform specific rituals and practices such as going to church or believing the common stereotype that women are naive. It is, as Terry Eagleton writes, ''subtle, pervasive and unconscious'' and what binds individuals to the social structure in order to give a "coherent purpose and identity'' (149). Hence, it can be argued that logocentric thinking is an essential part of ideology which foregrounds center and periphery and latently constructs subjects. Logocentrism itself is the starting point of ideology that posits subjects into it by inscribing them as one side of the pole. This idea reveals that when one enters ideology he/she also enters a discourse that is already constructed and presupposed.

In his famous essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" published in 1970, Althusser reformulates the Marxist definition of ideology by widening the concept from a system of ideas to a "representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 30). It is argued that ideologies or, say, 'world outlooks' (30) whether religious, legal or political, are all imaginary because what they all have at their disposal is an idealized, illusionary form of reality which does not correspond to reality. This imaginary relationship not only binds human subjects to society but it also securely masks

the hidden agendas of the dominant classes. Thus, it can be said that ideology is a misrecognition that is created by man as a medium to forge its distorted reality in order to subjugate, alienate and exploit the ones on the periphery. In addition, Althusser argues that "ideology has a material existence" which means it always presents itself in an apparatus. There are a number of Ideological State Apparatuses that are namely, "the educational apparatus, the religious apparatus, the family apparatus, the political apparatus, the trade-union apparatus, the communications apparatus, the 'cultural' apparatus, etc" (Althusser 20). Each of these regional ideologies are linked to the agendas of the ruling classes and their existence is always assured with practice. Human subjects submit themselves to these imaginary principles so that they can achieve a coherent identity and attain a sense of meaning. Thus, ideology in the last instance keeps the material existence of individuals who submitted to society by helping them to perpetuate an imaginary consciousness. As Althusser writes:

> Ideological representation of ideology is itself forced to recognize that every 'subject' endowed with a 'consciousness' and believing in the 'ideas' that his 'consciousness' inspires in him and freely accepts, must 'act according to his ideas', must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice. If he does not do so, 'that is wicked'. (34-35)

It can be stated that the notion of a unified, autonomous and coherent subject that is purported by ideology is self-deceptive. 'I' is actually a decentered figure of multiple social determinants rather than a coherent, autonomous subject who finds itself in the realm of ideology. 'I' is thrilled with the image 'I' receives of itself and submits to it and eventually, through this obedience, 'I' becomes the subject.

Within this binaristic and phallogocentric mode of thinking, reading madness in Gothic writing requires the demystification of logos. It can be argued that within a maxim where Gothic functions as the silenced-other-of-reason, and the woman functions as the other-of-man, madness in Female Gothic brings subversive possibilities into fruition. Scott Brewster argues in *Seeing Things: Gothic and the Madness of Interpretation* by referring to Foucault as follows:

> Madness opens out such a privileged space within literature from the late nineteenth century onwards. Although madness and mental illness have occupied the same place in the field of excluded (insane) languages, madness has entered the "transgressive fold" of literature, and thus ''undoes its relationship. . . with mental illness." (qtd. in *A New Companion to Gothic* 483)

Within this point of view, it can be argued that both Gothic and madness as they are confined to the margins of reason, resist and undermine the insistence on the compulsive tendency of rationalism. Brewster argues regarding Gothic fiction that it produces "crises of reason in a strange complicity with what the world calls crises of madness" (484). Within this Derridean and Foucauldian strand of thought, it can be argued that the critical use of madness allows for an exploration from the flip side of the coin as well. Henceforth the madwoman whose madness gives way to transgression occupies a subversive site of act in Gothic fiction.

The phallogocentric mode of thinking that tyrannically inscribes women to the othered space against the backdrop of a masculinist economy of sameness finds itself an articulation in Female Gothic tradition. Eugenia C. Delamotte argues in *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* that women's Gothic suggests two different but related forms of staples: one is the 'Good Other Woman', and the other is the 'Evil Other Woman'. While the former is assigned to the "long-suffering and angelic, whose imprisonment and/or death was unmerited" the latter implies a woman "who got no more than she deserved and is now either dead or sorry for her sins and about to die." Those sins usually signify her "as a bad (selfish) mother, a bad (undutiful) daughter, and/or a bad (sexual) woman" (153). It is with this dichotomous mode of thinking that women are subjugated in the domestic sphere as 'sisters', 'wives' and 'daughters', and those duties usually come up with prerogatives such as 'angry', 'rebellious', and 'sexual Other Woman' unless women reject bodily desires and instincts that the traditional discourse demanded them to do so. Laurence Talairach-Vielmas adds to this discussion by suggesting that DeLamotte and Gilbert and Gubar found similarities between 'Good Other Woman' and 'Evil Other Woman' in their discussion of reductionist signification spaces of woman as either an angel or a

demon. For example, Gilbert and Gubar argue in relation to transgressiveness of Jane Eyre that what shocked and "horrified the Victorians was Jane's anger . . For while the mythologizing of repressed rage may parallel the mythologizing of repressed sexuality, it is far more dangerous to the order of society" (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 338). It can be argued that gender played a pivotal role in the victimization of women in patriarchy. Vielmas suggests by referring to Anne Williams that the 'Gothic myth' in the patriarchal family, with Lacan's 'Law of the Father' as the leading principle of the cultural order: ''sexual 'difference' is indeed the 'key' to the secrets of the patriarchal power structure'' (qtd. in Horner et al. 33). It is argued that female victimization is foregrounded even though the narrative is divorced from the threats that pose danger to the heroine in order to reinforce "women's self- abnegating roles within patriarchy" (33). Thus, both the idealized representation of femininity and the maddened/locked up evil woman reflect women's fate in a male-dominated world. Laurence Talairach-Vielmas argues on the issue in *Madwomen and Attics* by referring to Fleenor as follows:

> Such Gothic is grounded on the patriarchal paradigm that the 'woman is motherless, defective, and defined by a male God . . The self-divided heroine is a 'reflection of patriarchal values', and her quest frequently leads her to investigate 'whether she is anything but reflection.' (qtd. in Horner et al. 33)

The construction of madwoman has coterminous boundaries with the construction of femininity within the patriarchal discourse that reifies the argument that mad femininity is a gendered gestalt. Anette Schlichter argues in *Critical Madness, Enunciative Excess: The Figure of the Madwoman in Postmodern Feminist Texts* as follows:

> The madwoman, one of the stereotypes of femininity in modern Western culture, holds a central position within the gendered system of representation, enabling and outlining the locus of the masculine subject of reason, while simultaneously epitomizing a negation of women's discursive authority. (310)

Because the construction of madwoman juxtaposes male reason and feminine irrationality, it cancels not only the subject formation of the woman but also creates an impasse for women to find self-representation. Sclichter suggests in

her comparative study on Irigaray's and Acker's texts that the madwoman "functions as a symptom of women's symbolic and social disempowerment and has become a device of feminist strategies of intervention into patriarchal systems of representation that works toward and authorization of feminine self-representation" (310). It is argued that the critical use of madwoman occupies a limbo place between a 'patriarchal image' and a feminist 'figuration'. Rosi Braidotti argues in *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* as follows*:* "The term figuration refers to a style of thought that evokes or expresses ways out of the phallocentric vision of the subject. A figuration is a politically informed account of an alternative subjectivity" (Braidotti 1). With this new mode of thinking Braidotti moves beyond the confines of the habits of phallocentrism. However, the situatedness of the madwoman remains a subject of conflict as it is both constructed by phallocentrism and appropriated by feminist theory. Shoshana Felman suggests in *Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy* that it is the ''difficulty of the woman's position in today's critical discourse'' that the representation of women and madness must be divorced from each other.

> If, in our culture, the woman is by definition associated with madness, her problem is how to break out of this (cultural) imposition of madness without taking up the critical and therapeutic positions of reason: how to avoid speaking both as mad and as not mad. The challenge facing the woman today is nothing less than to "re-invent" language, to re-learn how to speak: to speak not only against, but outside of the specular phallogocentric structure, to establish a discourse the status of which would no longer be defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning. (Felman 10)

It can be argued that it is with the deconstructive readings of the figure/figuration of madwoman that the politics of representation exceeds the limits of the text. Madwoman that appears in Female Gothic refuses to submit herself to masculinist reason and establishes an enunciation from a position that breaks away from the logic of phallocentrism. It poses an attack on the symbolic from which the patriarchally constructed madwoman is eradicated. A deconstructive reading of the text in which the madwoman resides undermines the pervasive

operations of the agents and apparatuses of patriarchy such as husbands, fathers, doctors, institutions, asylums etc.

Locked up women in Gothic castles and attics has always been a significant leitmotif in Female Gothic. Vielmas suggests that Raddcliffe's Gothic romance dwells on the stereotypical representation of women who were driven to madness out of love in order to undermine the literary convention. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Signora Laurentini, a woman who was driven mad out of love plays herself out as a pivotal figure who experienced patriarchal violence and oppression in Female Gothic. Signora Laurentini is hidden in a convent and acts as an embodiment of live burial after her father reveals that she was murdered by her husband. The theme of entrapment and murder foregrounds the castration of free will of women in marriage and patriarchy. Vielmas argues: "Radcliffean Gothic female characters experience the violence of a male-dominated world, foreshadowing or mirroring the ways in which the heroine falls prey to a male villain" (Horner et al. 33) It can be argued that there are significant parallels between gendering of madness as a female condition and female victimization in order to reify women's subjugation within patriarchy. She argues:

> The ambiguity of the Gothic madwoman in the convent, as much spectral as corporeal, as much angel as demon, blurs conventional representations of femininity through its contradictions, and evokes mystery and fear for the heroine and prompts readers to question such representations. Radcliffe's madwoman foreshadows here Victorian representations of madwomen in attics, sowing the seeds of a feminist discourse later employed by authors such as Charlotte Brontë. (34)

It can be argued that what the Gothic madwoman has at her disposal is a transgression of an already presupposed femininity and it is with this skepticism towards her darkness that the Gothic heroine overturns idealized feminine representations with her strategies. For example, Charlotte Brontë's madwoman Bertha Mason who functions as the wild Gothic doubling of Jane comes to represent her sense of imprisonment and uses strategies such as flight, starvation and madness in order to escape her entrapment. It is argued that Charlotte

Brontë's madwoman, who was a confirmed medical patient, had a lasting influence on the sensation novelists of the late nineteenth century. Sensation fiction writers drew upon Gothic plots, motifs, tropes and narrative patterns in order to dwell on the victimization of women with its madwomen to better challenge gender stereotypes (34). Besides, Vielmas argues by referring to Helen Small that the madwomen of the late-nineteenth century continued to be a source of inspiration in the following years and those madwomen who lost their lovers and went mad functioned as an elevated form of trope by novelists, poets and dramatists. Radcliffe's treatment of sentimentalism and nervous sensitivity of women was doubly exploited by writers such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon. For example, it is argued that in *Lady Audley's Secret* Lucy's mental illness is shown to have emerged after her husband's desertion even though she is troubled with hereditary insanity. Vielmas goes on to give further details on the relation between the sensation novels on madwomen and major reforms in the history of insanity. She argues that Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* was serialized right after two major lunacy reforms in Britain. Firstly, after having revealed that two sane men and women were wrongfully confined, a Select Committee of Inquiry whose representatives were called Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society was established (qtd. in Horner et al. 35). Besides, the publication of the novel corresponded with the "discussions of the Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry into the Care and Treatment of Lunatics and Their Property of 1858-1859" (35). Although Collins was a male writer, he was an advocate of the asylum reform movement and close to important figures such as Bryan Procter, a Lunacy Commisioner whom he dedicated his novel to. In 1865 Medico-Psychological Association was established and underlined the "links between the sensational madwomen that were captivating the Victorians at the time and the history of insanity" (36). It can be argued that during a time when the discourse of Victorian madwomen was being circulated, sensation writers of the era paved the way for a condemnation of the constructedness of insanity as a female condition. Vielmas suggests as follows:

> By drawing upon sentimental literary conventions and rewriting earlier Gothic representations of the madwoman in the attic, the sensation writers of the 1860s highlighted how women's supposedly weak will inevitably constructed women as typical nervous sufferers. In so doing, they condemned the construction of insanity as 'an extension of [the] female condition.' (Horner et al. 36)

Finally, Vielmas argues that sensation writers of the 1860s and their reworkings of sensational icons show that the metaphors and the trope of the madwoman helped those writers overturn the gendering of madness (36). Vielmas suggests: "The weight of medical discourse that permeates sensation novels indicates the genre's denunciation of the authority of medical science and its infiltration into the social sphere'' (36). It was with these major reforms and undercurrents that the madwoman started to undermine and overturn its positionality within patriarchy. In their writings women writers engaged in a critical treatment of the female experience they were forced to suffer from. By making use of the settings or conditions which are the locus of their pejorative representation and entrapment, they revealed the latent designs of masculinist logic. One of the most iconic settings is foregrounded with asylums.

The first novel by a woman to adopt the setting of an asylum in Gothic tradition was Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman*. In the novel, Maria calls asylum a "mansion of despair", as Moers suggests, she was "far from mad, has been forcibly imprisoned by her tyrant husband" (*Literary Women* 133). Moers argues that:

> The asylum itself becomes for these writers an elaborated, enclosed, and peculiarly feminine testing ground for survival. There are the large, spreading, mysteriously complicated buildings; the harsh guards and strange rules; the terrifying inmates; the privations, restraints, and interrogations; the well-meant, but indubitable torture of electric shock treatment. (Moers 133)

The setting of an asylum is depicted commensurate with the Gothic castle model with its "iron gates and grated dungeon windows, the manacled arms and ruthless jailers, the desolate walks and ruined turrets, and especially the groans and shrieks". Peculiarly Gothic depiction of the asylum gives insights to the terror and dread woman were forced to experience. Moers argues: "For Mary

Wollstonecraft, the terrors, the restraints, the dangers of the Gothic novel were not the fantasies but the realities of a woman's life. 'Was not the world a vast prison,' she wrote further on in *Maria*, 'and women born slaves?''' (134). It can be argued that by reflecting their experiences in asylums, women writers also exposed the hypocrisy of those institutions where femininity was equated with insanity. Showalter suggests:

> The asylums are indeed confusing places, secretive prisons operated on Wonderland logic. Their female inmates are instructed to regard themselves as "naughty girls" who have broken a set of mysterious rules that have to do with feminine conduct. (*The Female Malady* 211)

In conclusion, the category of madness, which is a by-product of male hegemonic discourse and reason, is associated with femininity. Both the category of madness and woman fall into the Other side of the binaristic mechanism. However, critical use of madness offers a glance from the flip side of the coin that brings subversiveness into fruition. It can be argued that the figuration of a madwoman that speaks from a place that is not constrained by patriarchy is transgressive. Her refusal to accept a positionality that is established against the background of a center-to-itself logic is subversive. Besides, women writers from Female Gothic tradition employed the trope of madwoman in their works in order to undermine and expose the latent organization behind the plight of the madwoman. Madness in the Female Gothic not only testifies how these women are imprisoned in asylums, prisons and Gothic castles by their husbands or male oppressors but also foregrounds itself as a subversive site of act in which the madwoman uses particular strategies to assert her self-representation.

2.4. Jean Rhys and Sylvia Plath in the Literary Tradition

Jean Rhys, born Ella Gwendolyn Rees Williams in Roseau, is a twentieth century British novelist. She was born in Dominica, a West Indian island to a Creole mother and a Welsh father. She is regarded as a modernist, postcolonial, Caribbean, British and Creole writer. Rhys's positionality within the literary

tradition falls into modernist and colonialist frameworks. Although she was "an expatriate white Creole", having spent her childhood in the Caribbean played itself out strongly in her writing (Carr 19). It is argued that Rhys' "sense of homelessness" may be felt stronger than her contemporaries due to the fact that the West Indies provoked feelings of lacking home more than any other colonized place. Helen Carr argues the historical and social nexus as follows:

> In the West Indies there was nothing comparable to the insistent ideological construction of nationhood that formed the United States, and turned its immigrants into a nation. As colonies, the West Indies related to the metropolis; historically their identity was a dependent and fractured one. (20)

It can be argued that diasporic tensions that were felt in her native island did not allow her to form a cultural identity and led her to become a hybrid writer. Her attitude towards the Empire along with the strategies she makes use of in her writing positions her within postcolonial literature. Her work radically questions the limits and values of a world in which she finds herself divided. The time when Rhys began to write overlaps with the Modernist movement and shows itself with particular narrative modernist strategies. For example, she employed stream-of-consciousness to objectify the disintegration of her characters, and used images of machines to glimpse at modernity's anxiety of the mechanization of life. She foregrounded a subversive representation of the individuals who refused to fit into one frame or another (Maurel 14). Her fiction is pretty much shaped by a sense of homelessness as well as a sort of fragmented and divided sense of identity that hovers around historical and political axes. Naipaul wrote of her as follows:

> Jean Rhys thirty or forty years ago identified many of the themes that engage us today: isolation, an absence of society or community, the sense of things falling apart, dependence, loss . . . What she has written about she has endured, over a long life; and what a stoic thing she makes the act of writing appear. (qtd. in Helen Carr 19)

What is at stake in Rhys' work is the divided self that lives on the margin and is acutely disempowered. Critics usually draw parallels between her sense of self,

which is quite disintegrated, and her writing, which oscillates between feminist and colonial implications. Although Rhys does not consider herself a feminist, reception of her work among feminist circles is remarkable. Helen Carr argues that she "was feminine rather than feminist" (qtd. in Carr 11). It is argued that even though her work foregrounds patriarchal oppression, "her heroines connived too much in their own unhappiness" (11). However, from the late twentieth-century onwards, the emphasis has fallen onto how the work itself thematically negotiates a certain issue rather than writer's own subjectivity. Thus, instead of focusing on Rhys attitude towards feminism, feminist critics look into the representation of feminine disempowerment that is present in her writing. Carr suggests that Ann Howells calls this characteristic of Rhysian fiction as "feminine colonial sensibility" and argues as follows:

> What Rhys constructs through her fiction is a feminine sensibility, becoming aware of itself in a modernist European context, where a sense of colonial dispossession and displacement is focused on and translated into gendered terms, so that all these conditions coalesce, transformed into her particular version of feminine pain. (qtd. in Johnson 126)

Along with many of the issues that thematically position her writing on the margin, Rhys also gives form to disempowered heroines who are split and homeless.In her fiction Rhys hints at a number of oppressions all of which melt in the same pot. Much as she writes of histories, cultures, and identities, her fiction foregrounds issues and characters that belong nowhere and are unable to identify themselves. Although most of her novels are preoccupied with the issues of homelessness, disintegration, racial, economic, and sexual oppression, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is her only novel that portrays the madwoman. Carr suggests:

> Rhys' fiction takes account of a whole range of oppressions, colonial, racial, economic, sexual: being a woman does not mean that she collapses them all into the sexual, but nor does it mean that she simply adds sexual oppression at the end of the list. Being a woman means that all other oppressions are experienced in a more intense and acute form. (30-31)

Rhys's fiction also embodies a postmodernist dimension and her fiction glimpses at other modernist texts as it does in a dialogical relationship with *Jane Eyre,* and foregrounds multiple and fragmented identities that are preoccupied with the concerns of imperialism and colonialism. Perhaps this is the reason that moves her closer to postmodernism. Zygmunt Bauman argues in *Modernity and Ambivalence*: "In modernism, modernity turned its gaze upon itself and attempted to attain the clear-sightedness and self-awareness which would eventually disclose its impossibility, thus paving the way to the postmodern reassessment" (qtd. in Carr 31). Rhys's positionality within the literary tradition particularly in its relation to modernity and postmodernity can be understood better against the background of Derrida's critique for cultural analysis. Derrida argues that the motivation behind modernity is a drive to regulate the order, therefore, "ambiguity and ambivalence are anathema to it" (32). Rhys's writing is reflective of English society's intolerance to *différance* and ambiguity in a way that it becomes a central theme in her writing. Carr puts it as:

> She might seem ill-placed to join in one major endeavour of postcolonial literature, the creation of a counter-history, a counter-identity, an alternative 'imagined community', to free the colonized from a mimicked colonial identity and from their cribbed confinement within the colonizers' history. (24)

Rhys's counter-discourse can be seen as a postmodernist strategy that is particular to her writing. It is argued that Rhys's playfulness with language foregrounds a counter-discourse in a way that she reinvents a new space of signification. To illustrate, textual alignment with 'obeah' in *Wide Sargasso Sea* signifies ambivalence towards the enigma that is felt by the characters as it also reifies the supernatural and uncanny Gothic elements. Whereas in the case of Antoinette 'obeah' is a medium to reinstate the love of her husband, in the case of Rochester such a practice psychologically dismantles him. On the other hand, obeah also gives power to Christophine as she is foregrounded as the practitioner of this black Caribbean magic. Thus, it can be argued that Rhys attacks the dominant mode of discourse and its languages with Gothic strategies and in

doing so she gives voice to the ones on the margin and powerfully subverts the textual politics and power relations. Carr argues:

> Like other postmodernist and postcolonialist writers – and whilst those two categories by no means always coincide, many of their strategies do – Rhys in her fictions unpicks and mocks the language by which the powerful keep control, while at the same time shifting, bending, re-inventing ways of using language to open up fresh possibilities of being. (106)

In this sense, Rhys's alignment with literary strategies is one way of subverting dominant discourses. On the other hand, Luengo argues that Rhys's engagement with Gothic mode of writing regarding the characters' subjective depiction of landscape which has significant thematic similarities with that of Radcliffean can be discussed. For example, Rochester who is in search of a truth at a time when rumors regarding her marriage and facts are blurred takes on a narrative that depicts the forest as dark and hostile:

> I began to walk very quickly, then stopped because the light was different. A green light. I had reached the forest and you cannot mistake the forest. It is hostile. The path is overgrown but it was possible to follow it. I went on without looking at the tall trees on either side. Once I stepped over a fallen log swarming with white ants. How can one discover truth I thought and that thought led me nowhere. No one would tell me the truth. Not my father nor Richard Mason, certainly not the girl I had married. I stood still, so sure I was being watched that I looked over my shoulder. Nothing but the trees and the green light under the trees. (*WSS* 88)

Rochester is perplexed and disoriented as he hardly catches up with the changing mechanisms of this land and its inhabitants, therefore, his consciousness is reflected on the depiction of the forest. Luengo argues regarding Rhys's technique that "her Caribbean jungles at once provide a strikingly visual and textured terror and a convenient mirror in which to reflect the inner turmoil of her two main characters. Thus we can trace Rochester's changing moods by his "changing attitudes to a seemingly changing land" (*WSS* 12 qtd. in Luengo 232). On the other hand, Luengo argues that Antoinette's narrative of the forest at the beginning of the novel is 'unnervingly consistent' (Luengo 233). Antoinette's narrative is as follows:

> Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the Bible – the tree of life grew there. But it had gone wild. The paths were overgrown and a smell of dead flowers mixed with the fresh living smell. Underneath the tree ferns, tall as forest tree ferns, the light was green. Orchids flourished out of reach or for some reason not to be touched. (*WSS* 4)

It can be argued that Rhys's alignment with the depiction of landscape is in a dialogical relationship with the psychology of characters. In addition, the novel's treatment of Thornfield Hall can also be argued in relation to what classical Gothic fiction adopted in its treatment of architecture such as Gothic castles and dungeons. In this sense, Rhys not only aligns with her literary ancestors in her creation of Gothic houses but also reorients the classical Gothic castle to the 20th century with the setting of a patriarchal Gothic chamber that entraps the heroine in the attic. Characters in search of a hidden secret, bemused and disoriented as well as the heroine in search of a lost mother and is driven mad can be argued as Rhys's dialogue with classical Gothic fiction.

The Left Bank, her first collection of short stories, was published in 1927 with Ford's preface. In 1928 she completed *Postures* which was published in the US as *Quartet* in 1929. In 1931 she published another novel *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie.* In the following years she published *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939) consecutively. 1966 marks the time when her most famous work, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, was published. *Tigers are Better-Looking* (1968) and *Sleep It Off Lady* (1976) are also listed among her stories. *Smile Please: An Unfinished Autobiography* was posthumously published in 1979. Her work can be seen as an intellectual response to a world that is unsettled especially for the Other. Many of the notions that she bears within herself such as migration, womanhood, homelessness and sense of divided self condense with a modernist consciousness and shape the artistry of her fiction.

Sylvia Plath is an American poet, novelist and short story writer famous for her works in the confessional poetry genre. Within the historical and literary contexts, Sylvia Plath contributed to a number of different traditions. As a writer who was born in America to a German father and a Polish mother, she oscillates

between American and European elements in terms of linguistic and literary matters (Gill 14). Given that she moved to England twice, first for reasons related to her studies and next as a wife and a prospective mother, Gill argues that "Plath embodies transatlantic concerns or, more properly, inhabits, as Tracy Brain proposes, a 'midatlantic position' – one which refuses to choose between two places" (Gill 14). It can be argued regarding identity issues that haunt the work of Plath is that there is a refusal on her part to settle down to one tradition or another.

The reason for her in-betweenness can also be traced in the political turmoil her life intersected with, that is, the depression of the 1930s and the anxieties aroused by WWII as well as the ambiguity of the Cold War Ideology. It is argued regarding the Cold War ideology that "at one and the same time, it extolled the virtues of family and home and the security of the domestic sphere, while regarding the private lives and desires of Americans as potentially suspect and thereby worthy of close examination" (Gill 15). As a woman who was born to a German father and a Jewish mother, she acutely felt the tensions of WWII - a tension which particularly shows itself in *Letters Home* (1975) and *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams* (1977).

Having written in the 1950s as a poet, she is considered to be one of those middle generation American poets[8]. Plath's writing coincides with the rise of the 'confessional'[9] mode of poetry that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Rosenthal's review suggests the characteristics of confessional poetry as "autobiographical, therapeutic ('soul's therapy' and 'self-therapeutic') and unflinchingly truthful (featuring 'uncompromising honesty')" (Gill 20). Confessional mode of writing was considered as a breakthrough due to insistence

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[8] Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop, Randall Jarrell, and John Berryman were some of those middle generation American poets who gave insights into the social milieu of American society in their poetry.

[9] The term 'confessional' was first used by the critic M. L. Rosenthal in Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*. Rosenthal gives a definition of this new confessional mode of writing and identifies how it differs from other modes of poetry (Gill 20).

to emphasize what is directly personal. Plath puts her feelings about this new poetry as follows:

> I've been very excited by what I feel is the new breakthrough that came with, say, Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*, this intense breakthrough into very serious, very personal, emotional experience which I feel has been partly taboo . . . These peculiar, private and taboo subjects, I feel, have been explored in recent American poetry. I think particularly the poetess Ann Saxton [*sic*], who writes about her experiences as a mother, as a mother who has had a nervous breakdown, is an extremely emotional and feeling young woman and her poems are wonderfully craftsman-like poems and yet they have a kind of emotional and psychological depth which I think is something perhaps quite new, quite exciting. (qtd in. Gill 20)

For Plath, writing in the confessional mode was transgressive as it gave her room to talk about taboo subjects such as mental illness, sexuality and a particularly female experience. Jo Gill argues in *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath* as follows:

> If lyric poetry was imagined as the private expression of a private individual, confessional poetry with its taboo subjects like mental illness, sex, alcoholism, infidelity, rage and domestic conflict was deemed altogether too private. Exposing the darkest aspects of private life, confessional poets were not exploring the autonomy that private space nurtured, but instead submerging themselves in the aspects of domestic life that curb autonomy and compromise self-expression. (73-74)

Her disposition to produce works in the confessional mode of poetry can perhaps be the result of the historical and political milieu in which she straddled to articulate her feelings. "Personal is political" is a motto that played itself out in her writing. Plath puts it in an interview as follows: ''Personal experience is very important, but certainly it shouldn't be shut-box and mirror-looking, narcissistic experience. I believe it should be relevant and relevant to the larger things, the bigger things such as Hiroshima and Dachau and so on'' (qtd. in Gill 21). In this sense, Plath's work is preoccupied with concerns that tackle the lives of Americans and/or women. Perhaps one reason could be the fact that she produced much of her work during a time when "uncertainty, menace and an all-

embracing culture of surveillance" haunted the decade (26). Nelson argues regarding her alignment with confessional poetry as follows:

> This is both a peculiar, and in the end an inevitable, time for the emergence of the confessional mode of poetry with which Plath's work has been aligned. The 'changing boundaries of public and private domains' heralded by McCarthyism and the Cold War provide fertile ground for the poetry of Lowell, Plath and Sexton. (qtd. in Gill 26)

Plath's position within the literary tradition should be seen in its relation to postwar culture. In the aftermath of WWII along with the return of many soldiers, the population witnessed an increase which led to attempts to reshape and reinstate domestic ideology that purported values of conventional family line. Ideological aspects of family and home are categories Plath revisits in her writing every now and then. *Journals (*1982)*, The Bell Jar* (1963)*, Letters Home* (1975) are some of the works that particularly deal with the ideological air of postwar culture. She satirizes the limited space that is assigned to women, a neither/nor situation that offers nothing but motherhood and being a wife. *The Bell Jar*, for example, brings the issues of personal and political that challenged the lives of individuals by offering nothing but ideological patronization. Gill argues by referring to Pat Macpherson as follows:

> In 1961–2, settled in England with her husband, two children and writing career, Sylvia Plath can satirize the absurdity of this suburban kitchen-mat marriage offer. In the early 1950s it was no laughing matter for Sylvia Plath in her journal to try to come to terms with the either/or-ness of motherhood and career, purity and sexuality, domesticity and education. (qtd. in Gill 15)

Given that Plath's work was produced between the first two waves of modern feminism, it led her to embody the issues that challenged the women both at that time and in the following years. Her writing foregrounds itself in an unapologetically feminist and feminine way that she undermines the limits of femininity of the1950s without accepting any obligation that it posits to the woman. Sandra Gilbert suggests in *Shakespeare's Sisters* that four years after Plath's editorship in *Mademoiselle*, she herself became a guest editor there and was assigned to the same staff editor. She argues that guest editors won the

contest by writing about their "Silent Generation", however, found themselves in a totally different environment than they'd expected. She speaks of her experience as follows:

> Instead of tests or books or grades, for instance, they gave us *clothes*. We sat around in a room that looked like a seminar room, and they wheeled in great racks of college-girl blouses and skirts. Into these we had to fit ourselves, like Cinderella squeezing into the glass slipper. Woe unto you if the blouse doesn't fit, was the message . . . Later they gave us new hairdos; makeup cases, as in *The Bell Jar*; sheets and bedspreads; dances on starlit rooftops; and more, much more. (246)

Femininity and feminine psyche are notions that are inextricably circulated in her writing. She powerfully connects these categories with history and politics. Having been fueled by the tensions of confined femininity, she brought up concerns such as virginity, purity, womanhood, domesticity etc. Ellen Moers argues that 'miscarriage' turned into "a powerful new theme in the hands of Jean Rhys and Sylvia Plath" (*Literary Women* 92).

In 1953 'Mad Girl's Love Song' was published in *Mademoiselle*. In 1960 her first collection of poems *The Colossus and Other Poems* was published in the UK and later in the USA in 1962. In 1963 *The Bell Jar* was published under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. In 1965 *Ariel* was published with particularly remarkable poems such as "Tulips", "Daddy" and "Lady Lazarus". Gill argues that Plath's poetry bears the aspects of 'creativity' and 'self-creation' as well as the figure of an absent father, whom she lost at an early age. He argues as:

> 'The Colossus' explores Plath's identification and resurrection of the father, at a time when she has returned to her country of birth . . . it points up how the poem is exploring the relationship Plath has between male and female integrated self, her English and American self, playing out both on screen and in still images, part of her continuing mythology of her relationships with men. (qtd. In Gill 39)

On the other hand, Plath's poetic imagery of female annihilation as well as anxieties and fears that she dwells on can be argued as emblematic elements of her alignment with Female Gothic mode of writing. As Botting argues regarding

the characteristics of twentieth century Gothic writing, "horrors of individual alienation and self-loathing and the grotesquely distorted images of everyday family and social life" were some of the matters that are problematized (*Gothic* 104). Similarly, Plath's writing foregrounds such a return of the female psyche that is burdened by the ideological air of the Cold War and the distress that is created by the nuclear threat as well as the topos of father. In this sense, it can be argued that Plath's dialogue with Female Gothic should be seen in its relation to the return of the patriarchally repressed.

In addition, Plath's insistence on using the imagery of death and the trope of the doppelgänger reveals a particular interest in Gothicising psychic material. Indeed, imagery of death and self, and self as Other can be deciphered against the background of each other since death may be implied to be the locus of reaching purgation by killing the Other. For example, in *Lady Lazarus* she writes "Dying / Is an art, like everything else / I do it exceptionally well" (42-44) and ends with the lines "Out of the ash / I rise with my red hair / And I eat men like air'' (79-81). It can be argued that the poetic persona recreates herself by using death as a medium of rebirth. Similarly, Gill argues that "this poem ends in a violent rebirth, with the speaker rising from the ashes to 'eat men like air' '' (190). In this respect, Plath's position within Female Gothic lays bare the repressed desire to transcend patriarchy along with her search for female subjectivity. On the other hand, Gills argues "Plath's undergraduate dissertation, on Dostoyevsky, cites Freud's view in 'The Uncanny' of the doppelgänger as the product of a split between the critical agency or conscience and the rest of the ego" (*Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath* 247). Her interest in split selves and doubles play itself out in her poetic discourse as well. It can be argued that the trope of doppelganger may have multiple implications in her work. Whereas in *The Bell Jar* she engages in self and self as Other as a medium to convey a ritual of rebirth, in many of her poems it indicates an "ironic deployment of stereotypes of alienated or objectified femininity" (Gill 250). Gill argues:

Among the personae which appear most frequently in Plath's poetry are those of the prostitute, the female performer and the mechanical woman. In 'Fever 103°', as in 'Lady Lazarus', the speaker occupies all three of these roles, oscillating between the positions of artist and artefact, consumer and commodity-spectacle. (250-251)

It can be argued that much as she writes of her personal quagmire she thematically intermingles it with historical and political events. In Plath's work there is descent into despair inasmuch as there's a ritual of birth and purgation. There is over-indulgence in the problems that haunt the decade in as much as there is harum-scarum. A woman of neither/nor, a myth of head in the oven, Plath is a savior of modern feminists.

CHAPTER 3

FEMININE MADNESS IN *THE BELL JAR* AND *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

This chapter discusses feminine madness and its treatment and configuration in the novels *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* both of which reveal the dualism of the patriarchal system by undermining its mode of thinking through the repressed voices of heroines Esther Greenwood and Antoinette. The common elements in Plath's heroine Esther Greenwood and Rhys's protagonist Antoinette are that they are both marginalized, victimized and experienced the dire consequences of stepping beyond the patriarchal norms. In the last resort, Antoinette is imprisoned in the attic and Esther is hospitalized and suffers from mistreatments and electrocution in the asylums. Before going into the textual treatment of madness, one useful question would be to ask: How do women become imprisoned or hospitalized because of madness? It would be apt to answer this question by referring to Phyllis Chesler's ground-breaking book *Women and Madness*: "against their will and without prior notice" (Chesler 103). When women are psychiatrically entrapped into asylums or madhouses, it is argued that the agents behind the imprisonment of women are mostly their husbands and medical establishments that are fundamentally based on male reasoning. Showalter argues in *The Female Malady - Women, Madness, and English Culture* that madness, or insanity has always been correlated with women on account of the statistical representation of women who have been reported as mentally ill. Starting from the seventeenth century to the twentieth century, records showed that the number of women patients in the psychiatric hospitals, mental health services and lunatic asylums outran the number of men. On the basis of the statistical facts, it is argued that women are reportedly subjected to twice as much stress than men as a consequence of unhappy marriage, misogynistic psychiatry and social confinements as a wife, daughter and girl. As a result, madness is considered a female malady because it is

experienced more by women than men (Showalter 3). Thus, it plays itself out on the flip side of the coin against the background of male scientific rationality. On account of the representation of madness, Chesler underscores that madness should not be bestowed upon and romanticized as a way of cultural rebellion and political contestation: "It has never been my intention to romanticize madness, or to confuse it with political or cultural revolution" (Chesler 97). Instead, she suggests that feminine madness should be deciphered as an ideological conditioning of the female subject who has been divorced from its free will and independence. Similarly, Shoshana Felman notes on madness that it is "quite the opposite of rebellion, madness is the impasse confronting those whom cultural conditioning has deprived of the very means of self-affirmation" (Felman 8). Showalter also suggests that within the dualistic system of representation women are always situated on the side of "irrationality, silence, nature, and body, while men are situated on the side of reason, discourse, culture, and mind" (Showalter 3-4). It is within this duality that women are defined as marginal figures against the privileged centrality of men. Hence, it is the male logos that mutes and suffocates the women in the dominant order and eradicates them from the cultural arena. It can be argued in the light of these that whenever a woman tries to step out of the confines of the patriarchal space, she is maliciously seen to occupy a marginal space and gets annihilated through the patriarchy's institutionally grounded methods. Disturbing the patriarchal codes or attempting to step on the edge of these laws has coterminous boundaries with madness. If we look at how the two protagonists suffer the results of madness in the case of Antoinette or mental breakdown in the case of Esther (her breakdown will be taken as a form of madness as it is categorized as such in its institutional treatment), it can be argued that both novels foreground the ideological configuration of madness as an apparatus to control women and perpetuate male authority.

Although the motivations behind the stigmatization of Antoinette and Esther are overdetermined, there are some parallel points that bring these women together under the same white-male hegemonic oppression: challenging the status quo

and speaking against the patriarchal discourse. Because they did not act or think commensurate with the male logos and accommodate themselves in a non-normative site of existence, they were systematically silenced and not heard by the discourse. By portraying the madwoman and problematizing the core values of patriarchal order such as womanhood, motherhood and family as ideological apparatuses, novels reveal and undermine the dualistic mode of thinking of patriarchal system through their repressed voices. Although they have little in common in terms of family, education and the ideological background, women end up being marginalized and called mad. In this respect, it can be argued in relation to Esther and Antoinette that they subvert the linear logic of male logos in two distinct ways. When Esther's act of madness is assigned to mind, Antoinette is assigned to body. Esther's intellectual capacity paves the way for her problematization of core values of patriarchy and epistemological categories of modernity, through which she transgresses binary mode of thinking. In contrast to Esther, Antoinette is not given any formal education or doesn't have intellectual capacity in the Western sense which will help her comprehend the oppression as she comes from a colonial circle. Although she has an aristocratic background, the political conditions in the aftermath of the Emancipation Act turn her life upside down, which moves her from center to margin. Thus, she endorses a bodily way of rebellion to reach purgation. With a similar strand of thought, it can be argued that while Esther seems to be an empowered and independent girl at the beginning of the novel, Antoinette registers the discourse with vulnerable and dependent prerogatives. Yet the result happens to be the same for both of them as they end up being otherised as a consequence of resisting the patriarchal norms. By materialising the madwoman and problematizing the core values of patriarchal order and revealing them as ideological apparatuses, they also reveal and undermine the dualistic mode of thinking in patriarchal system through their repressed voices. Their disavowal of subjugation, in this sense, moves them away from the traditional binary thinking through their resistance to be identified by male reasoning.

In each novel, the image of the madwoman is forged with a system of ideological conditioning that adopts patriarchal methodolatries to exclude and ostracize the female Other from the discourse. To start with *Wide Sargasso Sea*, stigmatization of madness starts with mistrust between Rochester and Antoinette after Rochester receives a letter from Daniel Cosway, Antoinette's stepbrother. In the letter it is claimed that, everyone in Jamaica hates Antoinette Cosway and her family because they are wicked slave-owners and that "there is madness in that family" (*WSS* 87). He goes on to give details on how Antoinette's mother was mentally disturbed and how she became penniless after the Emancipation Act when Coulibri went derelict. Having lost her drunkard husband and left without money and friends, madness ran in their poverty-stricken estate, he writes:

> This young Mrs Cosway is worthless and spoilt, she can't lift a hand for herself and soon the madness that is in her, and in all these white Creoles, come out. She shuts herself away, laughing and talking to nobody as many can bear witness. As for the little girl, Antoinette, as soon as she can walk she hide herself if she see anybody. We all wait to hear the woman jump over a precipice 'fini batt'e' as we say here which mean 'finish to fight. (*WSS* 87)

Given that Daniel Cosway is black, his embitterment can be related to the fact that Daniel is the product of Mr. Cosway and one of his slaves, this is also the reason why he has been excluded from the Cosway family and their estates for all his life. His desire to stigmatize and entrap innocent Antoinnete is hidden in his tacit desire to render the oppressor oppressed. He was traumatised by the racial system and the patriarchal system, and in turn he tries to destroy his half-sister using the same systems. In another line of thinking in his words we can hear his mother's voice who was devastated by the same systems and their mechanisms. He feels empowered in the patriarchal system as a man and tries to oppress his half sister. The formerly oppressed becomes the current oppressor. Daniel's letter reaches a climax as he writes:

> The madness gets worse and she has to be shut away for she try to kill her husband - madness not being all either . . . old Mason is dead and that family plan to marry the girl to a young Englishman who know nothing of her. Then it

seems to me that it is my Christian duty to warn the gentleman that she is no girl to marry with the bad blood she have from both sides. But they are white, I am coloured. They are rich, I am poor. As I think about these things they do it quick while you still weak with fever at the magistrate's, before you can ask questions. If this is true or not you must know for yourself. (*WSS* 76)

He finishes his letter by saying: "Money is good but no money can pay for a crazy wife in your bed. Crazy and worse besides" (*WSS* 90). The letter exacerbates the tensions Rochester experiences, it not only makes him paranoid and feel embittered as he thinks he was fooled by a trick everyone except him had known about but also proliferates the uncanny feeling that haunts the novel. Maurel argues: " 'Rochester' proves extremely susceptible to the influence of others, especially of Daniel Cosway, whose function is to initiate the tragic process by transforming 'Rochester's' feeling of estrangement into hatred" (Maurel 132). Rochester abruptly loses his sexual desire for Antoinette and they start sleeping in different rooms. On one hand Rochester, bearing a sense of abomination and hatred, starts ostracizing Antoinette, on the other hand, by not letting go of her, he masterminds a baleful plan so as to entrap her for the rest of her life. In other words, he formulates an intersecting system of oppression through which he constructs the racial and sexual Other. The construction of the Other is first and foremost entailed by Rochester's calling her 'Bertha' as Antoinette writes: "He hates me now. I hear him every night walking up and down the veranda. Up and down. When he passes my door he says, 'Goodnight, Bertha.' He never calls me Antoinette now" (*WSS* 106). Binaristic construction of Antoinette/Bertha, as they represent two sides of the coin, foregrounds the idea that while the former represents absence of femininity, the latter endorses patriarchal restoration of femininity. By calling her Bertha, Rochester initiates a new identificatory logic which can be argued as a process of restoring an act of recognition of the male logos in the female Other. H. Adlai Murdoch argues regarding the process of renaming as follows:

These key moments mark Rochester's recognition and contestation of creole difference, and the inception of the othered subjectivity by which Antoinette is increasingly overdetermined; an othering, as Gregg remarks, that in its turn divides her against herself: 'In renaming Antoinette Bertha, the husband does

59

not succeed in changing her, but in splitting her identity. This split subjectivity becomes the fate that she must confront.' But more than this, one might equally argue that Antoinette's renaming is of critical importance to Rochester's constitution and continuity as dominant English colonial subject, appropriating his vision of Antoinette's creole ambiguity to displace and erase it . . . 'The identity of the husband is constituted by the history and narrative of Europe and is dependent upon the "breaking up" of Antoinette, the Creole woman.' (qtd. In Johnson 164)

Indeed Rochester's act of initiating a new and split identity is quite symptomatic of Derridean *différance* when the motivation behind it is put under scrutiny. Power relations between Antoinette and Rochester are established on two distinct dichotomous oppositions with Rochester who signifies reason/presence/center/imperial and Antoinette signifying unreason/absence/margin/colonial. In this sense, Rochester who must secure his power and tyranny is fully dependent on Antoinette's powerlessness. The continuity of such a relationship that juxtaposes center and margin depends on the participation of the protagonists of the binarism. In other words, Rochester reinvents himself against the backdrop of Bertha. The female Other must perform an act of recognition of the oppressor's discourse to the extent she can be domesticated. Conversely, Antoinette's resistance to acknowledge the name 'Bertha' remorselessly undermines Rochestor's process of otherization and functions as a disavowal to be dominated and reduced by Rochestor, which is quite unsettling for him. Mardorossian argues that "Although the black Creoles are indeed, in Spivak's words, 'doubly silenced, doubly marginalized,' their complex interplay with colonial strategies actualizes a resistance that effectively unsettles the colonizer's worldview and actions" (1077). In this sense, Antoinette's disavowal functions as a strategy that overturns the politics of race, sex and colonialism. The following exchange between Antoinette and Rochestor is a case in point:

'Don't laugh like that, Bertha.'
'My name is not Bertha; why do you call me Bertha?'
'Because it is a name I'm particularly fond of. I think of you as Bertha.'
'It doesn't matter,' she said. (*WSS* 131)

60

It can also be argued that by calling her 'Bertha', Rochester pursues his own specular image by reducing her to a medium to acknowledge his own masculinist power. Thus, it becomes clear with the binary opposition between Antoinette/Bertha that Bertha is much less a Subject than a looking-glass to Rochester to reinforce his narcissistic self-image. Critic Carine M. Mardorossian suggests in "Double (De)colonization and the Feminist Criticism of *Wide Sargasso Sea*" as follows:

> Rochester's perceptions and values are identified as a reflection of the European systems of imperial control through which he thinks and acts. He strives to produce a regulating narrative in order to penetrate and appropriate (through/with Antoinette) the"untouched" othered place, "what it hides" (Rhys 1966, 87); he renames his wife "Bertha," thus domesticating her in terms of class as well as of sex and race, and confines her to an attic, the othered space against which his English house can define itself. Antoinette resists his masculinist and imperial enterprise, however, by rejecting the ominous name and by disturbing temporal succession and contiguity. (81)

Consequentially, the process of constructing the racial Other and the female Other can be argued as a patriarchal methodolatry[10] with an aim to objectify feminine madness so that the madwoman can be reduced to a spectacle or an object of possession. The next time he calls her Bertha, Antoinette rages and replies: "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that's obeah too" (*WSS* 145). It can be argued that Antoinette is imminently aware of the constructedness of this condition as well as the counter discourse Rochester endorses. By calling her 'Bertha' he fixates her to a masculine property. What Rochester pursues in Bertha is indeed a mirror which reflects his own image and consequently gives him space to acknowledge his narcissistic self-image. Gayatri Spivak argues in

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[10] Mary Daly first articulates the term in *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* and argues as follows: One of the false gods of theologians, philosophers, and other academics is called Method. It commonly happens that the choice of a problem is determined by method, instead of method determined by the problem. This means that thought is subjected to an invisible tyranny . . The tyranny of methodolatry hinders new discoveries. It prevents us from raising questions never asked before and from being illumined by ideas that do not fit into pre-established boxes and forms" (11). Patriarchal methodolatry, then, refers to a system that wipes out women's questions in a way that even women cannot hear and formulate their own questions to meet their own experiences. It is a method that prevents women from experiencing their own experience.

Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism regarding the name 'Bertha' as follows:

> Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism. Antoinette, as a white Creole child growing up at the time of emancipation in Jamaica, is caught between the English imperialist and the black native. In recounting Antoinette's development, Rhys reinscribes some thematics of Narcissus. (250)

In this sense, the motivation behind Rochestor's act of renaming her Bertha has multiple implications. On one hand, it opens up space for Rochester to extrapolate his own specular image, on the other hand he secures the continuity of his imperial, racial and sexual dominance over Antoinette.

As another patriarchal methodolatry, each novel reveals the ideological conditioning and constructedness of feminine madness with a specific attack on its disciplinarization which plays a crucial role in the production of the female Other. One of the major forms of violence in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is that Rochester systematically silences and does not hear Antoinette. To illustrate, despite a long conversation of telling Rochester the other/her side of the story as opposed to what Daniel Cosway reportedly said, Rochester does not believe her. Antoinette replies: "I have said all I want to say. I have tried to make you understand. But nothing has changed" (*WSS* 108). It becomes clear that no matter how hard Antoinette tries to express herself, she is intentionally not heard by Rochester. Gayatri Spivak argues this system of not hearing the subject of the Other as "epistemic violence" in her essay "Can the subaltern speak?" She argues that "epistemic violence" refers to a way of violating an oppressed group's access to epistemology by using methods of silencing and not hearing the subjects so as to force them to occupy an othered-space. As for Antoinette, any question to let her voice herself is set as a trap since it only reinforces Rochester's already existing notions of the real. In this respect, Antoinette is already circumscribed in an othered-space from which neither silence nor speech can let her out. Thus, Antoinette is marked out as the ontological Other within the patriarchal discourse, and any action or word she takes is violated and

obliterated by male agents. Within this context, going mad can also be seen as a metalanguage that transgresses conditions that pave the way for phallogocentric discourse or it can be taken as an alternative language that defines the limits of the dominant discourse.

In a similar strand of thought, Esther Greenwood's first encounter with a psychiatrist marks the beginning of epistemic violence in *The Bell Jar*. Esther suffers from losing her ability to read, write and sleep, and is advised to see a psychiatrist named Dr. Gordon. The severity of her symptoms is crystallized through her inability to write. She intends to write to Doreen that morning on whether she could come and live with her, however, she fails to do so because of losing her competence of the letters. She writes as follows: "But when I took up my pen, my hand made big, jerky letters like those of a child, and the lines sloped down the page from left to right almost diagonally, as if they were loops of string lying on the paper, and someone had come along and blown them askew" (*BJ* 134). Although she does not inform the doctor about the issue of handwriting, she tells about "not sleeping and not eating and not reading" (134). The conversation between Esther and Dr. Gordon reveals that no prior notice was given to her as the only question he interrogates her is which college she attended:

> 'Where did you say you went to college?'
> Baffled, I told him. I didn't see where college fitted in.
> 'Ah!' Doctor Gordon leaned back in his chair, staring into the air over my shoulder with a reminiscent smile.
> I thought he was going to tell me his diagnosis, and that perhaps I had judged him too hastily and too unkindly. But he only said, 'I remember your college well. I was up there, during the war. They had a WAC station, didn't they? Or was it WAVES?"
> I said I didn't know.
> 'Yes, a WAC station, I remember now. I was doctor for the lot, before I was sent overseas. My, they were a pretty bunch of girls.' (*BJ* 144)

It becomes clear that no matter what happened to Esther, whether she overworked, burnt out, descended into depression or could not cope up with the stress of daily life, the doctor does not provide any medical help or

63

understanding. Next time she visits Dr. Gordon's clinic, he receives Esther with the same indifference.

> 'Well, Esther, how do you feel this week?'
> Doctor Gordon cradled his pencil like a slim, silver bullet.
> 'The same.'
> 'The same?' He quirked an eyebrow, as if he didn't believe it.
> So I told him again, in the same dull, flat voice, only it was angrier this time, because he seemed so slow to understand, how I hadn't slept for fourteen nights and how I couldn't read or write or swallow very well. (*BJ* 148)

Esther decides to show a previously written letter to Dr. Gordon, thinking that he would immediately notice the problem with the hand writing, however, he only says "I think I would like to speak to your mother" (*BJ* 148). It becomes apparent with the dialogues between the two that their conversation lacks reciprocity as a result of the fact that Dr. Gordon systematically undervalues Esther. Because she is divorced from her free will as a consequence of the alliance between patriarchal psychiatrist and her mother, Esther cannot voice herself and turns into an object-in-formation. In the patriarchal discourse she is not a subject but an object that is deprived of any act of self-appropriation. Harold Bloom argues that "Esther wants to get help, but she cannot do so from Dr. Gordon, who symbolizes the patriarchal power of the medical establishment. Dr. Gordon does not seem interested in Esther's symptoms" (41). Dr. Gordon's ways are beyond her comprehension and how he diagnoses her problem remains a mystery to Esther. In fact, Dr. Gordon himself remains an unlikeable mystery to the end. He as a person and his ways are a closed book waiting to be deciphered for Esther and Esther does not desire to do so. We can also take Dr. Gordon as the patriarchy's manipulator and an embodiment of psychiatry. Esther is clever enough to smell the correlation between them and doesn't yield to him.

It is with the heroines' non-conforming behaviours within patriarchal ideology that they are forced to be genuflected by paternal laws and its male agents. These male agents may show up as their partners, husbands or on a broader level, it can pervasively perform itself through medical institutions. In this regard, binding

the woman subject to the domestic sphere brings up the issues where the dualism of public and private falls in. To start with, *The Bell Jar* opens up in the summer of 1953 when Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were put to death because they were spying for the Soviet Union. The opening lines of the novel hints at the ideological and political tensions of the 1950s in America when espionage and McCarthyism were an essential part of the hysteria for anti-communism. Then-current values were highly traditional, and women were really restricted to the domestic sphere by ways of how they should act and think. They were expected to behave commensurate with the prescribed roles at the service of men. Those roles were usually brought up with some values in their relation to motherhood and womanhood. Although Plath's novel is seen as a semi-autobiographical novel, it also functions as a historico-generational criticism that reveals public and private issues of gyno-politics. Esther's narration goes as follows:

> It was a queer, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York. I'm stupid about executions. The idea of being electrocuted makes me sick, and that's all there was to read about in the papers - goggle-eyed headlines staring up at me on every street corner and at the fusty, peanut-smelling mouth of every subway. It has nothing to do with me, but I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves. (*BJ* 6)

Although Esther assumes that it had nothing to do with her in a way that she tends to isolate herself from the external world, she is preoccupied with the idea of electrocution and says: "I thought it must be the worst thing in the world" (*BJ* 6). In between the lines we feel that she feels identified with the Rosenbergs as she can see her similarity to their case. The Rosenbergs were electrocuted for not submitting to the dominant discourse and Esther's revolt against the dominant discourse in a different form implies a similar punishment. She sees herself and her future in the Rosenbergs. Thus, the opening lines of the novel can be regarded as an allusion to the slick boundary between public and private issues, as it is given in *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia* Plath:

> Esther Ethel Greenglass Rosenberg' which is the full name of Ethel Rosenberg is probably where the name 'Esther Greenwood' is derived from. By calling her

heroine's name after a woman who suffered fatal state repression, it is claimed that Plath was casting "Esther's rebellion against 1950s codes of femininity in Cold War terms. In Esther's response to the Rosenberg trial, Plath depicts her generation's inability to grasp the connection between public events and private life" (Gill 77).

It can be discussed that what is public and private finds a framework in the introduction of the novel through which Plath addresses that women's lives are affected by the domestic ideology of the post 1945 period or the public itself is the private or vice versa. Balwin argues that "the rhetoric of the public and the private coalesce to form a particularly pernicious form of disorientation for the fragmenting Esther Greenwood whose sense of a private self becomes increasingly dependent upon her failing public self" (qtd. in Fernandez 165). The juxtaposition between the private and the public comes into place later in the novel when Esther herself gets electroshock therapy. Given that in the first chapter of the novel electrocution is used as a punishment for Rosenbergs and then as a therapeutic treatment for Esther's mental illness, Plath reflects upon the hypocrisy of psychiatric institutions and the punishment forms in different segments of the discourse. In a similar strand of thought Bloom suggests that "the electric shock is a symbol of power and death; Esther associates this form of therapy with punishment, a kind of sentencing'' (Bloom 43). Her early problematization of medicine acts as a foreshadowing of what will happen later in the novel when she was hospitalized and mistreated by psychiatrists.

In a similar fashion, Rhys' juxtaposition of imperial domination and patriarchal domination powerfully exposes the production of the racial Other and the sexual Other. In Rhys' fiction imperial/colonial binarism foregrounds the categories of race, sex and class which create an oppressive space of signification for women and function as a homogeneous and monolithic system of oppression. Because she is stigmatized as an ex-slave owner's daughter, she does not belong to the black community and is called out "white cockroach" and nor does she belong to the white community as she has Creole origins. Thus, she occupies an in-between limbo space. From a historico-political perspective, it can be argued that Antoinette is both a colonizer and a colonized. Yet in the perspective of sexual

politics, she is twice as much colonized by her husband's desire to possess both her money and body. Her body, in this sense, acts as a medium through which an interlocking system of domination is played to gain wealth and possession. Racial, sexual and class paradigms act in alliance with each other to subdue her in a patriarchal chamber.

The notion of ideological conditioning of femininity and correlation between madness and absence of womanhood are recurrent in both novels. In *The Bell Jar*, what brings Esther to the psychiatric hospital is her self-inflated marginalization and uniqueness as she becomes socially withdrawn and repeatedly wants to kill herself. She cannot associate herself with the society's ideals of womanhood and struggles to fit into one frame or another. Kate A. Balwin argues that "the fiction of integrated selfhood that the asylum offers her is one in which such integration relies on the marginalization" (171). The mental distress that is caused by the patriarchal structures and confines of society leads her to descent into madness. Fernandez suggests: "When Esther finds herself in this neither/nor which eventually leads her to be incarcerated—contained—in an asylum, she experiences radical truths about the mythical discourse of choice and individual freedom in a free society in which she was so far believing" (166).

Similarly in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester believes that Antoinette inherited her mother's madness and promiscuity. Showalter discusses that the transmission of madness was a common belief in Victorian psychiatry at that time. There was a consensus among psychiatrists that "since the reproductive system was the source of mental illness in women, women were the prime carriers of madness, twice as likely to transmit it as were fathers." Besides, she adds: "it is agreed by all alienist physicians . . .that girls are far more likely to inherit insanity from their mothers than from the other parent" (Showalter 67). In this sense, Antoinette's madness is taken as a genealogical inheritance. From the perspective of medical men, Rochester and patriarchy, all acting upon mechanisms of a totalitarian system, what Antoinette's madness works on is her female sexuality. The notion of promiscuity in the novel is forefronted by Sandi

Cosway, the son of Alexander Cosway. Rochester believes that Sandi and Antoinette could have married at some point in the past as Hilda says: "Miss Antoinette and his son Mr Sandi get married, but that all foolishness" (*WSS* 104). The idea flares-up in Rochester's mind with the letter of Daniel Cosway:

> His son Sandi is like a white man, but more handsome than any white man, and received by many white people they say. You wife know Sandi since long time. Ask her and she tell you. But not everything I think.' He laughed. 'Oh no, not everything. I see them when they think nobody see them. I see her when she … You going eh?' He darted to the doorway. . . You are not the first to kiss her pretty face. Pretty face, soft skin, pretty colour – not yellow like me. But my sister just the same . . . (*WSS* 104-105)

On the other hand, Rochester's narration reveals that he associates Antoinette with promiscuity: "She was wearing the white dress I had admired, but it had slipped untidily over one shoulder and seemed too large for her" (*WSS* 106). Low-cut, loose dresses are used as a repetitive symbol throughout the novel as a signifier of promiscuity. When Antoinette tells Rochester about the other/her side of the story as opposed to Daniel's, the narration reveals that how her mother used to be by then is similar to what Antoinette has been turned into. She says:

> I remember the dress she was wearing – an evening dress cut very low, and she was barefooted. There was a fat black man with a glass of rum in his hand. He said, "Drink it and you will forget." She drank it without stopping. He poured her some more and she took the glass and laughed and threw it over her shoulder. (*WSS* 112-113)

It can be argued that the moment Rochester sees Antoinette in a dress with a very similar style, it reminds him of her mother and reminds Daniel Cosway's words. In a similar line of thinking Mardorossian argues:

> After their initial estrangement, for instance, she tries to win him back by telling him the/her truth about her past but confirms instead his suspicion that she has inherited her mother's madness and promiscuity; she is wearing the white dress he liked so much, "but it ha[s] slipped untidily over one shoulder". . . Antoinette herself is incapable of realizing that in Rochester's eyes, her attire actually associates her with (black) female sexual wantonness and prostitution. (1076)

In this sense, Antoinette's attempts to alter her husband's presupposed views lead her to an impasse where her madness and promiscuity are taken as inheritance from her mother. As a final example of the metaphor of dress, in Thornfield Hall where Antoinette is locked in the attic, she becomes obsessed with her red dress and freaks out thinking whether they have hidden or changed her dress. As she finds it she holds and puts it against herself and asks Grace Poole: "Does it make me look intemperate and unchaste? . . . That man told me so. He had found out that Sandi had been to the house and that I went to see him. I never knew who told. 'Infamous daughter of an infamous mother,' he said to me" (*WSS* 159). The metaphor of dress endorses multi-layered meanings from different perspectives. From the perspective of Rochester, it represents promiscuity and unchastity. As for Antoinette, it functions as a symbol of her femininity and womanhood. Maroula Joannou argues in "From Black to Red: Jean Rhys's Use of Dress in *Wide Sargasso Sea*" that "dress is integral to Rhys's vision as a writer and to the manner in which she communicates that vision. As an essential condition of subjectivity dress articulates the body and in 'articulating the body, it simultaneously articulates the psyche' (qtd. In Johnson 123). Thus, Antoinette's obsession with her red dress is indeed her repressed desire to preserve her female subjectivity. Felman argues that "what the narcissistic economy of the Masculine universal equivalent tries to eliminate under the label 'madness' is nothing other than feminine difference" (Felman 9). In this regard, it can be argued that feminine madness is conceptualized with the absence of sex-role expectations. Within the binaristic oppositions where Masculinity conditions Femininity through which it defines and measures by a presence-to-itself logic, women are mad to the extent they violate the stereotypical expectations. Joannou also argues: "The dress that stands in a metonymic relationship to Antoinette also comes to represent an important milestone in her journey to understand who she is and to live by her own standards rather than by the alien standards imposed upon her by uncomprehending outsiders" (Johnson 138). Antoinette thinks that absence of her red dress will inevitably dislocate and displace her female subjectivity. As Felman further suggests: "The woman is 'madness' to the extent that she is

Other, *different* from man. But 'madness' is the 'absence of womanhood' to the extent that 'womanhood' is what precisely resembles the Masculine universal equivalent, in the polar division of sexual roles" (Felman 9). Hence, it can be deciphered that Esther and Antoinette are mad to the extent they do not consolidate white-male hegemonic discourse.

In the novels, mental asylums and domesticating the madwoman in the attic are used as feminizing strategies in an attempt to instate the category of femininity that is commensurate with patriarchal ideology. Elaine Showalter argues that in the course of the nineteenth century, English psychiatry went through three phases that are namely: "psychiatric Victorianism (1830-1870), psychiatric Darwinism (1870-1920), and psychiatric modernism (1920-1980)" (Showalter 17). It is with the legislation of The Lunatics Act of 1845 that attics are replaced by mental asylums to be the appropriate space for the madwoman. Showalter suggests:

> In line with their celebration of women's domestic role, the Victorians hoped that homelike mental institutions would tame and domesticate madness and bring it into the sphere of rationality. They designed their asylums not only to house feminine irrationality but also to cure it through paternalistic therapeutic and administrative techniques. (Showalter 17)

Given that madness was the narcissistic equivalent of feminine irrationality, what the phallogocentric thinking tries to instate in the female Other is nothing but its male reasoning. To illustrate, in *The Bell Jar,* Esther Greenwood finds herself in the mental asylum after having tried to commit suicide by overdosing herself with pills. As she wants to take a look at herself, nurses warn her saying she better not. While Esther is looking at herself in the mirror, it suddenly cracks, which leads nurses to suppose she might have broken it out of anger while looking at her shaved head asymmetrically located on her morbid face. The dialogue goes on as follows:

My mother's mouth tightened. 'You should have behaved better, then.'
'What?'
'You shouldn't have broken that mirror. Then maybe they'd have let you stay.'
But of course I knew the mirror had nothing to do with it. (*BJ* 192)

It is understood with these lines that Esther herself is also aware of the fact that her actions and words are not taken in line with common reasoning. Instead, her stream-of-consciousness informs that there are two distinct reasonings one being Esther's own and the other being male narcissistic principle. Later, Esther's encounter with another mentally diagnosed woman is quite note-worthy of how women were remorselessly thrown into mental institutions. The woman explains: "I'm here on account of my French-Canadian mother-in-law.' She giggled again. 'My husband knows I can't stand her, and still he said she could come and visit us, and when she came, my tongue stuck out of my head, I couldn't stop it. They ran me into Emergency and then they put me up here" (*BJ* 192-193). It can be argued that women are positioned in a system where any action that is not commensurate with sex-role stereotypes leads them to be stigmatized. Epistemic violence takes the length of the novel as doctors keep the method of silencing and not hearing the woman. During her first wardguard Esther writes: "After introducing themselves, the doctors all stood within listening distance, only I couldn't tell my mother that they were taking down every word we said without their hearing me, so I leaned over and whispered into her ear" (*BJ* 195). Because Esther has already been silenced by the discourse, even her mother does not believe her and stands on the side of the doctors. She says: "Oh, Esther, I wish you would co-operate. They say you don't co-operate. They say you won't talk to any of the doctors or make anything in Occupational Therapy …" (*BJ* 195). Esther's impasse can be seen in her culturally impositioned space where she cannot escape the boundaries of madness and consequently she cannot make herself heard in the position of madness. She is acted upon either by her mother or by the doctors that have the right to make the final decision with minimum knowledge.

Furthermore, from her insulin treatment to electroshock therapies, Dr. Gordon and Dr. Nolan function as foil characters. Dr Gordon, with his indifference and insensitivity towards Esther's symptoms acts as an agent of masculinity. Although Esther tries to inform him about the severity of her condition, Dr. Gordon repeatedly chooses to ask irrelevant questions and does not hear her. It becomes apparent with Dr. Nolan's attitude that Esther's first electroshock treatment was mismanaged since she was fully awake and felt every single moment of being electrocuted. On the other hand, it is quite noticeable to Esther that the psychiatric hospital did not bear signs of insanity. She writes: "What bothered me was that everything about the house seemed normal, although I knew it must be chock-full of crazy people" (*BJ* 52). It becomes apparent that women are hospitalized without even having their symptoms heard by the doctors and yet in quite the opposite way they turn out to be victims of therapeutic phallacy. Esther suffers from outpatient electroshock mistreatment as she was electrocuted fully awake: "Doctor Gordon was fitting two metal plates on either side of my head. He buckled them into place with a strap that dented my forehead, and gave me a wire to bite" (157). Later, Dr. Gordon informs her that: "A few more shock treatments, Mrs Greenwood,' I heard Doctor Gordon say, 'and I think you'll notice a wonderful improvement' " (159). Allison Wilkins argues in "The Domesticated Wilderness: Patriarchal Oppression in *The Bell Jar*" as follows:

> Dr. Gordon believes that he knows what Esther's problem is and prescribes his remedy—electroshock therapy—accordingly, but he does not listen to Esther. He is an example of yet another male character assuming authority over her and causing her harm . . . When administered incorrectly by Dr. Gordon, the therapy becomes a toxic chemical that further infects Esther as an attempt at controlling her . . . The control of the patriarchy, as expressed through Dr. Gordon and the other male characters, causes Esther to feel trapped and oppressed. (qtd. in Wilkins 48)

In this sense, it can be argued that Dr. Gordon, who is foregrounded as the agent of male logos, uses techniques that are unequivocally misogynist considering all his actions that do not provide medical help but further deteriorate Esther's condition. Felman suggests that "such is the male narcissistic principle on which

the system of reason, with its therapeutic ambition, is based" (10). Because Esther is associated with unreason for rejecting the cultural impositions, what the mental institution tries to reinstate in her is her femininity and female identity from the perspective of masculinist representation. As Felman suggests by referring to Foucault's *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique*; "the cure of the madman is in the reason of the other - his own reason being but the very truth of his madness" (qtd. in Felman 10). Thus, Esther's cure is deeply buried in the reason of male logos. She must perform an act of recognition so as to recover *his* reason and reach purgation. In this regard, it can be argued that the novel draws parallels between pathologized femininity and phallogocentric discourse in a way that *her* representation is the product of patriarchal logic.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the patriarchal nature of Victorian mental hospitals is attacked by Christophine during her conversation with Rochester as he reveals his plan by saying: "I don't see why I should tell you my plans. I mean to go back to Jamaica to consult the Spanish Town doctors and her brother. I'll follow their advice. That is all I mean to do. She is not well'' (*WSS* 147). Because madness was associated with maladjustment to the feminine role, Rochester is sure that both the doctors or her brother will agree on Antoinette's madness. Having understood this, Christophine reveals his plan as the narration goes as follows:

> 'Her brother!' She spat on the floor. 'Richard Mason is no brother to her. You think you fool me? You want her money but you don't want her. It is in your mind to pretend she is mad. I know it. The doctors say what you tell them to say. That man Richard he say what you want him to say – glad and willing too'. (*WSS* 147)

Christophine undermines the hidden agendas of male agents throughout the novel. She is seen as a threat by Rochester as she is capable of understanding their plans as well as directing Antoinette in her favor. When Rochester asks whether Anette was mad or not, Christophine replies:

73

> 'They drive her to it. When she lose her son she lose herself for a while and they shut her away. They tell her she is mad, they act like she is mad. Question, question. But no kind word, no friends, and her husban' he go off, he leave her. They won't let me see her. I try, but no. They won't let Antoinette see her. In the end – mad I don't know – she give up, she care for nothing. That man who is in charge of her he take her whenever he want and his woman talk. That man, and others. Then they have her. Ah there is no God.' (*WSS* 135)

This quotation implies that Antoinette's mother is locked, repeatedly raped by different men against her will and as a result is regarded mad in the end. Christophine can see that madness is a kind of defense mechanism in her case. The men who lock and rape her are not punished by the discourse but the woman is stigmatized as she suffers the results of what men do to her. The same parallelism is there between Antoinette and Rochester. He has sex with a servant and nothing happens to him. However, even a false narrative about Antoinette's past is enough to aggravate Rochester. He feels entitled to fulfill his bodily passions but he doesn't see Antoinette fit for the same passion. His hypocrisy is the main reason that leads to his psychological and epistemic violence on Antoinette. Christoptine is forefronted as the only person that can liberate Antoinette in the course of the novel, however, she is systematically eliminated by Rochester. Christophine's departure increases the maddening effects that are performed on Antoinette so as to isolate her. M. M. Adjarian argues in *Between and Beyond Boundaries in Wide Sargasso Sea* that:

> What is also interesting about how the writer treats the issue of the character's mental illness is the fact that she does not offer a single explanation of the "true" cause of that madness. Christophine claims that Annette was driven to insanity by events she could not control and people who misunderstood her: consequently, Antoinette has not inherited any "bad blood." (2)

The representation of feminine madness is in alliance with patriarchal culture. Both Antoinette and Esther are victims of a homogeneous system of patriarchal domination. In each novel, male figures act as the agents of heroines' domestication. For Antoinette, her madness is withheld by her husband and her brother. As for Esther, these patriarchal agents play themselves out as her analyst and her family. Thus, the ideological configuration of the madwoman cannot be

74

divorced from the same reasoning that it is built upon. At this point the questions to be asked are: Is madness an act of rebellion or is madness a reaction to suppressed rebellion?

It becomes apparent that feminine madness is much less a natural category than a constructed one which is explicitly bound to the stereotypical feminine role. As Phyllis Chesler argues, women with high potency and uniqueness were "punished in mental asylums" (*Woman and Madness* 147). The price for their search for an authentic self is associated with self-sacrifice by feminist critics. Chesler suggests on the relation between woman and self-sacrifice that "unlike men, they are categorically denied the experience of cultural supremacy and individuality" (147). Chesler argues that the female psychology is configured by an oppressive male culture and states: "It is clear that for a woman to be healthy she must 'adjust' to and accept the behavioral norms for her sex even though these kinds of behaviour are generally regarded as less socially desirable" (Chesler 211). Those norms and stereotypical implications of women are first and foremost reduced to being a mother, a wife or a daughter. Ultimately, a woman's social role is entangled with being a servant to a man and her image is ostensibly subjugated under the authority of man. Hence, stepping out of the patriarchal space of signification will inevitably make her fall into the ideological trap and stigmatize her. Chesler brings into light how these patriarchal labels come about by saying: "What we consider 'madness', whether it appears in women or in men, is either the acting out of the devalued female role or the total or partial rejection of one's sex-role stereotype" (Chesler 56). Such was the price women paid for their creativity and anger that cursed the rigidities of patriarchal tyrannies of male tradition.

The endings of the novels bring up different interpretations on the representation of patriarchal logic and its relation to madness. Esther recovers from mental illness thanks to Dr. Nolan and she is about to ascend to a bright, new life. Psychiatric treatments that are applied by Dr. Nolan lay bare the fact that she could manage to help Esther overcome mental paralysis, however, Dr. Gordon

could not. The reason can be argued that these two doctors reveal themselves as representatives of masculine/feminine reasoning. While the former looks at Esther's psychological condition from the feminine side, the latter acts as a tacit personification of patriarchal reasoning. What liberates Esther from madness is a deconstruction of patriarchal logic. In order to recover the status of her womanhood, Dr. Nolan's feminine sentiments bring up a new representation of women and its own discourse. It is with this revaluation of madness that is divorced from being subjugated to male reason that Esther transgresses the category of madness. At this point, the novel seems to make a statement. It is not psychiatry per se that is problematized but its appropriation by male logic. When the psychiatric field is dominated by women's consciousness, it can really 'heal'.

On the contrary, Antoinette cannot overcome the imprisonment in Thornfield Hall because she is accompanied by a warden named Grace who acts as an agent of patriarchy. Although Grace is a woman, her mentality is a reflection of patriarchal oppression. Mona Fayad argues on Grace Poole by referring to Mary Daly as follows: "She is a skillful portrayal of what Daly has called the 'male-woman,' the token torturer who often unwittingly pleases her masters by selling out her own kind. She increases their pleasure by performing the acts which are less than gentlemanly, thus obscuring their role" (*Gyn/Ecology* 335 qtd. in Fayad 448). Grace is fully dependent on male approval that is masked behind money. As Antoinette comments: "Her name oughtn't to be Grace" (*WSS* 153). Grace ignores the oppression that is performed on Antoinette in as much as her money is paid. Her reaction when she first encounters Antoinette in the attic is quite note-worthy: "Now that I see her I don't know what to think. If she dies on my hands who will get the blame?" (*WSS* 161). However, she is easily tricked by the idea of "double, treble money" and accepts to be part of this malignancy (161). Greediness leads her to be a practitioner of male domination. In this sense, it can be argued that as a result of the fact that Grace is a representative of masculine mentality, she is incapable of showing empathy towards Antoinette. Thus, Antoinette cannot transgress the imprisonment in Thornfield Hall because she is entrapped within the masculine logic. Yet again by burning down the house in

her dream, she performs an act against the patriarchal chamber. Although she cannot go beyond the confines of Thornfield Hall, she transgresses the patriarchal house in a figurative way through her madness. In this sense, whereas Esther recovers from her mental illness with the help of feminine logic, Antoinette cannot go beyond her madness and confinement due to being guarded by a "male-woman".

All in all, the representation of madness that is employed in each novel lays bare the idea that madness is performed as a subversive site of act against patriarchal oppression. Besides, women must produce another space of signification that is transgressive of the masculinist representation of the madwoman. Madness which is represented from the masculinist vantage point, hints at the hierarchical production of meaning that pathologized femininity is the production of the phallogocentric discourse. A reconsideration of the representation of the madwoman against the background of male logos foregrounds the visibility of the feminine subject. Both novels seem to imply that a feminine space of signification is the only transgressive way beyond the confines of patriarchy.

CHAPTER 4

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY AS IDEOLOGICAL APPARATUSES IN *THE BELL JAR* AND *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

This chapter discusses the portrayal of marriage and family, both of them having been established as ideological apparatuses to train the subject in the patriarchal matrix. It is argued that these categories are used and designed as an apparatus to dominate women subjects in order to subdue them in accordance with their roles in the society. In this sense, categories of marriage, family as well as motherhood, and purity are used as patriarchal parameters that measure the positionality of women in the patriarchal domain.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the categories of marriage and family are played out as a contract of in/dependence. Rochester's marriage to Antoinette signifies intricate power relations as it is revealed that his marriage was already planned among Rochester, his father and Richard Mason. In a letter to his father, Rochester writes:

> Dear Father. The thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her (that must be seen to). I have a modest competence now. I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love. No begging letters, no mean requests. None of the furtive shabby manœuvres of a younger son. I have sold my soul or you have sold it, and after all is it such a bad bargain? The girl is thought to be beautiful, she is beautiful. And yet … (*WSS* 49-50)

Unable to embrace the Creole heiress Antoinette for her identity, as he feels contempt for the blackness in her, Rochester merely desires to possess her fortune. Having learnt that Antoinette is about to cancel the wedding, Rochester asks what the matter was:

'You don't wish to marry me?'
'No.' She spoke in a very low voice.
'But why?'
'I'm afraid of what may happen.'
'But don't you remember last night I told you that when you are my wife there would not be any more reason to be afraid?' (*WSS* 58)

For Rochester, the cancellation of the wedding brings up not only the loss of wealth and fortune but also it costs him his Victorian reputation. Critic Rose Kamel suggests in her article "Before I Was Set Free: The Creole Wife in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*" by referring to Jean Rhys's *Letters* that "The West Indies had a (melo?) dramatic quality. A lot that seems incredible could have happened. And did. Girls were married for their dots at that time, taken to England and no more heard of" (qtd. in Kamel 6). It can be argued that the contract of marriage foregrounds the independence and power of men whereas it functions as just the opposite for women as an inevitable part of Victorian patriarchy. Having witnessed the psychological oppression of Rochester, Christophine tells Antoinette to "pick up your skirt and walk out" of Coulibri if she wants to restore Rochester's love back thinking that she can achieve this since she is a "rich, white girl" (*WSS* 49). Antoinette replies:

'He will not come after me. And you must understand I am not rich now, I have no money of my own at all, everything I had belongs to him.'
'What you tell me there?' she said sharply.
'That is English law.' (*WSS* 49-50)

It can be argued that English laws are configured in a way that where man is empowered woman is divorced from legal rights and freedom. Bathie Samb argues in "Race and Gender in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*" as follows:

Within wedlock ties, not only does she lose her property, her name, but she is also silenced; she has no right to speak in the name of her husband. Subservience cannot buy security or identity. Marriage reduces her to a child for whom dependence is an obstacle to self- assertion. It also sets up a master/slave relation in which husband and wife enact the rites of possession and revolt. (178)

Within the Victorian patriarchal chamber, women are reduced to be a by-product of their husbands. In order words, marriage brings up the civil death of the woman as she becomes disempowered. Antoinette's vulnerability is perhaps nowhere better exemplified than in the following lines:

> Going away to Martinique or England or anywhere else, that is the lie. He would never give me any money to go away and he would be furious if I asked him. There would be a scandal if I left him and he hates scandal. Even if I got away (and how?) he would force me back. So would Richard. So would everybody else. Running away from him, from this island, is the lie. What reason could I give for going and who would believe me? (*WSS* 93)

Antoinette's impasse is that although she holds a certain amount of fortune, she lacks the ways of knowledge that will help her resist the oppression or find her way out of this trap. Rose Kamel argues as follows:

> An heiress dependent on the sizable inheritance that Mason has provided,Antoinette has no experience resisting her status as a commodity and lacks even the perception that such resistance is possible. It is hardly surprising, then, that uneasy dreams foreshadow her helplessness in thwarting her marriage to the obscure and sinister Englishman who will ultimately confine her to an attic. (7)

As a more knowledgeable and intuitive figure, Christophine purports her resistance by scolding Richard, as Antoinette hears their conservation:

> When I passed her room, I heard her quarrelling with Richard and I knew it was about my marriage. 'It's disgraceful,' she said. 'It's shameful. You are handing over everything the child owns to a perfect stranger. Your father would never have allowed it. She should be protected, legally. A settlement can be arranged and it should be arranged. That was his intention. (*WSS* 94)

Christophine reveals the hidden agendas of male agents that use Antoinette only as a source of wealth. Marriage opens up space for the white colonialist Rochester to subjugate the racial Other through legally grounded ways. Thus, Antoinette is doubly colonized in her marriage. She not only loses her money but also her voice, body and cultural space. M. M. Adjarian argues in ''Between and beyond Boundaries in *Wide Sargasso Sea*'' as follows:

Marriage is what he offers to gain the economic security she represents and which he has been denied by the English law of primogeniture. Antoinette is therefore little more than a means to an end, the thing that stands between him and what he desires. Once his initial fascination with her difference has worn off and he learns about her family history, he draws away from her, leaving Antoinette desperate to win back the self-affirming "mirror" she thought she had in Rochester. (2)

In this sense, Rochester renders Antoinette as a medium of fortune that he gains through marriage. What he sees in Antoinette is imperial, cultural, economic and social power by intentionally making her dependent on himself.

In *The Bell Jar*, Esther Greenwood problematizes the category of marriage as well as its subcategories such as purity and motherhood as paternal agents. Although she thinks about getting married one day and mentions her relationship with Buddy Willard every now and then, she oscillates between her resistant mind and the expectations of the world around her. Bennett argues in "My Life, a Loaded Gun: Female Creativity and Feminist Poetics" by referring to *The Feminine Mystique* that " a woman who went to college between 1945 and 1960, could hardly avoid not getting interested, in anything besides getting married and having children if she wanted to be normal, happy, adjusted, feminine" (Friedan 11 qtd. in Bennett 102). It is with this strong doctrination for women to get married and have children that the struggle to oscillate between a poet and a house-wife becomes crystallized in the novel. Bennett goes on to argue that "both Plath and her mother identified success as a woman with a successful marriage because, like virtually every woman living in the United States in the mid-twentieth century, this is what they had been told" (Bennett 101). Esther foregrounds her struggle for finding her direction with the metaphor of a fig tree which she likens to her life. She writes:

I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig-tree in the story. From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor… (*BJ* 84)

81

It is clear with these lines that choosing one is letting go of the other. She could not be a housewife and a career woman at the same time. With this dilemma, Esther troubles the ideological apparatuses of patriarchal epistemology such as marriage, family and motherhood on which the whole civilization relies. Harold Bloom writes on this problematization by referring to critic Janet Badia as follows:

> From her relationship with Buddy Willard and her mother, to her experimentation with suicide methods, to her fight to escape the bell jar, nearly all the plot episodes within the novel reveal Esther's struggles to gain control over her own life, to determine her own choices, rather than merely to accept those that society presents to her. In fact, one could argue that it is Esther's desire and search for control that threads together the many identities Esther struggles with, including her identity as a young woman, a patient, a daughter, a successful student, an aspiring writer, and, of course, a potential wife and mother. (Badia 132 qtd. in Bloom 18-19)

Esther has plenty of options but is unable to make a choice because her rationale does not match with that of the socially-approved. That's why she says she is "starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose" (*BJ* 86). The dilemma she experiences has its roots in the ideological confinements because apparently, she thinks of choosing two ways, say a career and marriage, would not be possible for a woman in that period as she writes: "I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet" (86, 87). Her act of rejection to be subordinated by one way or another feels to her like hovering between two opposite poles which in the last resort causes her to experience alienation and bodily passivity. Nóra Séllei argues in "The Fig Tree and the Black Patent Leather Shoes: The Body and Its Representation in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar"* that ''it is the pressure of choice—and most particularly, as clear from the enumeration, the choice between being a wife-and-mother and being a female creator—that leads to the protagonist Esther Greenwood's schizophrenia and psychic collapse'' (128). The more Esther struggles to find a way out of the

binaries, the deeper she sinks into depression. An inability to compromise between conflicting paths paves the way for her feeling of fragmentation.

The double bound structure of the politics of marriage is recurrent in both novels. In *The Bell Jar,* Buddy Willard appraises marriage saying she would feel differently afterwards and wouldn't want to write poems anymore. Esther thinks "maybe it was true that when you were married and had children it was like being brainwashed, and afterwards you went about numb as a slave in some private, totalitarian state" (*BJ* 95). Similarly, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, when Antoinette expresses that she is afraid of what might happen after their marriage, Rochester replies: "But don't you remember last night I told you that when you are my wife there would not be any more reason to be afraid?" (*WSS* 58). Male antagonism in each novel foregrounds itself in alliance with ideological apparatuses of patriarchy. No matter how male characters differ from each other as one is assigned to Victorian society and the other is to American society, the result does not change in their behavioral patterns. Thus, it can be argued that Buddy Willard and Rochester are foil characters against the background of each other. Buddy Willard represents himself as the ideal husband in American society of the 1950s. He is soon to become a doctor and excels at school. He is utterly keen on his mother and a regular church attendant. Esther says:

> My mother and my grandmother had started hinting around to me a lot lately about what a fine, clean boy Buddy Willard was, coming from such a fine, clean family, and how everybody at church thought he was a model person, so kind to his parents and to older people, as well as so athletic and so handsome and so intelligent. (*BJ* 72)

In other words, he behaves commensurate with the bourgeois epistemology and its ideological apparatuses by playing his part in the society. However, his approach to purity and marriage as well as Esther's poetic nature reveals that his perfectionism is only a mask for his patriarchal character. For example, he undermines Esther saying: "Do you know what a poem is, Esther?" and goes on full of grace: "A piece of dust" (*BJ* 68). It is overt that Buddy Willard is captured

by a gendered superiority complex that urges him to patronize Esther. Linda Wagner argues as follows:

> Esther is what she is in New York because of the indoctrination she has had at the hands of her socially-approved guide, Buddy Willard. For Buddy, women are helpmeets, submissive to husband's wishes; they have no identity in themself. Esther's desire to become a poet is nonsense (poems are "dust" in his vocabulary); her true role is to be virginal and accepting of his direction—whether the terrain be sex or skiing. (qtd. in Bloom 73)

Quite the opposite of Buddy, the narration does not present Rochester as the ideal husband. He is pretty much endorsed with patronizing, manipulative and occupant prerogatives. His white-male hegemonic identity represents his centrality within bourgeois epistemology. It is with the marriage that Rochester takes off his mask and starts performing his oppression on Antoinette. During a conversation on whether he could take one of the servants with him to England, Antoinette says she has already said yes instead of Rochester. He shouts at Antoinette as follows: "What right have you to make promises in my name? Or to speak for me at all?" (*WSS* 149). In his imperial world, he is the sole person that can hold rights upon other people's lives or actions. As the foiling between Buddy and Rochester takes the whole course of the novel, they perform themselves as agents of the patriarchy insofar they can empower their ideological domination over women.

Perhaps the most pervasive political representation of marriage in American society finds its best example in the last chapter of *The Bell Jar*. When Esther recovers from her mental illness and is about to leave the asylum, Buddy asks: "I wonder who you'll marry now, Esther." The narration goes as: " 'Now you've been,' and Buddy's gesture encompassed the hill, the pines and the severe, snow-gabled buildings breaking up the rolling landscape, 'here' " (*BJ* 245). For Esther, suffering from dire oppressions of an utterly patriarchal society that gives no space to women led to being subjected to sexist mistreatments at mental asylum. Conversely, having been to a mental asylum for a woman is equated with being less favorable for men as a wife. In this sense, Plath reveals the working

mechanisms of the patriarchal matrix in a way that even its medical institutions that provide help are nothing but a medium of stigmatization. Thus, women are doomed to try to escape the patriarchy without knowing that they are actually entrapped in a hamster wheel.

As another paternalistic aspect of the category of marriage, the representation of purity and virginity as ideological constructs is problematized in each novel. Esther's stream-of-consciousness frames the presuppositions on how American society expected women to be then. For example, Esther's mother sends her an article written by a married woman lawyer from *Reader's Digest* that praises virginity and marriage. The article points out how men's and women's worlds are totally different from each other and that only marriage can bring them together. Esther goes on as follows:

> This woman lawyer said the best men wanted to be pure for their wives, and even if they weren't pure, they wanted to be the ones to teach their wives about sex. Of course they would try to persuade a girl to have sex and say they would marry her later, but as soon as she gave in, they would lose all respect for her and start saying that if she did that with them she would do that with other men and they would end up making her life miserable. (*BJ* 90-91)

Concurrently, Esther undermines the hypocrisy of this double-edged approach towards womanhood and purity. She does not come to terms with the idea that women should engage in restricted or no sexual activity, whereas men are free to construct their sexual identity with multiple women. One example from the novel is that when Buddy Willard kisses Esther for the first time Buddy says "I guess you go out with a lot of boys" as if to imply she is sexually more active than Buddy (*BJ* 70). Later, when Esther asks if Buddy has had an affair with someone, Buddy answers he had an affair with a waitress multiple times during the summer. Bewildered with this unexpected answer, Esther thinks "I almost fell over. From the first night Buddy Willard kissed me and said I must go out with a lot of boys, he made me feel I was much more sexy and experienced…" (*BJ* 78). And yet again Esther mentions her thoughts as "what I couldn't stand was Buddy's pretending I was so sexy and he was so pure, when all the time

he'd been having an affair with that tarty waitress and must have felt like laughing in my face" (*BJ* 80). Even though Buddy always exalts the importance of purity and virginity, his freedom regarding sexuality confronts Esther with the hypocrisy of society and its limited space for women to construct a sexual identity. Jo Gill argues regarding Buddy Willard's reaction as follows:

> Not only does Esther discover that she has been made the butt of Buddy's joke, she also realizes that she is subject to societal double standards that understand a young man's sexual experiences as 'sowing wild oats' but then judge a young woman's sexual experiences as 'promiscuity'. In other words, what she realizes is that Buddy can construct his own sexual identity while she cannot. (*The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath* 269-270)

She writes on what Buddy Willard told her of the indoctrination of his mother as a devoted supporter of virginity. When the first time Esther went to Willard's house she says about Mrs Willard that "she gave me a queer, shrewd, searching look, and I knew she was trying to tell whether I was a virgin or not" (*BJ* 80). Thus, it can be argued that Buddy Willard and Mrs Willard represent the ideal family structure in a heteronormative society. Buddy Willard acts as "an arrow into the future" and Mrs Willard as "the place the arrow shoots off from" (*BJ* 76). This binaristic structure that is symbolized by "arrow" lays bare the idea that while men are assigned to masculinist, confident and powerful prerogatives, women are reduced to be passive, needy, help-seeking and vulnerable positions.

The oppressive structure of marriage on the side of women is acutely present in both novels. Esther, for example, develops her opinions on marriage through her observations of Buddy and Mrs Willard. For example, in Chapter 6, Buddy Willard takes Esther to Yale Medical School where they see cadavers and fetuses in glass jars. There they watch a baby being born and watch the mother being cut in order to deliver the baby. Having witnessed this violent scene, Esther feels struck by the pain that the woman had to experience. Later, Buddy Willard informs her that the lady was on drugs so she did not really feel the pain, Esther gets even more disappointed and writes:

> I thought it sounded just like the sort of drug a man would invent. Here was a woman in terrible pain, obviously feeling every bit of it or she wouldn't groan like that, and she would go straight home and start another baby, because the drug would make her forget how bad the pain had been, when all the time, in some secret part of her, that long, blind, doorless and windowless corridor of pain was waiting to open up and shut her in again. (*BJ* 78)

Esther's thoughts signal out the working mechanisms of medical institutions and how women are taken under control through medicine. She not only problematizes the medicalization of childbirth but also reveals that the medical establishment plays itself out as an oppressive and ideological force upon women's bodies and uses it as a medium of reproduction. It can be argued in relation to childbirth that it is an apparatus that turns the woman subject into a reproductive object. The women such as her mother and Mrs. Willard symbolize her the idea that marriage does not work for women as much as it does for men and it also undermines their careers. She thinks marrying someone would be more or less like:

> Getting up at seven and cooking him eggs and bacon and toast and coffee and dawdling about in my nightgown and curlers after he'd left for work to wash up the dirty plates and make the bed, and then when he came home after a lively, fascinating day he'd expect a big dinner, and I'd spend the evening washing up even more dirty plates till I fell into bed, utterly exhausted. (*BJ* 88)

For her, this is a "wasted life" after "fifteen years of straight A's" at the college. She resembles this wasted life to Mrs. Willard's kitchen mat arguing that "in spite of all the roses and kisses and restaurant dinners a man showered on a woman before he married her, what he secretly wanted when the wedding service ended was for her to flatten out underneath his feet like Mrs Willard's kitchen mat" (*BJ* 94-95). Esther satirizes this kitchen-mat-marriage that exhausts her female subjectivity by reducing her to the object of man. Because she is an intellectual and clever girl, such a marriage signifies emptiness and futility to her. Bloom argues: "Marriage and motherhood loom as the monstrous maternal maw, threatening to swallow up her unmaternal self, desire to express herself, and sexual desires. This totalitarian state of kitchen-mat-wifehood is the fate of Mrs Willard in *The Bell Jar*" (117). Esther, whose motivations are beyond being

reduced to a kitchen-mat-wifehood, moves away from such confining structures by ridiculing it with the metaphor of 'kitchen mat'. In addition, she also problematizes the fact that behaviors of men change drastically after marriage. Because men are ideologically conditioned by the social structure and political representation of marriage, such representation subordinates women to the domestic sphere which, in the last resort, makes them needy and vulnerable towards their husbands. As a result, men feel free to perform tyrannical practices upon their wives. Esther comments on this problem as follows:

> Hadn't my own mother told me that as soon as she and my father left Reno on their honeymoon – my father had been married before, so he needed a divorce – my father said to her, 'Whew, that's a relief, now we can stop pretending and be ourselves'? – and from that day on my mother never had a minute's peace. (*BJ* 89)

Esther exhausts the patriarchal mask that covers marriage and reveals it as a contract that valorizes the hierarchy of men and subjugates the material being of women. Very much like what Esther believes, Antoinette's life in the aftermath of her marriage turns out to be a hell that traps her to the attic. For Antoinette, the price of marriage is losing all her possessions and being ostracized to the extent she can barely welcome herself in the mirror. Now that she is hidden in the attic of Thornfield Hall, she is deprived of very basic human needs. Besides, after her confinement to Thornfield Hall, she strives to see Rochester to beg him to get her out. Pacified as an animal, she says: "When I first came I thought it would be for a day, two days, a week perhaps. I thought that when I saw him and spoke to him I would be wise as serpents, harmless as doves. 'I give you all I have freely,' I would say, 'and I will not trouble you again if you will let me go.'" (*WSS* 153). However, Rochester never comes as Antoinette is left to death. When one day, Richard comes to Thornfield Hall to talk to Antoinette, Antoinette does not remember anything about this since she was not in her true mind. Grace informs her that although she was not in the room, she heard Richard saying "I cannot interfere legally between yourself and your husband." Grace continues: "It was when he said 'legally' that you flew at him and when he twisted the knife out of your hand you bit him" (*WSS* 157-158). Antoinette's

attack on the word 'legally' lays bare the fact that the category of marriage was much less a commitment but a professional alliance between men and the man-made institution. This alliance can be seen as an intricate system of operation that latently designs already-inscribed roles of male/female and husband/wife relationships. In this sense, Antoinette's attack is not only aimed at Richard but in a wider context it is an attack on the institutionalization of oppression. Henceforth novels' treatment of marriage exposes the patriarchal structures that always find legally-grounded ways to justify oppression.

All in all, the novels' categorical treatment of marriage and family as ideological apparatuses performs an attack on the sexual politics of the binary oppositions between male/female and husband/wife relations. By deconstructing the category of marriage as a man-made ideological institution, the novels foreground the idea that marriage functions as an oppressive and restrictive establishment whose law and constitution favors androgenic relations. These relations, which are fundamentally based on law and order, subjugate women to the domestic sphere by divorcing them from their reason and will. It is argued that in 1950s American society, womanhood was measured by a happy marriage and virginity and that women were unable to navigate their way out of the confines of the society. In Victorian society, on the other hand, women's sexuality is reduced to their husband's reputation and possession which gives him the conformity to keep the woman hidden in an attic and tame her like a wild beast. In other words, both novels make a statement that marriage performs like an apparatus through which women are imprisoned both physically and psychologically to 'bell jars' or 'attics'.

CHAPTER 5

MARGINALIZATION OF THE FEMALE OTHER IN *THE BELL JAR*
AND *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

In *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, historical and political parameters shape the ways in which the marginalization of Esther and Antoinette takes place. The novels' employment of marginalization is foregrounded on the axes of race and gender. In each novel, heroines' experiences point out the heterogeneity of discourses; however, the androgenic antagonism tries to reduce women to their totalizing homogeneous materiality. Esther and Antoinette lay bare the limited space of contact women are assigned to when their gender and race are at stake. This chapter first discusses the historical parameters within each novel and then argues their political implications on the marginalization of heroines Esther and Antoinette. Besides, it is argued that the formation of the subject of the Other in each novel is foregrounded through a logocentric thinking which creates binary oppositions. Esther and Antoinette register the discourse from different sides of the poles; however, both end up being marginalized by the same mechanisms.

Wide Sargasso Sea opens in the aftermath of the Emancipation Act of 1833, a time when the imperial ideology was already set in the Caribbean. Dominant English ideology in the fictional West Indies is forefronted as a presence-to-itself logic as it creates dichotomous oppositions of center/subaltern, black/white, colonizer/colonized. Social demarcations and relations are defined on account of the hierarchies of binaristic thinking. The impasse that is at stake for Antoinette is that although she looks white, she does not belong to the white community because of her Creole identity, a term that refers to the colored people of the Caribbean with European origins. After the abolition of slavery, Antoinette and her family are marginalized because her father Alexander Cosway was once a slave owner and sugar planter. Thus, it can be argued that while Antoinette was

at first a central figure in the dominant discourse, after the abolition, her register of being changed from center to margin as a consequence of their loss of power. Coral Ann Howells argues regarding Antoinette's marginalization as follows:

> Hated by the blacks and despised for their poverty by both blacks and other whites, Antoinette and her mother are the victims of a system [the plantation system] the collapse of which has not only dispossessed them as a class but also deprived them as individuals of any means of independent survival. (qtd. in Sylvie Maurel 133)

As a woman, she is doubly marginalized in her marriage because of the limited space she had in the imperial and patriarchal ideology. In this respect, the notion of marginalization in the novel is set on a hinge around which categories of race and gender turn throughout the novel.

The first chapter of the novel depicts a time when Coulibri was run-down and derelict and they barely welcomed visitors as they did not have even a road. Post-emancipation politics and sugar plantations make the district a fertile place to make money for some English men. One of those wealthy Englishmen who come to the West Indies is Mr. Mason, Antoinette's stepfather. As opposed to the old Mr. Cosway who never threatened the blacks because he was poor, Mr. Mason wants to replace them with coolies he will import from the East Indies. However, Mr. Mason does not have the capacity to figure out the sort of jeopardy he poses to the black inhabitants in the West Indies and tells Anette to "be reasonable" because she was the daughter and a widow of a slave-owner but was never harmed before. Anette tries to tell him the seriousness as of the situation:

> 'We were so poor then,' she told him, 'we were something to laugh at. But we are not poor now,' she said. 'You are not a poor woman. Do you suppose that they don't know all about your estate in Trinidad? And the Antigua property? They talk about us without stopping. They invent stories about you, and lies about me. They try to find out what we eat every day.' (*WSS* 17)

The wealth that Mr. Mason brings up with him causes them to be dislocated and the blacks burn the Coulibri Estate down and cause Antoinette's disabled brother to die. Power relations are once again reshaped in the West Indies, and the tensions of hate and violence exacerbate the racial discriminations. As a consequence, both Antoinette and Anette are ostracized by the white and black population. Bathie Samb argues:

> The imperialistic ideological system which has structured the West Indies has set the categories of representation. The legal castes of slaves are replaced by a race-colour system of stratification. Consequently binary oppositions which are at work in the diegesis assign the lower level of the society to the black characters, deprive them of any power, consider them as subaltern and ultimately reduce them to silence. The dominant white characters make up the hegemonic group while black Creoles form the landless rural proletariat. (169)

Besides, they are called by the black servants in the Coulibri Estate "white cockroaches" (8). While they are marginalized as 'white cockroach' in black community, white community calls them 'white niggers'. In this sense, colonial discourse takes on different forms of marginalization regarding the changing mechanisms of race and power. When a servant calls her 'white cockroach' she reveals this to her husband Rochester in a conversation:

> It was a song about a white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all. Will you go now please. I must dress like Christophine said. (*WSS* 86)

It can be argued that Antoinette occupies a limbo space since she is unable to submit herself to one side of the binarism. Neither black nor white, her in-betweenness restricts her to navigate her way. Critic Rose Kamel argues that "within the context of slavery the status of white Creole women remained peculiar, indeed anomalous, and after Emancipation in 1833 they were even more isolated from the woman of color they had colonized" (3). Historical displacement and fragmentation are at the heart of Antoinette's impasse. Having

been excluded from each side of the black/white oppositions, she is twice as much ostracized.

Similar to the political representation of marginalization in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *The Bell Jar* too lays bare the pervasiveness of center/margin relations. Esther Greenwood comes from a conservative, middle class family and has a mother devoted to her daughter's well-being. She's a gifted girl with intellectual dispositions and many good opportunities that are presented to her. For example, she was one of the selected group of young girls who made their way to New York at a very young age. After 19 years of peering through the window in the suburbs of New England, Esther goes to New York as a guest editor in a teenage magazine after having won the College Fiction contest and a prize with all her expenses covered, and piles of free bonuses. However, she experiences isolation and ostracization day by day and falls into mental collapse. It can be argued that the reasons that paved the way for her marginalization are hidden in the ideological atmosphere of the post-1945's. The then-current values were highly traditional and women were really restricted to the domestic sphere by ways of how they acted and thought. They were expected to behave commensurate with the prescribed roles at the service of men. Those roles were usually entangled with such values as motherhood and womanhood. Paula Bennett argues in "My Life, a Loaded Gun: Female Creativity and Feminist Poetics" by referring to Betty Friedan from *The Feminine Mystique* that "of women's expectations during the 1950s, fulfillment as a woman had only one definition . . . the housewife-mother" (Friedan 7 qtd. in Bennett 101). While men were associated with power and encouraged to be active in institutions, women were reduced to "physical charm . . cosmetics, adornments, and dresses" (102). Esther's depiction of the magazine office and American society is, in effect, reminiscent of the stereotypical expectations from women in the 1950s. Esther writes that she was with 12 other girls working in the feminine magazine office "drinking martinis in a skimpy, imitation silver-lamé bodice stuck on to a big, fat cloud of white tulle" and how stupid she was to buy "uncomfortable, expensive clothes, hanging limp as fish" in her closet. She says that they were given make-up kits, sunglasses and

countless presents along with "passes to fashion shows and hair stylings at a famous expensive salon " (8). Because she came from a small town and won the contest by writing essays and poems, the life at the hotel which she calls 'Amazon' with other girls seemed like a bubble. Those girls with wealthy parents were "bored with yachts and bored with flying around in aeroplanes and bored with skiing in Switzerland at Christmas and bored with the men in Brazil" (9). Despite all the glitter and fancy that were presented to keep her preoccupied with feminine prerogatives, Esther becomes alienated from the city life, and she barely submits herself to the society and thinks "how all the successes I'd totted up happily at the college fizzled to nothing outside the slick marble and plate-glass fronts along Madison Avenue" (6). All of a sudden her life seems meaningless to her, and she feels dissatisfied and fragmented. She writes: "I guess I should have been excited the way most of the other girls were, but I couldn't get myself to react. I felt very still and very empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo" (7-8). It can be argued in relation to Esther's marginalization that there is a rejection on her part to submit herself to bourgeois epistemology and she revisits its modern categories with an aim to attack and problematize every now and then. Garry M. Leonard argues in *The Woman Is Perfected. Her Dead Body Wears the Smile of Accomplishment: Sylvia Plath and Mademoiselle Magazine* as follows:

> That fashion magazines sell products by persuading women that they need various accessories in order to be "feminine" is common knowledge; but what Plath explores in her novel, journals, letters, and poetry is the extent to which this commercial project can pervade a woman's personality until that "personality" is nothing more than a package designed to catch the eye of the discerning masculine consume. (Leonard 61)

It can be argued that Esther refuses to have her identity dominated by male gaze. The notion of a male-defined femininity attempting to appropriate women in a way that it conforms to the male gaze is an idea Esther rejects to come to terms with. Yet this was the sort of idea that dominated *Mademoiselle* which can be regarded as a microcosm that reflects the standardized femininity that was

94

dominant at that time. Her inability to navigate between the feminine stereotyped ideals and her true self is what isolates her from the dominant discourse. The ideal representation of womanhood that is foregrounded by the setting of the magazine office and the atmosphere of the 1950s is indeed a sub-fractionary mechanism to inscribe women subjects to the male-configured ideology. Women are taken under control to the extent that they keep themselves busy with the domestic sphere and not their careers. Fernandez argues in "We Are All Mad Here: Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* as a Political Novel" as follows:

> Esther's society's rejection of the Other, as well as Esther's rejection of the Other as well, brings to light the very paradox essential for happiness in American society—there is a limited range of roles in order to fit in; otherwise, you are unfit for society. This, however, is so because these very margins exist: the construction of the Other is necessary for the construction of the One. Esther, in othering other peoples, dis- mantles the very mechanism by which she has been othered, thus questioning the veracity of the discourse of the *statu quo*. Rebelling against it, though, is not so simple, since it means to give up the fictionality of a sense of self, which is at the same time encouraged and erased by the power discourse. (Fernandez 166)

It is with Esther's constant unwillingness to submit herself that she comes to be marginalized. Locating herself on the margin, she constantly problematizes the ideologically configured mechanisms of patriarchy such as marriage, purity, motherhood and womanhood. In other words, Esther does not voice the male hegemonic discourse that purports patriarchal ideals. There is no overlap between her rationality and the dominant discourse. In the perspective of reason/unreason dichotomous oppositions, Esther is inscribed to the latter as a consequence of her unwillingness to submit herself to male reason.

Reason/unreason binarisms play themselves out through the voice of Rochester in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Throughout the novel, Rochester is associated with English rationality but Antoinette, Christophine and all the other colored characters are beyond his logic. For example, once he hears someone singing the words "ma belle ka di" which means "my beautiful girl" in Creole language. However, Rochester thinks "whatever they were singing or saying was dangerous. I must protect myself" (*WSS* 127-128). For him, Creole language is

another rhetoric that may curse him. He slowly starts to perceive Christophine and Antoinette as figures that occupy an uncanny space. One example can be given from the novel when Antoinette requests Rochester to take Baptiste, a colored servant, with him to England saying "he knows English . . . he has tried very hard to learn English" (149). Rochester replies: "He hasn't learned any English that I can understand . . . What right have you to make promises in my name? Or to speak for me at all? (149). Apparently, the discourse within which Rochester speaks out does not overlap with the discourse the colored characters are located in. Bathie Samb suggests in "Race and Gender in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea"* as follows:

> The white characters cannot see coloured people as human beings who are capable of thought and reasoned determination. They are stereotyped as children and the ignorance associated with them is usually read as the source of their laziness and passivity. They cannot make deductions or come up with sound conclusions. (170)

In this respect, Antoinette, Christophine and all the colored characters are representatives of not only the racial Other but also the ontological Other. Neither heard nor understood, their register of being cannot locate itself within the dominant ideology.

Both *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* portray the embodiment of the inextricable struggle of women through the female body which is politically castrated within the patriarchal space of signification. The protagonists are either entrapped by patriarchy or its agents that foreground themselves as villainous figures. Zombis, ghosts, lost mother figures, cadavers and fetuses in glass jars, the asylum and the attic as patriarchal chambers all foreground the Gothicising aspects of the novels.

Diane Long Hoeveler argues in *Gothic Feminism* that the Female Gothic plot involves in "a persecuted heroine in flight between a pastoral, bucolic past and a haunted, ominous castle. An absent mother and a threatening father were staples of the genre" (xiv). In this sense, it would be apt to draw an example from *Wide*

Sargasso Sea. At the end of the novel Antoinette sees her third dream in which she unlocks the door of the attic and wanders around Thornfield Hall holding a candle. There she encounters a ghost: "It was then that I saw her – the ghost. The woman with streaming hair. She was surrounded by a gilt frame but I knew her" (*WSS* 172). The ghost she encounters can be interpreted as her mother haunted by patriarchy. Mona Fayad argues in "Unquiet Ghosts: The Struggle for Representation in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*" that Antoinette is "pursued by the dead/undead mother who often represents the problematics of femininity" (450). The uncanny image of the ghost can be deciphered as the representation of 'ghosting' of women within patriarchy. The idea of 'ghosting women in patriarchy is underlined in *Female Gothic Histories* as Diana Wallace argues: "Ghost stories frequently express the 'otherness' of Victorian woman, their ambiguous legal and social position: "the Victorian woman was above all the ghost in the noontide, an anomalous spirit on display at the centre of Victorian materialism" (98). Henceforth it can be argued that the image of the ghost in the novel interrogates the condition of the female Other within the patriarchal space as well as making an allusion to the likely fate of Antoinette. Fayad suggests: "The gilded mirror of Antoinette's dream, that idol of femininity that has destroyed Antoinette's mother as she brushes her hair and waits for her reintegration into patriarchy, appears as a frame that closes the mother in, as it threatens to do to Antoinette's reflection" (451). However, the image of ghost has a subversive function as Antoinette marks a distinction between herself and the ghost with the fire that burns after she drops the candle:

> I dropped the candle I was carrying and it caught the end of a tablecloth and I saw flames shoot up. As I ran or perhaps floated or flew I called help me Christophine help me and looking behind me I saw that I had been helped. There was a wall of fire protecting me but it was too hot, it scorched me and I went away from it. (*WSS* 172)

The metaphor of fire that protects Antoinette can be seen as her rejection to be defined by the patriarchy whose mechanisms eradicated her mother and threaten to do so to Antoinette as well. The fire she burns can be taken as a rebellion against the paternal past and phallocratic incarceration of the female Other

97

within the patriarchal chamber, Thornfield Hall. Thus, it functions as a subversive site of act, a feminizing strategy through which Antoinette transgresses her forced concealment. The transgressiveness of the Gothic heroine acutely dismantles the patriarchal norms with subversive strategies.

Secondly, both *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* share a common ground in their tendency for a quest for self-representation. Both novels foreground the issues of the self as Other through the Gothic device of mirror. Jackson suggests: "Frequently, the mirror is employed as a motif or device to introduce a double, or Döppelganger effect: the reflection in the glass is the subject's other" (26). Esther's reflection in the mirror, when she wants to see herself in the mental asylum, functions as self as Other, suggesting the fragmented and disintegrated sense of self. Esther's stream-of-consciousness reads as follows:

> At first I didn't see what the trouble was. It wasn't a mirror at all, but a picture. You couldn't tell whether the person in the picture was a man or a woman, because their hair was shaved off and sprouted in bristly chicken-feather tufts all over their head. One side of the person's face was purple, and bulged out in a shapeless way, shading to green along the edges, and then to a sallow yellow. The person's mouth was pale brown, with a rose-coloured sore at either corner. The most startling thing about the face was its supernatural conglomeration of bright colours. (*BJ* 208)

It can be argued regarding Esther's depiction that she is in no sense depicting herself. She foregrounds a narrative in a way that she almost talks about another person, especially referring to herself as 'the person'. In this sense, 'the person' she sees in the mirror is far away from being herself and it is rather a specular image that haunts the self and hollows out the sense of wholeness. She shifts the Enlightenment paradigm of "I think, therefore I am" to "I see, but do I really exist"? It is with this attack on *Cogito* that she puts the notion of consciousness in question. The distorted image in the mirror functions as a misperception of self that is ingrained by the patriarchal matrix. Similar to Esther's defamiliarization, Antoinette is forced to live in deprivation of a self-image, too. She says:

> There is no looking-glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was between us – hard, cold and misted over with my breath. Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I? (*WSS* 163)

It can be argued that the narrative juxtaposes two sorts of subjectivity: the one who was not yet castrated and in a symbiotic relationship of wholeness and the other who is fragmented and alienated. Given that she had tried to kiss her image in the mirror when she was a child and came to acknowledge that the self and the specular image in the mirror are indeed castrated, it is understood that she did not sense this castration at that moment. Conversely, the current narrative circulates the fragments of self which are disintegrated and alienated. Rosemary Jackson suggests:

> The topography of the modern fantastic suggests a preoccupation with problems of vision and visibility, for it is structured around spectral imagery: it is remarkable how many fantasies introduce mirrors, glasses, reflections, portraits, eyes—which see things myopically, or distortedly, or out of focus—to effect a transformation of the familiar into the unfamiliar. (*Literature of Subversion* 25)

Thematically, Gothic dwells on the ambiguity of the real as it makes the distinction between the real and the unreal hard to notice for the reader. Within the spectral realm, the Gothic subject oscillates between being and nothingness. It can be argued in the case of Esther that the frenzy encounter with the self as Other functions as a Gothic mirror of duplicity of selves. In the case of Antoinette the motif of looking-glass establishes the Gothic concerns of visibility/invisibility that the more she cannot appropriate herself, the deeper she lapses into invisibility. Self is hollowed out in a way that heroines' division of self as Other is marked off with the mirror image and renders them the ontological Other. The confusing representation of the heroine has a tangential relation to the real as they are dislocated and fragmented. The distorted image in the mirror provokes terror and introduces the Gothic doubling of self and Other. Within the logocentric mode of thinking, the visible is defined against the background of the invisible which draws us to the conclusion that it is the visible

that defines the limits of the invisible. As Gilbert and Gubar suggest: "But a mirror, after all, is also a sort of chamber, a mysterious enclosure in which images of the self are trapped like 'divers parchments' (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 340-341). Because they are defined within the phallocratic discourse that eradicates their visibility, the ontological Other foregrounds a subversive function within the epistemological and metaphysical system that neither sees nor hears her.

Antoinette and Esther's isolation from and marginalization in the patriarchal ideology also implies an attack on the epistemological categories. Because they are ontologically there but epistemologically obliterated, they pose an attack on the categories such as reason and linearity. The following conversation between Antoinette and Grace demonstrates that Antoinette cannot connect her past with the present.

> "When was last night?' I said.
> 'Yesterday.'
> 'I don't remember yesterday." (*WSS* 155).

In her world, linearity has gone bankrupt. Furthermore, she cannot remember her actions as Grace Poole explains to her what she did when Richard came over. Her actions are divorced from causality. It is argued by Sylvie Maurel that "space and time as we know them disintegrate. The markers Antoinette uses are unprecedented and it is only thanks to the mother-text that the reader recognizes the place where she is incarcerated (163). Similarly, Esther does not eat, sleep, read and write. She says: "I hadn't washed my hair for three weeks, either. I hadn't slept for seven nights" (*BJ* 131). She adds the reason: "it seemed so silly" (131). In doing so, she foregrounds an attack on the teleological drive. As she sinks more and more into disintegration and a fragmented sense of self, she undermines the category of unified sense of self. Eventually, Esther and Antoinette's engagement in the deconstruction of the categories that are foregrounded by modernity and patriarchal logic undermines the epistemology

from which they are excluded. In doing so, they mark out a new site of action that is transgressive and deconstructive.

Likewise, in the end, both heroines foreground feminizing strategies to overcome the confinements of patriarchy. Although the strategies they use are different, the motivations behind them have some identical aspects. Whereas Esther escapes the Gothic prison of asylum by finding a self-representation, Antoinette burns down the imprisoning Thornfield Hall through her madness. To start with, at the end of *The Bell Jar*, Esther says, as she was waiting to be set free from the asylum: "I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart. I am, I am, I am" (247). It can be argued regarding her definition of self with the subject I that Esther reaches a purgation which she regards a reconnection with the self, a rebirth that reconciles between the self and Other. Esther says: "But I wasn't getting married. There ought, I thought, to be a ritual for being born twice – patched, retreaded and approved for the road. I was trying to think of an appropriate one when Doctor Nolan appeared from nowhere and touched me on the shoulder" (248). It becomes clear with these lines that her purgation has its roots in coming to terms with a self-definition that is divorced from the markings of ideological apparatuses of patriarchy or its agents. The quest for self-representation that led her to straddle all her life finally comes to an end when she takes over the control on defining the self and writes *her* story by repeating "I am, I am. I am (247)". E. Miller Budick argues in relation to Esther's rebirth as follows:

> Esther's rebirth, therefore, is a self-birth. But it is also a marriage of the heart. In leaving the security of the womb, she weds herself to the world, the same world that has caused her so much pain . . . Esther acknowledges that all psychological or emotional birth is rebirth, all identity a wedding of old and new. She is now "patched, retreaded and approved for the road". . . Esther realizes that she cannot be born anew. But she can be healed. She can be born "twice." (256)

On the other hand, in *Wide Sargasso Sea* Thornfield Hall is foregrounded as the undercurrent of Gothic prison that devastates Antoinette's life. While Thornfield Hall functions as a bourgeois home for Rochester, it is a Gothic prison for

Antoinette since it is a patriarchally marked house. It represents male ownership through which Antoinette is imprisoned. Antoinette's narration goes on as follows:

> I waited a long time after I heard her snore, then I got up, took the keys and unlocked the door. I was outside holding my candle. Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do. There must have been a draught for the flame flickered and I thought it was out. But I shielded it with my hand and it burned up again to light me along the dark passage. (*WSS* 172-173)

It can be argued that burning down the Gothic prison with its imprisoning structures plays itself as a violently liberating act of site. Sandra Drake argues:

> And, as the novel's conclusion indicates, Antoinette becomes keeper, mistress, and protector of the divine flame that brings freedom . . . She is able to accomplish this by finally answering the two questions personal and social history have set her as her life work: "Qui est la?" and "You afraid?" They are asked, and answered, in the course of the third occurrence of her dream. It constitutes an awakening to the realities of colonialism, cast in the terms of the zombi . . . The zombi, awakened, takes revenge in flame. But in burning Antoinette-zombi, she also frees Antoinette for her real life. (qtd. in *Jean Rhys* 202)

In this sense, Antoinette reinstates self by destroying the imprisoning structures that define both her plight and notion of self. Instead of negotiating the limits of the patriarchal house, she cancels it by burning the house down which, eventually, gives her a sense of liberation. The literary and figurative representation of the madwoman, therefore, is transgressive. All in all, heroines liberate themselves with particularly feminizing strategies by transgressing or subverting patriarchally marked Gothic houses, whether it be an attic or an asylum.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis has emerged from the awareness that a presence-to-itself logic, which Derrida calls 'metaphysical' as it is unquestionably acknowledged in the Western world, dominates the epistemological and ontological systems and inevitably foregrounds binaristic mode of thinking that subordinates, subjugates, and marginalizes all of the other categories that remain out of its domain. A male-dominated society that is configured on male reason and ruled by a male god is ideologically conditioned to exclude the woman as its opposite side. It is with the notion of *différance* that Derrida argues that one side remorselessly shuts down the Other and yet it is unequivocally dependent on this Other so that he can maintain his dominance. Man, the founding principle, must police the woman-as-its-Other in order not to be transgressed and dethroned. In the light of Derridean understanding of logos, all of the categories that are configured by the same logic have been put under scrutiny. From poststructuralism onwards, the logocentric mode of thinking and its categories have been exhausted and undermined in a way that deconstruction made a subversive way of representation possible.

It is with this awareness of the constructedness of the conditions of the real that this study has discussed the phallogocentric structures by demystifying its ideological apparatuses in the light of Derrida and Althusser. In this respect, it is argued that ideology, the air container that structures reality, has a material existence and presents itself in an apparatus. This thesis has looked into the ideological apparatuses and how they circumscribe subjects into ideology by patriarchal methodolatries. Those methodolatries not only circumvent any unique female experience but also forestall posing questions against patriarchally-grounded institutions in order not to shake their authority. Marriage and family

are categories that this thesis has particularly discussed in order to expose and undermine those ideological apparatuses and their all-pervasive agendas. In this respect, what marriage and family have at their disposal is the civil death of the woman under the mask of conventional vice and virtue.

This thesis has demonstrated that whenever a woman steps outside the margins of patriarchal ideology, she is marginalized and forced to occupy an othered-space. This marginalization is carried out by institutionalization and confinement in the novels. In this sense, marginalization is also used as a methodolatry that informs the subjects of the consequences of their behaviour if they revolt against patriarchy. Madness, in this sense, is foregrounded as the other-of-reason against the background of phallogocentrism and the madwoman is epistemologically and ontologically silenced, not heard, and oppressed. Thus, this thesis has found out that madness is used as an ideological apparatus that is configured to keep the female Other in line with patriarchal doctrinations. The woman is mad to the extent she does not come to terms with her positionality against the background of male narcissistic principle. Because *her différance* is the locus of *his* metaphysical presence and certainty. In this sense, the hierarchical production of meaning foregrounds a correlation between phallogocentric discourse and pathologized femininity in a way that *his* reason positions and (re)configures *her* representation. The representation of madness foregrounds the idea that the only reflection that is deemed suitable for women who search for self-reflection is a culturally-conditioned one.

It is with this cultural conditioning of the female subject that marriage and family function as the ideological apparatuses that keep the woman bound to the domestic sphere. This thesis has discussed that marriage is a legally-grounded normative site that castrates the free will and self-affirmation of the female subject. Far from being a form of commitment, marriage is a contract of in/dependence as in the case of Antoinette and a kitchen-mat-offer as in the case of Esther. Given that *Wide Sargasso Sea* reflects the status of woman in marriage in Victorian society and *The Bell Jar* in American society of the 1950s, it is seen

that women's fate in marriage has been pre-established by an omnipotent Masculinity that different eras and countries foreground only different methods and strategies yet the objective remains the same. In this sense, this thesis gains significance to demystify the working mechanisms of ideological apparatuses against the backdrop of male narcissistic principle in different eras and places. Whereas women's marital status in Victorian society is assigned to fortune, reputation and power of the husband, in American society its implication for women is assigned to giving up on their careers in favor of motherhood and domestic prerogatives. Thus, marriage is one way of rendering the self disempowered as it exhausts female subjectivity.

In this respect, the association between madness and female malady is much less a feminine psychic condition than a disinclination of sex-role stereotypes. Esther's mental illness is symptomatic of an ideological anxiety where personal and political melt in the same pot. It is a symbolic inability to compensate for the eerie feeling of reality. Because she struggles to cope with the oppressive ideology that leads her to a neither/nor situation, the heroine inevitably descends into mental collapse. In the case of Antoinette, madness is first and foremost contextualized as a genealogical legacy that is used to obliterate and entrap the female subject. It is seen that male antagonists such as husbands, doctors, and brothers play themselves out as agents of a homogeneous system of patriarchal oppression. These agents complement each other as all of them are representatives of the patriarchal discourse which is also in alliance with medical discourse. The therapeutic ambition of male reasoning implies that recovery from madness is indeed an act of the recognition of Masculinity and submitting to the patriarchal ideology. In this respect, novels' treatment of feminine madness also hints at the gendered politics of psychiatry and/or medical discourse. What these discourses that are established on male narcissistic principle have at their disposal is the visibility of the female Other. *Her* representation is deeply buried in the reason of the other.

Another line of thinking regarding the tropes of 'Good Other Woman' and 'Evil Other Woman' that show up in Female Gothic draw us to an argument that whereas Antoinette can be associated with 'Good Other Woman' at the beginning of the novel due to her innocence and incapacity to decipher the cultural and political events that are happening around her, she registers to 'Evil Other Woman' through the end of the novel after being associated with genealogical madness and promiscuity of her mother. In contrast, Esther cannot be argued within such a binarism. It would be equally, if not more, wrong to assign her to 'Good Other' or 'Evil Other' because her narrative undermines such restrictive categorisations for women. In this sense, they need new categories to be labelled as they fit to neither Good Other nor Evil Other. Their ontology hints at another space of signification.

As I argued elsewhere, feminine madness is configured as an apparatus to subjugate and subordinate the woman in an attempt to remind the female Other of her cramped space in patriarchy. A culturally devalued female role that manifests refusal of appropriation by male logic is inevitably pulled toward the margin. In this sense, the female body foregrounds itself as a political site of action. The more she refuses to submit herself to the tyranny of male logos, the deeper she sinks into an othered-space. The madwoman's stream-of-consciousness informs the reader of the patriarchal and hegemonic oppression in a way that her voice opens up another space of signification from the flip side of the coin. The voice of the madwoman is the voice of the patriarchally repressed.

This thesis has based its discussions on *The Bell Jar* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* because both novels offer a glance at the representation of madness from the flip side of the coin in different linear, spacial and ideological domains. Although Esther and Antoinette register the discourse from different positions, they end up being marginalized in and alienated from the epistemological and ontological discourse. Besides, the representation of male antagonism as well as the politics of gendered psychiatry (it is argued as Spanish Town doctors in *Wide Sargasso Sea*) bear similarities in the novels. Buddy Willard and Rochester are taken as foil characters against the background of each other. Looking at two rather

different characters from distinct discourses has shown that masculinity only adjusts itself to changing mechanisms and reinvents itself in different forms. However, the hegemonic tyranny remains the same as it always finds new methodolatries to position itself within dominant ideology. Hence, ideology and patriarchal methodolatries are also proved to work in alliance with each other. Likewise, whereas marriage in the Victorian era stood for a significant loss of property on the side of the woman, 1950s America conveys a slightly adjusted but similar oppression by exhausting the subjectivity and the private life of the woman. In this sense, the method changes but the oppression remains the same.

On the other hand, novels' positionality within the Female Gothic tradition opens up a subversive site of action in its treatment of the return of the patriarchally repressed. The term Female Gothic does not appear frequently in the chapters as it is not only a thematic concern in the thesis but it also offers a 'methodolatry' in a subversive sense to the thesis. How this thesis demystifies and subverts the patriarchal category of madness mimics and applies the principle mode of thinking in Female Gothic. In this respect, this thesis is particularly important as it theorizes on the demystification of phallogocentric working mechanisms. The reason why this thesis has chosen Female Gothic tradition is that Female Gothic opens up space for a subversive site of act that transgresses the binaristic trap. Female body that is politically castrated opens up a subversive site of act.

This thesis has chosen to base its arguments in Female Gothic tradition because it is with Female Gothic that going beyond the binaristic trap is first and foremost made possible. Binaristic mode of thinking that has been the quagmire of the female Other is dismantled and demystified with the subversive site of act that is foregrounded in Female Gothic. Hence, the female Other found herself an outlet to dethrone the phallogocentric structures. This study has claimed that Female Gothic is particularly significant with its departure from accommodating itself to logocentric structures, that is, instead of looking into the dichotomies Female Gothic divorces itself from, it puts the working mechanism of phallocentric thinking under scrutiny. In doing so, it opens up space for the

female body that proved itself to be political to find an outlet to transgress the patriarchal and ideological structures. Henceforth this thesis has also emerged with the need to theorize on the demystification of the working mechanisms of phallogocentrism.

Whereas from the perspective of male antagonism madness is foregrounded as an ideological apparatus to train the female Other in line with its hidden agendas, from the perspective of female subject the representation of madness from the flip side of the coin undermines this all-pervasive constructedness. The voice of the madwoman that undermines therapeutic fallacy without accommodating itself to male reasoning informs the reader about an alternative subjectivity that is not contained by patriarchy. This idea condenses with the representation of Esther's rebirth that a rebirth from the impasse of self and self as Other that is hollowed out by the confines of patriarchy is only possible by departing from patriarchy's semantic and linguistic space of signification. In this sense, reading the lines ''I am, I am, I am'' in line with a deconstructive mode of thinking lays bare the idea that the heroine can exhaust the structures of the bell jar only if she reinvents *herstory* without taking on the presuppositions of an imprisoning one. Yet from the perspective of Antoinette, her reference to the Gothic house as 'their cardboard houses' undermines the rigidities of such structures that base themselves on what she undermines. Although Antoinette is literally entrapped and cannot overcome her imprisonment, her act of burning down the house circumvents the construction of her othered-place. Thus, in both novels the heroines refuse to accommodate themselves within phallogocentrism but operate from a positionality both within and beyond. This is the point where Female Gothic and the figure of the madwoman operate in identical lines with each other to inform an alternative subjectivity as they put telos and logos under attack.

In *The Bell Jar*, the notion of 'bell jar' itself represents the Gothic prison where women are forced to live in a patriarchal world. Those Gothic prisons, Thornfield Hall in the case of Antoinette and the 'bell jar' in the case of Esther come to represent the slippery ground for women to self-appropriate themselves.

Female Gothic with its treatment of phallogocentric structures opens up a non-normative site of ontology for heroines to expose and overturn those structures.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Kadın Gotik geleneğinden iki romanda kadın deliliğinin, kadın Ötekiyi eğitmek için ideolojik bir aparat olarak edebi açıdan ele alınışını tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez, 'phallogocentrism' ile kurulan ikili düşünme tarzının yapısökümcü bir okumasını ön plana çıkarmak için Kadın Gotik geleneğini benimser. Gotik, kendisini Romantizm ve modernitenin karşısında konumlandıran ilk gelenek olarak ortaya çıkmasına rağmen, batı epistemolojisine derinden kök salmış olan logosmerkezci düşünme biçimini örtülü bir biçimde gizleyen ikili yapıları yapısöküme uğratmak için bir alternatif olarak hareket edememiştir. Fakat Kadın Gotik ile birlikte kadın yazarlar, bu ikiliklere hapsedilmiş kadın özneyi içinde bulundukları tuzaktan çıkarmayı amaçlayarak, logosmerkezci yapıları açığa çıkarmak ve ikilikleri yıkmak için stratejiler geliştirmişlerdir.

Kadın Gotik'in, kendisini geleneksel Gotik'ten ayırması, ataerkil matrisin yıkımı ve ihlali ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Geleneksel Gotik, ikili tuzağın ötesine geçemezken, kadın Gotik, ataerkil matrisin sınırlarını aşarak geleneksel Gotik'ten ayrılır. Geleneksel Gotik, ezen ve ezileni yan yana koymakta ısrarcı iken Kadın Gotik bu ikilikleri yaratan mekanizmaların altüst edilmesini konu edinir. Böylelikle, kendisini geleneksel Gotik'ten ayırır. Bu bağlamda, Kadın Gotik'i, geleneksel Gotik'in önüne geçiren şey, onu ötekileştiren logos'u yapısöküme uğratma kapasitesidir. Geleneksel Gotik, bastırılmışı ön plana çıkarıp yüceltirken, Kadın Gotik, 'phallogocentric' yapıları altüst edecek şekilde bastırılmışın sesine yer verir. Kadın Gotik, ne kadınların mağduriyetini yüceltir, ne de kendisini temsil etmekten yoksun bırakılmış depresif ve ezilmiş kadınların durumunu romantize eder. Aksine, ataerkinin oluşturduğu kanıksanmış koşulları yok etmeyi amaçlar. Bu nedenle geleneksel ve Kadın Gotik arasındaki en net

ayrım geleneksel Gotik ezilene bir temsil atamaktaki ısrarı nedeniyle ikili tuzakta takılı kalırken, Kadın Gotik ise ezileni bu tuzaktan çıkarır.

Bu tez, ezen ile ezilen arasındaki ayrıma bakmak yerine, ezen/ezilen, merkez/marjin, mevcudiyet/yokluk, özdeş/öteki, varlık/hiçlik ikiliklerini kuran, ikili düşünme biçiminin çalışma mekanizmalarını tartışır. Bunu yaparken de bu çalışma, roman okumaları üzerinden yapısökümcü bir tartışmayı ön plana çıkarmak amacıyla argümanlarını daha çok Fransız filozof Jacques Derrida'ya dayandırır.

Jacques Derrida'nın ''Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences (1967)'' adlı makalesi, Kadın Gotik geleneğinde kadın deliliğinin temsili üzerine postyapısalcı bir araştırma için verimli bir zemin sağlar. Derrida'nın logosmerkezci düşünce biçimini yapısöküme uğratması, batı geleneğinin kategorileri tanımlama biçiminin, bu kategorilerin ne olduğunun ne olmadığına bakılarak tanımlandığı ispatlar. Ontolojik ve epistemolojik sistemlerdeki ögelerin hiyerarşik düzendeki konumlarına göre belirlendiği logosmerkezci düşünce alışkanlığı postyapısalcılık ile birlikte baltalanmıştır.

Bu nedenle Derridacı yapısöküm, kadını, Öteki'nin anlam alanına kodlayan ikilikleri ters çevirmek için alan yaratır. Benzer bir biçimde, Althusser'in ideoloji algısı, ideolojinin bilinç dışında yapılanmış ve aynı epistemolojik ve ontolojik sistemdeki ögeleri örtülü bir biçimde yönettiği çalışma mekanizmalarına değinir. İdeolojide ön plana çıkan şey, çalışma ilkelerini yokluk/hiçlik/ötekilik kategorilerinin karşısına konumlandıran bir kendine-varlık mantığının ortaya çıkardığı zorunlu düşünme tarzıyla ilişkilendirilir.

Bu bağlamda, bu tez, bu örtülü organizasyonların çalışma ilkelerini kuramlaştırma ve yapısöküme uğratma çabasıyla, delilik, evlilik, aile ve ötekileştirilme gibi ideolojiyle ilişkilendirilmiş kategorilerin kurgulanma biçimini tartışır. Bu kategorilere baktığımızda, bunların kadın Ötekini eğitmek için ideolojik aygıtlar olarak tasarlandıkları görülür. Bu anlamda, ideoloji ve

ataerki, kadın öznelere boyun eğdirmeyi amaçlayan benzer çalışma mekanizmaları üzerinde çalışır. Bu kategorilerin, Kadın Gotik geleneğinde yapısökümcü bir okuması, bu tezde daha fazla tartışma için etkili bir anlam alanı yaratır.

2. bölüm, Gotik'in on sekizinci yüzyıldan yirminci yüzyıla kadar süregelen anlam alanına odaklanarak tarihsel gelişimini tartışır. Bu bölüm, Gotik teriminin ortaya çıkışı ve yıllar içinde hem tarihsel hem de coğrafi olarak neye atıfta bulunduğu hakkında fikir verir. Bu bölüm, farklı dönemlerdeki ortamlar, tematik ve biçimsel özelliklerin yanı sıra, kendi zamanlarının öncü kadın yazarlarının eserlerine odaklanarak Gotik'i tartışır. Bu bağlamda, Gotik'in soy bilimine bakmak Kadın Gotik'in edebi gelenekteki yerini ön plana çıkarmak için önemlidir. Bu bölüm, Kadın Gotik'te, aynı epistemolojik ve ontolojik sistemlerdeki kadın Ötekinin kurgulanışını baltalayarak karşımıza çıkan deliliğin altüst edici bir temsili ile devam eder. Tezin teorik arka planı, Kadın Gotik'in 'phallogocentric' mekanizmaların, gizemini çözmek için kadın yazarlara yapısökümcü stratejiler için yer verdiği fikrini ön plana çıkarır.

3. bölüm, kadın deliliğinin işlenişine ilişkin olarak *The Bell Jar* ve *Wide Sargasso Sea* romanlarının tartışmasına odaklanır. Bölüm, deli kadın kategorisinin kurulmasında kilit rol oynayan ataerkil düşünce tarzının çalışma mekanizmalarına bakarak kadın deliliğinin tartışılmasıyla başlıyor. Kadın deliliğinin, kadın Ötekini ataerkil yasalara uymasına zorlamak için ideolojik olarak koşullandırıldığı tartışılır. Delilik, bir kadın hastalığı olmaktan çok ataerkil metodolatriler ile birlikte kadının ideolojik olarak koşullandırılmasıyla ilişkilidir.

4. bölüm, Derrida ve Althusser'in ışığında kadın Ötekini eğitmek için ideolojik aparatlar olarak ortaya çıkan evlilik ve aile kategorilerini tartışıyor. Her iki roman da kendilerini ideolojik aparatlar olarak sunan 'phallogocentric' kategorileri baltalamaktadır. Cinsel politikanın yapısökümcü bir okuması, erkek ve mantık arasındaki ittifakı altüst eder. Evlilik, erkek tarafından kurgulanmış bir

ideolojik kurum olarak ele alınır. Buna hizmet ederek, yasalar ve düzen ataerkil ilişkileri güçlendirmek için tasarlanmıştır.

5. bölüm, ırk ve toplumsal cinsiyetin ele alındığı tarihsel ve politik parametreleri açığa çıkararak kadın Ötekinin marjinalleştirilmesini konu edinir. İkili zıtlıklar arasında yön bulamama veya ikili zıtlıkların logosmerkezciliği baz alarak tanımlanması, kadın kahramanların ötekileştirilmesinin yolunu açar.

6. bölüm, bu tezin sonucunu oluşturmaktadır. Kadın Gotik'teki deli kadının, epistemolojik ve ontolojik sistemlere kazınmış 'phallogocentric' yapılara madalyonun öbür tarafından bir bakış sunduğuna vurgu yapar. Deli kadını, feminist bağlamda ne mağdur eden, ne de bir objeye indirgeyen yeni düşünce biçiminin ataerkiyi altüst olanaklar yarattığı tartışılır.

Bu tezde ele alınmak üzere seçilen her iki roman da Kadın Gotik geleneğinde görülen patriyarkal anlamda bastırılmış olanın geri dönüşünün örnekleridir. Bu tez Jean Rhys'in *Wide Sargasso Sea* ve Sylvia Plath'in *The Bell Jar* romanlarına odaklanır çünkü her iki romanda da kadın Ötekinin phallogocentrism'e karşı yapılandırılması, kadın deliliğini altüst edici bir eylem alanı olarak ön plana çıkarmakta ortak bir zemine sahiptir. *The Bell Jar* ve *Wide Sargasso Sea* romanları her ne kadar kadın deliliği bağlamında çalışılmış olsa da; bu romanların Kadın Gotik geleneği içinde 'phallogocentric' mekanizmalara karşı ve ideolojik aparatları deşifre ederek ele alınışı daha önce çalışılmamıştır.

Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, 'phallogocentrism' ile kadın deliliğinin, Kadın Gotik geleneğindeki temsili arasındaki ilişkiyi tartışmaya ve kuramsallaştırmaya çalıştığı için ayrıyeten önemlidir. *The Bell Jar*, 1945 yılında Amerika'da geçmektedir. *Wide Sargasso Sea* ise Batı Hint Adalarında, 1833 yılında Köleliği Kaldırma Yasası'nın akabinde geçiyor. *The Bell Jar*, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası ideolojik perspektifinden Amerikan toplumundaki kadın kategorisini ön plana çıkarırken, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Victorya toplumundaki kadının durumuna bir bakış sunuyor. Romanlardan biri 1966'da diğeri ise 1963'te yayınlanmış olsa da,

bu iki romanda kadınların hikayesi oldukça farklı iki tarihsel ve kültürel bağlamda işlenmiştir. Bağlamları arasındaki büyük kültürel ve tarihsel boşluğa rağmen, romanların kadın kategorisini ve onun yapılandırılmasını ve yine onların 'phallogocentric' sistem tarafından nasıl kapana kıstırıldığını ele alma bakımından ilginç benzerlikler taşır. Bu kadınlar, farklı yüzyıllarda ve kültürlerde yaşamalarına rağmen yaşadıkları deneyimler açısından çok büyük benzerlikler taşımaktadırlar. Bunun nedeni, kadınların ataerkil matriste nasıl yapılandırıldığının bazı evrensel kurallarla ilişkili olması ve coğrafi ya da tarihsel farklılıkların onların yapılandırılma süreçlerinde çok fazla fark yaratmaması şeklinde açıklanmaktadır. Bu benzerliğin bir başka nedeni de, romanların farklı tarihsel ve kültürel bağlamlara rağmen aynı zamanın ruhunun ürünü olmalarıdır. Bir yazar, sorunu on sekizinci yüzyılda, diğeri yirminci yüzyılda bulmasına rağmen bakış açıları aynıdır.

Bu iki romanı birbirleri ile bir diyaloğa sokmak, yüzyıllar boyunca kadının kurgulandırılma biçimde bazı evrensel ögeler olduğunu gösterir. Antoinette'in içinde bulunduğu duruma baktığımızda, bu durum, onun batı diskuru ve kendi kültürünün dominant diskuru tarafından nasıl ötekileştirildiğini gösterir. Onun ayrımcılığa uğramasında bir diğer ilginç durum ise, bu duruma etki eden patriyarkal mekanizmalar ile birlikte çalışan kültürel ve ırksal başka göstergeler daha olduğudur. Farklı tarihsel ve kültürel ortamların hikayelerini anlatan bu romanları birbirleri ile bir diyaloga sokmak, bu tezdeki argümanlarım için verimli bir zemin oluşturur.

Bu tez, batı diskurunda tartışmasız bir biçimde kabul edilmiş logosmerkezci yapıların, ve bu yapıların ortaya çıkardığı ikiliklerin, epistemolojik ve ontolojik sistemlere hükmettiği ve kaçınılmaz olarak ikiliklerden zayıf ayağı tahakküm altına aldığı bilinciyle doğmuştur. Bu hiyerarşik yapılanma her zaman zayıf ayağı ve sabote ettiği diğer tüm kategorileri marjinalleştirmektedir. Erkek mantığı üzerine kurulmuş, erkek bir Tanrı tarafından yönetilen, erkek egemen bir toplum, kadını her zaman zayıf ayağa konumlandırmaya ve dışlamaya ideolojik olarak şartlanmıştır. Derrida yine ortaya koymuştur ki, güçlü taraf gücünü

sürdürebilmek ve egemenliğini muhafaza edebilmek için zayıf olan tarafa muhtaçtır. Bu nedenle, erkek, gücünü korumak istediği müddetçe kadın Ötekinin davranışlarını gözetlemeli ve kontrol altında tutmalıdır. Derrida'nın logos anlayışı ışığında, aynı mantığın ürettiği tüm kategoriler mercek altına alınmıştır. Gerçekliği oluşturan koşulların kurgulanmış olması bilinci ile ortaya çıkan bu çalışma, 'phallogocentric' yapıları ve onun ideolojik aparatlarını, Derrida ve Althusser'in ışığında deşifre ederek tartışır. Bu bağlamda, ideolojinin, tıpkı gerçekliği yapılandıran bir hava gibi materyal bir varoluşa sahip olduğu ve kendisini bir aparatta sunduğu ileri sürülmektedir.

Bu tez, kadın özneleri ataerkil metodolojiler ve ideolojik aparatlar ile birlikte, ideolojinin içine nasıl yerleştirdiklerini araştırır. Bu metodolatriler, öznel kadın deneyimini engellemekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda otoritelerini sarsmamak için ataerkil temelli kurumlara karşı sorular sorulmasını da önler. Evlilik ve aile, bu ideolojik aparatları ve gizli ajandalarını açığa çıkarmak ve baltalamak için, bu tezin özellikle tartıştığı kategorilerdir. Bu bakımdan, evlilik ve aile kurumlarının erdem ve geleneksel ahlak kuralları arkasında sakladığı şey, kadının sivil ölümüdür. Bu tez, bir kadın ne zaman ataerkil ideolojinin sınırlarının dışına çıksa, marjinalleştirildiğini ve ötekileştirilmiş bir alanı işgal etmeye zorlandığını gösterir. Bu marjinalleşme, romanlarda kadını akıl hastanesine kapatmak veya çatı kadına hapsetmek yollarıyla gerçekleştirilir. Bu anlamda, marjinalleştirme, özneleri ataerkilliğe isyan etmeleri durumunda davranışlarının sonuçları hakkında bilgilendiren bir metodolatri olarak da kullanılır. 'Phallogocentric' yapılanmalara baktığımızda, delilik, erkek mantığının ötekisi olarak konumlanmış iken, kadın ise erkeğin ötekisi olmuştur. Böylelikle, bu tez, deliliğin, kadın Ötekini patriyarkal öğretiler doğrultusunda ideolojik bir aparat olarak kullanıldığını ortaya çıkarır. Kadın, erkek narsisist ilkesinin, arka planına karşı kendi konumunu kabul edemediği ölçüde delidir. Çünkü onu farklı yapan şey, erkek mantığına ve ilkesine ne kadar karşı çıktığı ile ilgilidir.

Kadın deliliğinin bu tezdeki temsili, böylesine erkek mantığı üzerine kurulmuş bir dünyada kendi yansımasını arayan kadınların, kendisine uygun görülen tek

yansımanın kültürel olarak koşullanmış bir yansıma olduğu fikrini ön plana çıkarır. Kadın öznenin, bu kültürel koşullanmasıyla birlikte, evlilik ve aile kategorileri, kadını domestik alanda bağlı tutan ideolojik aparatlar olarak işlev görür. Bu tez, evliliğin, kadın öznenin, özgür iradesinin önüne geçen yasal temelli normatif bir alan olduğunu tartışır. Evlilik, bir bağlılık biçimi olmaktan çok, Antoinette örneğinde olduğu gibi bir bağlılık/bağımlılık sözleşmesi ve Esther örneğinde olduğu gibi bir mutfak paspası teklifidir. *Wide Sargasso Sea*'nin Viktorya toplumunda yaşayan kadının, evlilikteki durumunu; *The Bell Jar*'ın ise 1950'li yıllarda Amerikan toplumunda yaşayan kadının, evlilikteki durumunu yansıttığı düşünüldüğünde, kadınların evlilikteki kaderinin, her şeye kadir bir erkeklik tarafından önceden belirlendiği görülmektedir. Yöntem ve stratejiler farklı dönemlerde değişse de, arka planda yatan amaç aynı kalmıştır. Bu anlamda, bu tez, farklı dönemlerde ve yerlerde erkek narsisist ilkesi zemininde ideolojik aparatlarını çalışma mekanizmalarını aydınlatmak için özellikle önemlidir. Victorya toplumunda, kadınların medeni durumu kocanın servetine, itibarına ve gücüne yorumlanırken, Amerikan toplumunda bunun anlamı, annelik ve ev içi sorumluluklar için kariyerlerinden vazgeçmeleri şeklinde yorumlanır. Dolayısıyla evlilik, kadın öznelliğini yok ettiği için, benliği güçsüz kılmanın bir yoludur.

Bu açıdan, delilik ve kadın hastalığı arasındaki ilişki, kadınsı bir psişik durumdan çok, cinsiyet rolü klişelerine karşı bir isteksizliktir. Esther'in akıl hastalığı, kişisel ve politik olanın aynı pota altında eridiği ideolojik bir kaygının belirtisidir. Gerçekliğin ürkütücü hissini telafi etmek için sembolik düzendeki bir yetersizliktir. Onu ya o/ya da bu seçimine zorlayan baskıcı ideolojiyle mücadele etmek durumunda kalan kadın kahraman, kaçınılmaz olarak zihinsel çöküşe düşer. Antoinette örneğinde ise, delilik, her şeyden önce, kadın özneyi yok etmek ve tuzağa düşürmek için kullanılan bir soy mirası olarak bağlamsallaştırılır. Kocalar, doktorlar ve erkek kardeşler gibi erkek düşmanların, homojen bir ataerkil baskı sisteminin ajanları olarak kendilerini ortaya koydukları görülmektedir. Bu failler, tıp diskuruyla da ittifak halinde olan ataerkil söylemin temsilcileri oldukları için birbirlerini tamamlarlar. Erkek aklının terapötik hırsı,

delilikten kurtulmanın gerçekten de erkekliği tanıma ve ataerkil ideolojiye boyun eğme eylemi olduğunu ima eder. Bu açıdan, romanların kadın deliliğini ele alışı, psikiyatrinin ve/veya tıbbi diskurun cinsiyetçi politikalarına da işaret eder. Erkek narsisist ilke üzerine kurulan bu söylemlerin elinde olan şey, kadın Ötekinin görünürlüğüdür. Kadının görünürlüğü, ötekinin akıl ve anlam alanında gizlidir.

Kadın deliliği, kadın Ötekine ataerkil matristeki yerini hatırlatmak amacıyla, bir aparat olarak yapılandırılır. Erkek mantığı tarafından tanımlanmayı reddeden, kültürel olarak değersizleştirilmiş bir kadın rolü, kaçınılmaz olarak marjine doğru çekilir. Bu bağlamda, kadın bedeni, politik bir eylem alanı olarak kendisini ön plana çıkarır. Kendisini, erkek logos'un zulmüne ne kadar teslim etmezse, ötekileştirilmişliği o kadar fazla vuku bulur. Deli kadının romanlardaki bilinç akışı, okura patriyarkal ve hegemonik baskılar hakkında bilgi verir. Öyle ki, deli kadının sesi, madalyonun diğer tarafından başka bir anlam alanının sesi olur. Deli kadının sesi, ataerkil bağlamda bastırılmışlığın sesidir.

Bu tez tartışmalarını *The Bell Jar* ve *Wide Sargasso Sea*'ye dayandırmıştır, çünkü her iki roman da deliliğin farklı lineer, uzamsal ve ideolojik alanlarda madalyonun diğer tarafından temsiline bir bakış açısı sunar. Esther ve Antoinette diskura farklı konumlardan girmelerine rağmen, epistemolojik ve ontolojik sistemlerde marjinalleştirilir ve ötekileştirilirler. Ayrıca, patriyarkal diskurun ve cinsiyetçi psikiyatrinin erkek ajanları (bu kişiler *Wide Sargasso Sea*'de Spanish Town doktorları olarak ele alınır) romanlarda benzerlikler taşır. Buddy Willard ve Rochester, birbirinin arka planına karşı folyo karakterler olarak ele alınırlar. Farklı diskurlardan oldukça farklı iki karaktere bakmak, erkekliğin yalnızca değişen mekanizmalara uyum sağladığını, ve kendisini farklı biçimlerde yeniden icat ettiğini göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, hegemonik tiranlık, kendisini egemen ideoloji içinde konumlandırmak için her zaman yeni metodolatriler bulduğu için aynı kalır. Dolayısıyla, ideoloji ve ataerkil metodolatrilerin de birbirleriyle ittifak içinde çalıştıkları kanıtlanmıştır. Aynı şekilde, Viktorya döneminde evlilik, kadın açısından önemli bir mal kaybı anlamına gelirken, 1950'li yıllar Amerikası,

kadının öznelliğini ve özel hayatını tüketerek benzer bir baskı taşımaktadır. Bu anlamda, yöntem değişir ama baskı aynı kalır.

Öte yandan, romanların Kadın Gotik geleneği içindeki konumu, ataerkil olarak bastırılmış olanın geri dönüşünü ele alırken yıkıcı bir eylem alanı açar. Bu bakımdan, bu tez, phallogocentric çalışma mekanizmalarının gizeminden arındırılmasını kuramsallaştırdığı için özellikle önemlidir. Erkek mantığına ayak uydurmayan deli kadının sesi, okura patriyarka tarafından kirletilmemiş alternatif bir öznellik hakkında bilgi verir. Sınırları patriyarka tarafından belirlenmiş bir benlik algısının açmazından çıkmak ancak patriyarkanın semantik ve dilsel anlam alanından ayrılmakla mümkündür. Esther'in yeniden doğuş olarak adlandırdığı iyileşme süreci ile bu düşünce açıklanmıştır. Bu anlamda, "Ben, ben, ben" (*SF* 248) satırlarını yapısökümcü bir düşünce tarzıyla okumak, kadın kahramanın, kendi hikâyesini ancak kendi öznelliğiyle yeniden kurgulayarak, 'sırça fanusun' sınırlarının dışına çıkabileceğini ortaya koyar. Antoinette'in bakış açısından, Gotik eve 'onların karton evleri' olarak atıfta bulunması, bu tarz yapıların ne kadar kolay baltalanabileceğini göstermektedir. Antoinette, fiziki anlamda hapsedilmesinin üstesinden gelememiş olsa da, evi yakma eylemi, ötekileştirilmiş yerinin inşasını altüst eder. Böylece, her iki romanda da kadın kahramanlar phallogocentrism'e uyum sağlamayı reddederler ve hem içeride hem de ötesinde bir konumsallıktan hareket ederler. Ve bu, Kadın Gotik geleneğinin ve deli kadının, telos ve logosu saldırı altında tutarak alternatif bir öznelliği bilgilendirmek için birbiriyle özdeş hatlarda çalıştığı noktadır. *The Bell Jar*'da, 'sırça fanus' kavramının kendisi, kadınların ataerkil bir dünyada yaşamaya zorlandıkları Gotik hapishaneyi temsil eder. Bu Gotik hapishaneler, Antoinette örneğinde Thornfield Hall ve Esther örneğinde 'sırça fanus' olarak temsil edilir. Bu tez, bu Gotik hapishaneleri, kadınların bütünlüklerini korumakla mücadele ederken içinde bulundukları kaygan zeminlerin bir temsil aracı olarak ele alır.

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