

PSYCHOLOGICAL BISEXUALITY AND OTHERNESS IN THE NOVELS
OF ANGELA CARTER, VIRGINIA WOOLF, MARGE PIERCY AND
URSULA LE GUIN: A STUDY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ÉCRITURE
FÉMININE

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyses *The Passion of New Eve* by Angela Carter, *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf, *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy and *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula Le Guin from the perspective of *écriture féminine*. After a thorough discussion of the roots of *écriture féminine*, the theory of the French feminists is put into practice in the analysis of the novels. The study asserts that the concepts of bisexuality, the other and the voice are common elements in novels of *écriture féminine*, thereby the novelists mentioned in the study follow the propositions of Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Lucé Irigaray. The argument of the study is that the use of *écriture féminine* as portrayed with reference to the novels, can be an efficient way in deconstructing the patriarchal system of language. Literature has a significant influence on social life, however women cannot make themselves heard using the language of patriarchy. Therefore an alternative such as *écriture féminine* is essential. This study shows how this alternative can be practiced in various ways and it also creates the opportunity to consider the possibilities of

alternative lives if this kind of thinking is widespread.

Keywords: *Écriture féminine*, bisexuality, other, patriarchal language

ÖZ

ANGELA CARTER, VIRGINIA WOOLF, MARGE PIERCY VE URSULA LE GUIN ROMANLARINDA RUHSAL İKİCİNSLİLİK VE ÖTEKİ: BİR KADIN BEDENİ YAZINI ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu çalışma Angela Carter'dan *The Passion of New Eve*, Virginia Woolf'dan *Orlando*, Marge Piercy'den *Woman on the Edge of Time* ve Ursula Le Guin'den *The Left Hand of Darkness* adlı eserleri kadın bedeni yazını açısından incelemektedir. Kadın bedeni yazınının kökenleri hakkında kapsamlı bir tartışmanın ardından, romanlar incelenirken Fransız feministlerin teorileri pratiğe dökülmektedir. Çalışma ikicinslilik, öteki ve ses kavramlarının kadın bedeni yazınının ortak öğeleri olduğunu, dolayısıyla adı geçen romancıların Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva ve Lucé Irigaray'ın önerilerini uyguladıklarını iddia etmektedir. Çalışmada öne sürülen tez kadın bedeni yazınının romanların incelemelerinde gösterildiği üzere ataerkil dil sistemini yapıbozuma uğratmada etkili bir yöntem olabileceğidir. Edebiyatın toplumsal hayat üzerinde önemli bir etkisi mevcuttur, ancak kadınlar ataerkil yapının dilini kullanarak kendi seslerini duyuramazlar. Dolayısıyla kadın bedeni yazını gibi bir alternatif çok gereklidir. Bu çalışma böyle bir alternatifin farklı biçimlerde nasıl uygulanabileceğini gösterirken, bir yandan da bu tarz bir düşünce sisteminin yaygınlaşması halinde ortaya çıkabilecek muhtemel alternatif yaşam koşullarını irdeleme fırsatı sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın bedeni yazını, ikicinslilik, öteki, ataerkil dil

With the hope of being one, yet many...

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to poststructuralist feminists language is a patriarchal system which gives men the power to subordinate women. Lacan's theories prove that as a person acquires language, s/he becomes a social being and enters the patriarchal culture. Since kinship relations, gender roles, a person's relation to the others, taboos, rules and regulations are first established in language, it is true to say that "language not only reflects power relationships, but helps maintain them" (Bergvall et al 4). Feminists argue that the phallogocentric structure of the patriarchal discourse dominates and controls every institution, which results in the inferior status of women. Following this inferiorisation is another common dissatisfaction of feminists that women are always and everywhere defined as lack or the other. That is why, feminists such as Sandra Gilbert (1986) argue that authorship has always been assigned to men and never to women. However the time came when women gained consciousness and realised that they could write as well. As Showalter (1996) indicates, these women first tried to imitate the male author. Then they set out to write as women but their idea of femininity was limited to the definition imposed on them by the patriarchy. They did not describe the femininity that is actually experienced by women because femininity has always been defined by men. These were various steps toward the present state of feminine writing. In order to claim their rightful status in all areas of life, women needed an alternative to the patriarchal system of language. Women realised that they should deconstruct the given language and create their own system of self-expression. Thus emerged *écriture féminine* –female body writing- which has

been established by the French feminists as a reaction against the patriarchal structure of language.

Écriture féminine aims at deconstructing the phallogentric, hierarchical, heterosexist system in literature. Although a definition of *écriture féminine* is not possible since it defies the very language that one would have to use to define it, it can be said that *écriture féminine* is an alternative discourse which stems from the female body and female sexuality as opposed to the phallus-oriented nature of patriarchal language. It is a return to the presymbolic stage where the infant is not yet introduced to the symbolic order. It is the realm of the semiotic which is at work within the framework of the symbolic. *Écriture féminine* can simply be defined as the language of the woman's/mother's body. It is written through the female body, that is, the writer of *écriture féminine* frees him/herself from the constraints of patriarchy, leaves aside the taboos and social norms and only focuses on his/her own nature. Listening to the voices coming out of his/her body and privileging the natural over the cultural, the writer of *écriture féminine* goes back to the semiotic stage where the law of the father does not yet exist. The experiences of the writer's body and mind in that semiotic stage are then put into words as images, metaphors or poetic rhythms so as to make sense to the reader.

Unlike the patriarchal language *écriture féminine* is open-ended, fluid, circular, repetitious and free from binary oppositions. *Écriture féminine* requires a bisexual mind rather than a purely female or purely male one. In order to employ *écriture féminine* the writer should be aware of and at peace with his/her other which exists within each person's own body and not anywhere else. It is a bisexual language as opposed to the patriarchal language. The term bisexuality is used rather than androgyny or transsexuality because in *écriture féminine* it is the existence of the two sexes in the mind of the writer that is emphasised. It has nothing to do with the sexual life of the characters in the novel, instead the focus is on the psychological bisexuality of the protagonists. Moreover, the term androgyny refers to female and male

characteristics whereas French feminists –especially Cixous- argue that psychological bisexuality of the writer does not mean having a few characteristics from each sex, it means having a whole male and whole female self within one’s psyche. This particular feminist practice is based on poststructuralist linguistics, Derridean deconstruction and psychoanalysis. That is why the theoretical chapter of this study includes the discussion of the influence these theories and analyses had on the French feminists in forming their own theory.

The aim of this study is to discuss four novels in the light of the theory illustrated in the first chapter: Angela Carter’s *The Passion of New Eve*, Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*, Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Ursula LeGuin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*. All of these writers employ *écriture féminine* in their novels and their common point is the use of the body, psychological bisexuality and the other in their language. The main object of the study is to portray the possibility of deconstructing that which is taken for granted to be the *norm* and reconstructing it from a different point of view; in this case the point of view of women. It is close to impossible to change the structure of language; however, it is possible to do something about the content so as to establish a new discourse. Therefore, it is within the scope of this study to discuss such deconstructions and reconstructions in terms of *écriture féminine* in these four particular novels.

The novels can be considered in two groups according to the method the writer employs in presenting the idea of psychological bisexuality and according to the position of the protagonist: In *The Passion of New Eve* and *Orlando* a sex-change is in question. The protagonists go through a first-hand experience of psychological bisexuality and the reader has access to this experience through the first person singular narration. However, in *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *The Left Hand of Darkness* the protagonists are guided into the world of psychological bisexuality by other characters, therefore, the

protagonists and the reader are in a similar, distanced position. That being so, each novel brings a different outlook on the subject with its peculiar approach.

In this study, the novels are discussed, following the theoretical background, under three different headings: psychological bisexuality, the other and the voice. Since the writer of *écriture féminine* has a bisexual mind and thereby both a female and a male self at once, French feminists also argue that this psychological bisexuality breaks the self/other binary. According to this way of thinking a person has his/her other within him/herself. The voice is the rhythms, sounds, songs coming out of the female body and the writer of *écriture féminine* is expected to hear these voices once s/he makes the journey towards the semiotic and once s/he remembers his/her union with the mother's body before the intervention of the father. These concepts, their promotion and deconstruction, form a significant part of *écriture féminine*. The bisexuality of the writer's mind and reaching deep to hear the voice of the mother are ideas that should be spread among writers of *écriture féminine* according to the texts of Hélène Cixous and Lucé Irigaray. The Other is a concept that has to be deconstructed and reconstructed in the afore-mentioned bisexual mind. These concepts are present in the novels of Carter, Woolf, Piercy and Le Guin. Each novel starts with a journey and within the course of the journey the protagonists go through a life-changing experience. The journey in each novel is a quest for wholeness and integrity. Once the protagonists accept their psychological bisexuality, they manage to find the other within themselves and the quest is over. Therefore, it is the intention of this study to take its reader on a similar journey in which they might come across their own other.

In the second chapter of this study, before a detailed discussion of *écriture féminine*, the influence of the poststructuralists –Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan- is explained. The common points between Barthes's text of bliss and *écriture féminine* texts are pointed out. Derrida's theory of deconstruction is discussed since it is an essential means of the main objective of *écriture féminine*. Finally, Lacan's theories on the child's

development are explained for a better understanding of the patriarchal structure of human psychology and of the source of *écriture féminine*. After this discussion of the main influences comes a detailed analysis of *écriture féminine* with reference to Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Lucé Irigaray. The female body and sexuality as the source of women's writing, the plurality and difference of this sexuality and the existence of the source in every human being outside the reach of the symbolic order are discussed in this part. Since the novels are analysed in relation to the concepts of bisexuality, the other and the voice, these concepts are first explained in the second chapter with reference to Freud, Jung, Lacan and the feminist deconstruction of the theories of these psychoanalysts.

The third chapter contains the four novels analysed in terms of psychological bisexuality. Each novel is handled separately, yet parallels are drawn between the novels where necessary. The analysis of bisexuality is limited to the explanation of the concept given in the second chapter. The main source of the analysis is Hélène Cixous's work, although Kristeva and Irigaray's theories also apply in certain cases. In the fourth chapter only *The Left Hand of Darkness* is excluded for reasons explained in the second chapter. The rest of the novels are discussed in relation to the unity of the self and other in *écriture féminine* as an inevitable outcome of psychological bisexuality. Furthermore, the function of the mother in creation, in the achievement of wholeness and plurality is also discussed and compared to the dysfunction of the mother in Lacanian psychoanalysis. To that purpose both Cixous's and Irigaray's theories are employed. The fifth chapter investigates the voice of the mother in three novels excluding *Orlando*. The voice is related to the source of *écriture féminine* which is the semiotic. For the analysis of the semiotic and its outcome Kristeva's theories are significant. Each novel portrays different voices in different ways.

The concluding chapter of the study indicates that each novel gives out a voice which is distinct yet in harmony with the voices of the other novels.

The study displays this orchestra-like function of *écriture féminine* and its requirement of the reader to hear not only the individual instruments but the whole melody. In the analysis of the novels it becomes clear that each novel explores *écriture féminine* and ends with the self-realisation of the protagonist which indicates a new beginning. It becomes clear then, that not only the characters in the novel but the reader and the writer experience a similar awakening as well. Thus one of the most significant objectives of feminism is achieved: consciousness raising. The idea that binaries should be broken and patriarchy should be deconstructed is thus asserted while the outcome of such actions is portrayed in the alternative worlds of the novels.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter is intended to give a theoretical background to the following chapters in which various novels will be analysed as texts of *écriture féminine*. Therefore it is essential first to reveal the steps that led the French feminists to the idea of *écriture féminine*. These steps were established by Roland Barthes in his theories of the text, by Jacques Derrida in his extensive oeuvre and also by Jacques Lacan in his theories of the language and the unconscious. After this introductory part of the chapter come three significant figures –Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Lucé Irigaray- who brought together the theory of *écriture féminine* each through her own independent ideas on sexuality, language, writing and the female body. Finally it is in the scope of this chapter to put the three concepts – bisexuality, otherness and the voice- within a theoretical framework with reference to Freud, Jung and the above-mentioned philosophers before discussing these concepts in relation to the selected novels in the succeeding chapters.

1.1 Influence of the Poststructuralists

1.1.1 Roland Barthes: Texts of Bliss

Despite the fact that Barthes regards the writer as *he*, his theories on the text are closely related to those of *écriture féminine*. Therefore it would be appropriate to begin with his definition of *écriture*. In a Preface to his *Writing Degree Zero* Susan Sontag explains the difficulty of translating *écriture* for the English reader saying that the word *writing* is not an equivalent. She argues

that the meaning of *écriture* for Barthes might be “personal utterance” since he regards it as a “function” and she elaborates on the meaning that Barthes intended as “the ensemble of features of a literary work such as tone, ethos, rhythm of delivery, naturalness of expression, atmosphere of happiness or malaise” (1997: xiii). Barthes claims, just as the French feminists do, that *écriture* “refers the writer back...to the sources” and by sources he means sources of creation (1997: 16). The source in *écriture féminine* is the female body, and Barthes emphasises the relation between language and the body. He argues that “imagery, delivery, vocabulary spring from the body and the past of the writer and gradually become the very reflexes of his art” (1997: 10). He further argues that the secret of style is inside the body of the writer waiting to be remembered (1997: 12). This is again in congruity with the view in *écriture féminine* that women should go back to a previous phase in their body and remember it to be able to write through their bodies.

Barthes defines *écriture* as the writer’s stand in history and thereby as something beyond communication and expression because, he argues, “it is impossible to write without labelling oneself” (1997: 1). This is Barthes’s introduction right before he claims that attempts at “neutral modes of writing” are illusory since all writing has a style (1997: 5). That style naturally evolves through the author’s history and through the history of his/her society (1997: 10). In view of this argument it would be true to say that *écriture féminine* is something beyond a tool of communication and expression, and grants those who employ it a particular stand in history from which to decentre that history itself. Barthes also claims that writing is closed if it is given an Author because in that case it moves towards a final signified due to the limitations assigned to it by the Author-God (1992: 117). This closedness is the pressure of history and tradition on writing, because patriarchy finds writing a threat to the authoritarian regimes. Female literature is exposed to such pressure under the authority of the symbolic order and that is why *écriture féminine* came about in the first place.

Another contribution of Barthes to the outcome of *écriture féminine* is his definition of text in general and his definition of a text of bliss in particular. Barthes defines the text as an open, off-centred, plural, constantly moving, constantly deferring, metonymic overcrossing (1986). Such a definition applies very well to the language of *écriture féminine* as will be seen in the following parts of this chapter.

Barthes excludes the father from the text: “it reads without the inscription of the Father...the restitution of the inter-text paradoxically abolishing any legacy” (1986: 1008). Thus he announces the death of the author which is of great significance for the feminists. The French feminists try to get rid of the concept of an ultimate meaning, the idea of an author-god and his message, thereby any fixed meaning. This is exactly what Barthes is talking about in “The Death of the Author”. There is no hierarchy in the text because the author dies when writing begins: “writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin”(1992: 114). Therefore there is no author-god who originates the meaning of the text. The writer “is born simultaneously with the text” (1992: 116). Both the text and the writer are created through language. Consequently there is no original, fixed meaning in the text. This is because, according to Barthes, a text is plural. It is “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash” (1992: 116). Since there is no author in a text, it cannot be closed with a final signified. Thus the text becomes a play of signifiers. As Barthes points out at the end of “Death”, the death of the Author brings about the birth of the reader and the above-mentioned play with the text is intended for the reader: “the text itself *plays*...and the reader plays twice over...the text...asks of the reader a practical collaboration...wanting the audience to produce the book...produce the text, open it out, *set it going*” (1986: 1009). Through this play the text leads the reader to *jouissance*.

Barthes argues in *The Pleasure of the Text* that in order for the writer to achieve *jouissance* neurosis is required (5-6). This is relevant to *écriture*

féminine in that writing the body in *écriture féminine* calls for the recollection of the presymbolic and people who experience that journey backwards are regarded as neurotics, or psychotics by psychoanalysts. Furthermore, Barthes talks about the rhythm of the texts which is again an aspect of *écriture féminine* related to the rhythms of the body. Barthes claims: “it is the very rhythm of what is read and what is not read that creates the pleasure of the great narratives” (1976: 11).

Barthes talks about two different kinds of texts: text of pleasure and text of bliss. When he makes a distinction between the two as “pleasure can be expressed in words, bliss cannot” and makes a reference to Lacan saying that bliss can only be spoken between the lines, it is quite appropriate to relate his text of bliss to the text of *écriture féminine* as will be much clearer in the next part of this chapter (1976: 21). His definition of the text of bliss can very well be used as the definition of the way texts of *écriture féminine* deconstruct the patriarchal language: “the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts, unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language” (1976: 14). Texts of bliss are writerly texts which are written intransitively so that the reader becomes an active participant in the act of reading. The attention of the writer of a text of bliss is devoted to the language itself instead of the meaning. Thus s/he enables the reader to take part in the production of meaning through intertextual connections and reading between the lines. The non-linear, circular structure of a text of bliss turns it into a sort of puzzle for the reader to solve. Texts of pleasure on the other hand, only give pleasure since they are in conformity with the reader’s values and expectations. That is why Barthes uses the word *jouissance* to describe the effect of a text of bliss since it is “unsettling” and “discomforting”. The reader has to give up the subject position which s/he is used to and become actively engaged with the text. Thus the reader gets rid of his/her repressions and

achieves *jouissance* both in the sense of sexual orgasm and of joy resulting from the play with the text.

Barthes also suggests that the text destroys any discursive category and is all about plurality which are also aspects of *écriture féminine* (1976: 30-31). He further argues that a text cannot be completely clear of the dominant ideology which in the case of *écriture féminine* is the patriarchy. Barthes claims that at least a shadow of this ideology remains (1976: 32). With regard to this we are going to say that the writer of *écriture féminine* will put her preoedipal language within the symbolic frame.

Barthes suggests that the text writes itself and that there is no originality, no fixed meaning. Therefore languages circulate within the text and those languages are “always outside-of-place” (1976: 34), hence have no centre. According to Barthes all this plurality and off-centredness is due to “a circular memory” which he defines as the infinite text (1976: 36). Furthermore he argues that through the *mother tongue* the writer is engaged with the mother’s body and that the act of writing is a play with that body (1976: 37). If the mother tongue he is talking about refers to the semiotic then this is exactly the same idea that will be found in *écriture féminine* later. Even if what Barthes means is the patriarchal language of the father, still his association of writing with the mother’s body is closely related to the theories of the French feminists. Barthes also says that bliss is created through repetition and gives examples like “obsessive rhythms” and “incantatory music” (1976: 41). Such examples will be given in the next part as eruptions of the semiotic in the symbolic. For Barthes repetition provides an annihilation of the transcendental signified because “to repeat excessively is to enter into loss, into the zero of the signified” (1976: 41). When the authority of the signified is loose, bliss can be achieved easily.

To sum up, Barthes’s definition of the text, which writes itself and in the mean time engages the reader by luring her/him into the process of writing, is the kind of text that will be seen in *écriture féminine*. The relation between

the writer and the reader is no longer a subject-object relation. For Barthes the plurality, off-centredness, intertextuality, repetitions and the circularity of the text lead the reader to *jouissance*. The text is liberated from hierarchy through the declaration of the death of the author and thus is decentred. It becomes a free play devoid of an ultimate signified.

1.1.2 Jacques Derrida: Decentring the Phallus

For the purposes of this dissertation the most significant concept of Derridian philosophy is “deconstruction”. It forms the basis of *écriture féminine* since the objective is to deconstruct the patriarchal language. In “Structure, Sign, and Play” Derrida argues that “*there is no sense* in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics” (961). That is why it is essential first to understand the system of the structure and then to deconstruct it from the inside, which is what *écriture féminine* does.

Derrida claims that in the structure of language there is always a centre and the system functions through the constant reversal of this centre. He says that “the whole history of the concept of structure...[is] a series of substitutions of center for center” (1986: 960). This fixed origin of meaning as the centre limits the “freeplay of the structure” (1986: 960). Therefore a text should be decentred because “in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse” (1986: 961). When decentred, the text turns into a free play of signifiers leading to *jouissance* instead of a fixed meaning. In feminist theory the centre is patriarchal and this is what makes it even more important to deconstruct the centre. Furthermore it is this patriarchal nature of the centre that makes the feminists call Derrida’s transcendental signified the *phallus*. Therefore from a feminist point of view it is the phallus that should be taken down. Besides, Derrida claims that for there to be *jouissance* there must be deconstruction (1992: 56).

The existence of binary oppositions is another limitation of the structure of language. Binaries put everything in a hierarchical relation, thus giving them a centre; the main binary being the female/male dichotomy. In a Freudian sense it translates into the one who has the penis and the one who lacks it, thus subordinating the female. Therefore the binaries should be discarded as well in order to decentre the text.

The logocentric structure requires a transcendental signified to render absolute the difference between the signifier and the signified (1976: 20). However in Derridian philosophy this difference means nothing since “fundamentally nothing escapes the movement of the signifier” (1976: 22). This is because everything is a text and therefore the logocentric view that there is no presence prior to textuality is true: “There is nothing outside of the text” (1976: 158). Therefore a text is not a representation but a free play of signifiers in which everything refers to something else.

This constant play requires *différance* which is the term Derrida coined to describe the fact that not only are signifiers defined through their difference from other signifiers but also an ultimate meaning is constantly deferred. According to Derrida the relationship between the signifier and the signified would be arbitrary since every signifier would refer to another signifier endlessly without ever reaching a final signified (1976: 44). This constant play of signifiers is the result of *différance*: each signifier exists through its difference from other signifiers and also through the deferral of the absolute meaning. That way the text is never closed, because meaning is never fixed and finalised by a signified (1987).

Thus deconstructing the given structure Derrida also suggests a non-linear style of writing which is the style of *écriture féminine* since it rejects the linear structure of time and history. Derrida argues that “linearity...[is] the repression of pluri-dimensional symbolic thought” and that a decentred text requires writing “without the line” (1976: 86).

Hence Derrida makes his contribution to *écriture féminine* by breaking the hierarchy in the text and deconstructing its phallogocentric structure. He puts forth the concepts of decentring and *différance* which are fundamental in *écriture féminine* with their use of doing away with the binaries. As Chris Weedon points out: “Deconstruction is useful for feminism in so far as it offers a method of decentring the hierarchical oppositions which underpin gender, race and class oppression and of instigating new, more progressive theories” (160). Thus Derrida makes his contribution to the decentring of the phallus which in Lacanian psychoanalysis stands for the Law of the Father and will be discussed in the following part.

1.1.3 Jacques Lacan: The Real/The Imaginary/The Symbolic

Lacan’s theory of the three stages of development are necessary for the purposes of this dissertation since it is the Real that the writer of *écriture féminine* will be after. However an analysis of the Real will also require an analysis of the rest of the three stages. Therefore it is appropriate to begin at the very beginning by saying that according to Lacan the unconscious is structured like language (1982: 139).

In Lacan’s view language is all about absence. The infant needs a word only in the absence of the thing it desires (1977a: 65). Here Lacan follows Freud’s analysis of the fort/da game. One wouldn’t need language where there wasn’t any absence and such a place exists during the first stage of infancy: the Real. At this stage the baby has needs such as food, comfort and security. All these needs are met by the mother. Since all needs are satisfied, at this stage there is no sense of absence or lack. Everything is complete and because of this fullness there is no need for language in the Real. However, the infant does not have a sense of wholeness yet. It does not realise that the breast which meets the need is a part of a whole. Similarly the infant is not aware of a distinction between its self and the objects that meet its needs. Consequently it does not

distinguish between itself and the mother but regards the two as one. For the infant, there are only needs and their satisfaction. Referring to a case study of Melanie Klein, Lacan explains:

The child's world, Melanie Klein tells us, is manufactured out of a container –this would be the body of the mother- and out of the contents of the body of this mother. In the course of the development of his instinctual relations with this privileged object, the mother, the child is led into instigating a series of relations of imaginary incorporations. He can bite, absorb the body of his mother...In this maternal body, the child expects to encounter a certain number of objects, themselves possessing a unity...(1988: 81)

This is the phase where the infant is in a symbiotic relationship with the mother in a state of unity and satisfaction. Lacan calls the mother's body the "primal universal container", the "primal large whole that is the fantasised image of the mother's body, the entire empire of the primal infantile reality" (1988: 82). There is a sense of security in this reality because all the needs are satisfied. Lacan explains this through Schema R in *Ecrits* calling the mother and the child "the imaginary couple of the mirror stage" (196-197).

Yet this imaginary and satisfactory relation with the mother continues only as long as the infant thinks that the mother has the phallus. This is explained by Lacan as follows:

the child, in his relation to the mother, a relation constituted in analysis not by his vital dependence on her, but by his dependence on her love, that is to say, by the desire for her desire, identifies himself with the imaginary object of this desire in so far as the mother herself symbolizes it in the phallus (1977a: 198).

"Her desire" is the mother's desire for the phallus since according to Lacan she *lacks* it. When the child discovers this lack s/he is separated from the mother and the mother becomes (*m*)*other*. This phase corresponds with the Imaginary where the child is introduced to the idea of an other and where s/he identifies the self with the image in the mirror. It is a misrecognition because an identification with an image is an illusion and that is why Lacan calls it the Imaginary (1977a: 1-7). Thus the infant becomes aware of its own wholeness, becomes aware of the fact that the mother is a separate being which leads to the

idea of 'other'. At that point the infant experiences loss for the first time; loss of the completeness in the Real. After this traumatic encounter with absence, the infant gradually moves from the natural state of the Real to the cultural state of the Symbolic.

Borrowing the idea of free play from Derrida, Lacan argues that language is a chain of signifiers destined for a signified which is unattainable. He argues that it is but an "illusion that the signifier answers to the function of representing the signified" and that it is a "heresy that leads logical positivism in search of the 'meaning of meaning'" (1977a: 150). This unattainable signifier is the phallus and although Lacan insists that it shouldn't be confused with the penis, still it is an unavoidable fact that the phallus is a concept that privileges the father and consequently his penis:

In Lacanian theory...signification is not a process of infinite free play, as it is for Derrida, in which all meaning is temporary and relative. For Lacan, meaning, and the symbolic order as a whole, is fixed in relation to a primary, transcendental signifier which Lacan calls the *phallus*, the signifier of sexual difference, which guarantees the patriarchal structure of the symbolic order (Weedon 51-52).

The child's recognition of the other and the entrance into the Symbolic coincide. In order to become a member of culture, one has to become a speaking subject first. Entrance into the Symbolic stage is entrance into language where the child becomes a speaking subject: subject of the language and subject to the father. This is because the Symbolic is the Name-of-the-Father or the Law-of-the-Father according to Lacan: "It is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law" (1977a: 67). It is the father's law because it is the father who threatens castration against the child's desire to fulfill the mother's lack.

The structure of the Symbolic is based on the Other. First of all, from a Saussurean point of view, each signifier has a meaning because it is *not* what another signifier means. Therefore self/other duality structures language.

Furthermore, the speaking subject 'I' always requires an other, which is 'not me', for the 'I' to exist. This other in language is the centre in Derrida's philosophy. Therefore the Other, in the Symbolic, is a position. The Other, like the centre, is unattainable and as such it creates desire. As mentioned earlier, language is needed when there is an absence. Therefore when the child begins to speak s/he does so out of a desire to fulfill a lack. So when the child becomes aware of the mother's lack, out of a desire to reunite with the mother, s/he feels the need to fulfill that lack. However, due to the threat of castration s/he substitutes that desire for the desire to be the object of the mother's desire for *her* lack. Therefore the child desires the phallus which is the centre in a Derridian sense: "If the desire of the mother *is* the phallus, the child wishes to be the phallus in order to satisfy that desire" (1977a: 289). From that point on the child will be subject to the Symbolic Law. S/he will submit to the rules of language as s/he will submit to the rules of the Law-of-the-Father because: "the law of man has been the law of language since the first words of recognition presided over the first gifts" (1977a: 61).

This symbolic law, according to Lacan, is essentially based on sexual relations:

Indeed, it is essentially on sexual relations –by ordering them according to the law of preferential marriage alliances and forbidden relations– that the first combinatory for the exchanges of women between nominal lineages is based, in order to develop in an exchange of gifts and in an exchange of master-words the fundamental commerce and concrete discourse on which human societies are based (1977a: 142).

Language first puts the child into her/his place in grammar, gives her/him a name and thus establishes for the child the rules of kinship. Therefore the first rule of Law that the child encounters is the prohibition of incest:

This law, then, is revealed clearly enough as identical with an order of language. For without kinship nominations, no power is capable of instituting the order of preferences and taboos that bind and weave the yarn of lineage through succeeding generations (1977a: 66).

From then on all the relationships of the child will be based on such patriarchal and hierarchical orderings. Furthermore Lacan claims that in the nature-culture duality culture can simply be defined as language (1977a: 148). This recalls Derrida's rejection of the binary opposition. In "Structure, Sign, and Play" Derrida gives Lévi-Strauss's example of the prohibition of incest to emphasise the paradox in the nature-culture binary. Derrida discusses the definitions of nature and culture in Lévi-Strauss's *Elementary Structures*. According to that if something is universal it belongs to nature and if it "depends on a system of norms" then it belongs to culture (Derrida 1986: 963). However Lévi-Strauss comes across a scandalous exception: the incest-prohibition. It is scandalous because "the incest-prohibition is universal; in this sense one could call it natural. But it is also a prohibition, a system of norms and interdicts; in this sense one could call it cultural" (Derrida 1986: 963). Thus, Derrida argues that the nature/culture opposition is not reliable which leads him to think that all these binary concepts should be brought into careful consideration. In Lacan it becomes clear that language is a tool of culture in the creation of this unnatural paradox.

From a feminist point of view the patriarchal and hierarchical structure of language is undeniable:

Men, by virtue of their penis, can aspire to a position of power and control within the symbolic order. Women, on the other hand, have no position in the symbolic order, except in relation to men, as mothers, and even the process of mothering is given patriarchal meanings, reduced, in Freud, to an effect of penis envy (Weedon 53).

As will be seen in the section on Lucé Irigaray, both the grammar and the content of language privilege male over female. Woman is always the lack, the *not-male*, and as Lacan points out it all starts with the entrance into language. Thus French feminists base their theories on Lacanian psychoanalysis with the idea that the source of a woman's language is in the presymbolic stage before the interruption of the unity with the maternal body by the Father.

1.2 *Écriture Féminine*

To begin with, there is the technical difficulty so simple, apparently; in reality, so baffling that the very form of the sentence does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman's use.
(Woolf 1990: 37)

The phallogocentric status of language led the feminists to the quest for an alternative. It is not possible for women to express themselves with a language in which they are defined by a lack: "As women enter language, learn to name themselves, so they are put in their place within the social order of meaning... There is masculinity and there is its absence" (Morris 113-114). Putting women thus into a subordinated position is a means of silencing them. Defining the woman as lack means that she is regarded as one who needs to be fulfilled and completed. She is always defined as the weak and incomplete other. Since it is language that puts women into this position and thus serves all other institutions in oppressing her, women have to change that language:

...for women the Symbolic means awareness of the self as a subject constituted through an alien –because logocentric and phallogocentric-discourse, which depends on pre-ordered naming and categorization. Entry into this state thus destines woman to a position in which she is linguistically marginalised, rendered inactive or mute in speech as well as in social signification. The only way to overcome this verbal suppression is to speak through a language not dominated by the phallus (Foster 66-67).

Women have always been defined and positioned by men through men's language. Furthermore, literature as well has been under the *author-ity* of men. Authorship has never been attributed to women because "writing is not an organic growth out of general linguistic capabilities, but a technology; like most technologies it has been monopolized by the powerful" (Cameron 5). That is why those women who dared write in the nineteenth century used male pseudonyms and tried hard to avoid subjects that were too feminine (Cameron 6-7). They had to be *conventional* and being conventional would mean 'having the male point of view'. Therefore they were imitating men with the names and

subject matters. So in appearance the silence had been broken, yet the female experience was still mute.

As Gilbert argues in “Literary Paternity”, Western culture talks about the authors *fathering* texts, thus drawing a parallel between the pen and the penis (488). Therefore in the patriarchal view it is the penis that leaves women out in the literary field. It is right at this point that the feminists remind those fathers of the creative powers of the maternal body which men have been trying to substitute with their phallus. That is why “contemporary women’s writing often ‘displays’ the body in ways which challenge its ‘careful disguise’ by the patriarchal culture” (Sellers 1991: 111).

Women need a language which will move them from their secondary position to a primary one and that is only possible by a decentring of the phallus. Showalter explains briefly how the female experience is suppressed in life, and in so doing provides at the same time a suitable explanation for its suppression in literature: “Puberty, menstruation, sexual initiation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause -the entire female sexual life cycle- constituted a habit of living that had to be concealed” (275). Realizing this difficulty of expressing their problems as women in a male-dominated world with a male-dominated language, women turn to the maternal body. Cixous finds the alternative in the plurality and fluidity of the female body. Kristeva adds the semiotic chora as the source of that body and Irigaray expands it to a change of grammar.

1.2.1 Hélène Cixous: Writing the Body

Cixous argues that women should write their bodies to challenge the phallogocentric structure of patriarchal language which governs all institutions. In “The Newly Born Woman” she gives examples of binary oppositions and points to the fact that all the binaries lead to a single binary of male/female. These binary oppositions establish the hierarchical relations necessary for the

continuation of the phallogocentric system. Cixous argues that this hierarchical organisation subjects everything, including the female, to man (1986b: 64). Therefore the challenge of this system would first require the deconstruction of these binaries. To this end Cixous's article titled "The Laugh of The Medusa" acts as a sort of guideline for women. It is both an invitation to women across the world to create a common language that would surpass the limits of the patriarchal one and at the same time the article is a very good example of the theory she is proposing. As Morris explains:

instead of the feminine as lack and absence, Cixous's writing practice in 'Medusa', embodies abundance, creative extravagance, playful excess, the physical materiality of the female body (121-122).

Cixous claims that it is not important whether the number of women writers is small or not, since their works are "in no way different from male writing, and which either obscures women or reproduces the classic representations of women" (1986a: 311). The reason for this is the absence of a language of their own. In "The Newly Born Woman" she explains this situation arguing about the connection between philosophy and literature: "to the extent that it conveys meaning, literature is under the command of the philosophical" (65). Since philosophy is phallogocentric, so is literature: "Philosophy is constructed on the premise of woman's abasement" (1986b: 65). Therefore women should write as women and not as men. Cixous's solution for such a language is in the female body because it is the body that makes all the difference. Female sexuality is ultimately different than male sexuality. Then women should find that source in their bodies and this is the most important part of the task. At the bottom of all the patriarchal discourses lies human sexuality. Therefore women should handle sexuality to deconstruct the discourse. Since sexuality means body, they should write from their bodies. However women have been estranged from their bodies and from their sexualities throughout history:

By writing her self, woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display –the ailing or dead figure, which so often turns out to be the nasty companion, the cause and location of inhibitions. Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time (1986a: 311-312).

The female body has always been presented as a forbidden, hidden, dark continent which should be protected by women and violated by men: “she has been kept at a distance from herself, she has been made to see (= not-see) woman on the basis of what man wants to see of her, which is to say, almost nothing” (1986b: 68). Women’s bodies have been used, abused, imprisoned and suppressed, therefore by writing their bodies women will take back their bodies, make those bodies their own and make their voices be heard. Furthermore, according Cixous, if women explore their bodies and make their bodies speak this will be their “shattering entry into history, which has always been based *on her suppression*” (1986a: 312). For women the symbolic means silence because, when a woman speaks in the symbolic, male ears would only hear “that which speaks in the masculine” (1986a: 312). Therefore women’s writing would be writing *of women for women*.

Women should find the source of their language in their own bodies and write about their femininity because they have been ignored for a very long time. Women should write:

about their sexuality, that is, its infinite and mobile complexity, about their eroticization, sudden turn-ons of a certain miniscule-immense area of their bodies; not about destiny, but about the adventure of such and such a drive, about trips, crossings, trudges, abrupt and gradual awakenings, discoveries of a zone at one time timorous and soon to be forthright. A woman’s body, with its thousand and one thresholds of ardor -once, by smashing yokes and censors, she lets it articulate the profusion of meanings that run through it in every direction- will make the old single-grooved mother tongue reverberate with more than one language (1986a: 315).

Women should tell men that female castration is a lie and that women do not lack anything. Patriarchal discourse has made women believe that their bodies are incomplete. It has subjected women’s bodies to the masculine so as to make

women repress their femininity. Cixous tries to tell women in her article that all this is a lie. Women do not lack anything. They do not need to be fulfilled. A woman's body cannot be one half of anything because it is not one but many in the first place. The patriarchal system has created the illusion that women's bodies do not belong to women themselves. Through a network of patriarchal institutions women have been made to believe that their bodies are the property of the male gaze and they have been taught to feel disgusted by and afraid of their bodies (1986b: 68). As a consequence women handed their body over to men:

And they told her there was a place she had better not go. And this place is guarded by men. And a law emanates from this place with *her* body for its locus. They told her that inside her law was black, growing darker and darker. And a doorkeeper preached prudence to her, because beyond it was even worse.

And she doesn't enter her body; she is not going to confirm the worst, it is not even properly hers. She puts it in the hands of the doorkeeper (1986b: 103).

Cixous tells these women to claim their bodies back through writing. The female body is open-ended, it has no boundaries and it is not oriented around a single organ:

Her libido is cosmic, just as her unconscious is worldwide. Her writing can only keep going, without ever inscribing or discerning contours...she goes and passes into infinity...She lets the other language speak - the language of 1,000 tongues which knows neither enclosure nor death (1986a: 317).

Texts written with this language, through women's bodies will be open-ended as well. Since there is no closure, feminine texts will be about the beginning and they will just keep continuing (2000: 287).

Feminine texts would fly (1986a: 316). Here Cixous uses the pun on the French verb "voler" which means both to fly and to steal. Therefore women would fly as birds getting away from the Law and also they would steal their own bodies back from the domination of men. They would steal it, reclaim it and freeing it from all the suppressions make it fly.

Cixous also points at the deconstructive and thereby revolutionary aspects of *écriture féminine* where she explains its outcome as *jouissance*. She argues that a text coming out of a woman's body is:

volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there's no other way. There's no room for her if she's not a he. If she's a her-she, it's in order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the 'truth' with laughter (1986a: 316).

Therefore women should write their bodies not as these bodies are culturally represented but as exactly the way they themselves experience their bodies. They should write their bodies because:

The body is linked to the unconscious. It is not separated from the soul. It is dreamed and spoken. It produces signs. When one speaks, or writes, or sings, one does so from the body. The body feels and expresses joy, anxiety, suffering and sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure is the least constrained, the least bridled manifestation of the body. 'Feminine' sexual pleasure (*la jouissance féminine*) is overflowing, undecided, decentralised and not caught up in the masculine castration scene, and is not threatened by impotency. The body lets desires pass through and this desire creates images, fantasies and figures. Feminine desire is flowing, so we often find images of the spring, of liquid, of water (Cornell 39).

Cixous, thus, invites women to create a new world where the Law of the Father does not count, a world where there are no binaries or hierarchies but only unity and harmony. It is not a utopia because such a place existed once in everyone's life: in the presymbolic period. Starting from Lacan's triad, Cixous finds the source of *écriture féminine* in that phase where the child is one with the m/other. For that reason she believes that women are closer to writing since they are closer to the maternal body, having one themselves. Therefore women should get in touch with their presymbolic in order to write their feminine texts. More about Cixous's view on this will be discussed in the third part of this chapter. Now it is time to turn to Kristeva for a thorough explanation of this presymbolic experience of the body.

1.2.2 Julia Kristeva: Semiotic Chora

Kristeva calls the stage preceding the entrance into language *the semiotic*. She argues that a link between the arbitrary relation of signifier and signified, and certain metaphors and metonymies can be found in the semiotic, especially in poetry (1984: 22). The semiotic is a part of the signifying process (24). Therefore it coexists with *the symbolic*. What Kristeva claims, as Cixous does, is that although that phase of psychological development is long gone, the semiotic is still there in people's memories and in the memories of their bodies.

Kristeva explains the functioning of the semiotic as the *heterogeneousness* to meaning and signification within poetic language:

This *heterogeneousness*, detected genetically in the first echolalias of infants as rhythms and intonations anterior to the first phonemes, morphemes, lexemes, and sentences; this heterogeneousness, which is later reactivated as rhythms, intonations, glossolalias in psychotic discourse, serving as ultimate support of the speaking subject threatened by the collapse of the signifying function; this heterogeneousness to signification operated through, despite, and in excess of it and produces in poetic language 'musical' but also nonsense effects that destroy not only accepted beliefs and significations, but, in radical experiments, syntax itself...The notion of *heterogeneity* is indispensable, for though articulate, precise, organized, and complying with constraints and rules, this signifying disposition is not that of meaning or signification: no sign, no predication, no signified object and therefore no operating consciousness of a transcendental ego. We shall call this disposition *semiotic* (1980: 133).

According to Kristeva the source of the semiotic is the *chora* which is a term she borrows from Plato's *Timaeus*. While describing the universe in relation to the human body, Plato talks about "a *receptacle* of all becoming" (38). It is a kind of space which Plato compares to a mother since the mother receives the source from the father to create their offspring. This space, according to Plato, is "an invisible and characterless sort of thing, one that receives all things and shares in a most perplexing way in what is intelligible, a thing extremely difficult to comprehend" (40). Plato further argues that this space cannot be

destroyed and it always exists just as the semiotic is never destroyed but is always there to be remembered (41). Since the chora is inside the mother's body where she receives, it is associated with a woman's womb and that is why French feminists who advocate a female language issuing from the chora liken the act of writing to childbirth. Similarly, Kristeva argues that childbirth brings a woman closer to the semiotic by establishing for her "a reunion...with the body of *her* mother" (1980: 239). That is why, as Cixous agrees, women are closer to the semiotic than men¹. Women have the potential to experience the primal regression "through which a woman is simultaneously closer to her instinctual memory, more open to her own psychosis, and consequently, more negatory of the social, symbolic bond" (Kristeva 1980: 239).

Kristeva is interested in the effects of the semiotic chora on the signifying process. The semiotic and the symbolic are the two inseparable modalities of the signifying process. However the two are completely different in terms of their source and content: "the semiotic *chora* is preOedipal, it is linked to the mother, whereas the symbolic, as we know, is dominated by the Law of the Father" (Moi 164-165). The semiotic is not a language in the symbolic sense; it is preverbal (Kristeva 1984: 26-27). In Kristeva's work only the function of the semiotic as a contributor to the signifiante is mentioned and according to Kristeva this contribution helps understand the arbitrariness of the signifier-signified relation:

this signifying disposition is not that of meaning or signification: no sign, no predication, no signified object and therefore no operating consciousness of a transcendental ego. We shall call this disposition *semiotic* (1980: 133).

Therefore the semiotic is not a grammatical language but a presymbolic state which goes on to function together with the symbolic even after the acquisition of language.

¹ However, Cixous does not refer explicitly to the semiotic. What she means is that women are closer to the body which is the source of writing and therefore they have easier access to writing. That source in the body is the semiotic in Kristevan terms. See "The Laugh of the Medusa" p. 316 and "The Newly Born Woman" pp. 85-86.

Since the semiotic refers to the preverbal stage, it is the stage where there is no father, no law and no phallus. There is no language because nothing is absent in the semiotic: “a preverbal functional state that governs the connections between the body, objects and the protagonists of family structure” (1984: 27). The child is one with the maternal body and all its needs are met. Hence no lack. Everyone is whole and content: “The *chora* is a modality of signifi-ance in which the linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object and as the distinction between real and symbolic” (1984: 26). Thus the child is still connected to the mother’s body in the semiotic via the *chora*. Kristeva defines the semiotic as “a joy without words” because the union with the mother, the absence of others and the feeling of wholeness produce laughter (1980: 283). However “after the acquisition of language, the child’s laughter is one of a past event” (1980: 286). Therefore the entrance of the child to the symbolic law means separation from the mother as well as loss of touch with the semiotic *chora*:

Once the subject has entered into the Symbolic Order, the *chora* will be more or less successfully repressed and can be perceived only as pulsional *pressure* on symbolic language: as contradictions, meaninglessness, disruption, silences and absences in the symbolic language. The *chora* is a rhythmic pulsion rather than a new language (Moi 162).

As the child is introduced to the rules of language, s/he is introduced to the rules of the father and from then on s/he has to repress the semiotic in order to abide by these rules: “Language as symbolic function constitutes itself at the cost of repressing instinctual drive and continuous relation to the mother” (1980: 136).

Although a person loses touch with the semiotic in the symbolic stage, as Plato argues the *chora* is always there. Therefore it is not surprising that the semiotic would come back to the surface every now and then as eruptions of the symbolic. Kristeva relates *chora* to the place where the child’s preverbal semiotic operations come from in the form of rhythms and intonations (1980: 134). However she agrees that it cannot be posited or defined:

...the *chora*, as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality. Our discourse -all discourse-moves with and against the *chora* in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and refuses it. Although the *chora* can be designated and regulated, it can never be definitively posited: as a result, one can situate the *chora* and, if necessary, lend it a topology, but one can never give it axiomatic form (1984: 26).

Kristeva regards the *chora* as a rhythmic space and thus associates the semiotic with poetic language. As it is obvious in the quotation above, Kristeva believes that the semiotic and the symbolic coexist though the former is under the constraint of the latter. However, in poetry the semiotic is not repressed:

...in any poetic language, not only do the rhythmic constraints, for example, perform an organizing function that could go so far as to violate certain grammatical rules of a national language and often neglect the importance of an ideator message, but in recent texts, these semiotic constraints (rhythm, phonic, vocalic timbres in Symbolist work, but also graphic disposition on the page) are accompanied by nonrecoverable syntactic elisions (1980: 134).

Yet this does not eliminate the symbolic altogether. Since semiotic by itself would not mean anything it can only come out as eruptions of the symbolic. Kristeva claims that these eruptions are necessary for creation and that in literature it is a means of creating music as well:

Whether in the realm of metalanguage or literature, what remodels the symbolic order is always the influx of the semiotic. This is particularly evident in poetic language since, for there to be a transgression of the symbolic, there must be an irruption of the drives in the universal signifying order (1984: 62).

Therefore the symbolic is language that is used for communication and the semiotic is a process which includes the drives of the body and the preoedipal unity with the mother.

As Kristeva portrays in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, the dwelling place of metaphor and metonymy is the semiotic thereby forming the “the semiotic rhythm within language” (29). Kristeva defines the symbolic as socially constructed linguistic categories based on sexual differences and the semiotic as genetic programmings including “the primary processes such as displacement and condensation, absorption and repulsion, rejection and stasis,

all of which function as innate preconditions, 'memorizable' by the species, for language acquisition" (1984: 29). Consequently she divides the text into two categories: the genotext and the phenotext (1984: 86-87). The former is the kind of text that includes the semiotic processes, therefore the text of *écriture féminine*, and the latter is the text of patriarchal language.

The genotext, according to Kristeva, has the potential to lead the reader to *jouissance* by eliminating the dominating sense of the symbolic through nonsense and thus causing laughter:

...the aim of this practice, which reaches us as a language, is, through the signification of the nevertheless transmitted message, not only to impose a music, a rhythm -that is, a polyphony- but also to wipe out sense through nonsense and laughter. This is a difficult operation that obliges the reader not so much to combine significations as to shatter his own judging consciousness in order to grant passage through it to this rhythmic derive constituted by repression and, once filtered by language and its meaning, experienced as *jouissance* (1980: 142).

Thus a parallel is drawn between Cixous's definition of the texts that should be written by women and Kristeva's genotext which combines the symbolic with the semiotic. Furthermore, Kristeva's reference to the obligations of the reader calls to mind Sissel Lie's realisation of her own role as a reader of *écriture féminine*:

I had to give something of myself in the reading, had to read with my head and my body, to mobilise feeling and memories in order to meet her [Cixous's] texts, I could understand what she says and let it change me (196).

Thus the reader has to open up her/his body to the semiotic as well because only then can s/he leave aside the impositions of the symbolic and participate in the whole process.

The language of literature, therefore, is the language that comes from the maternal body (the semiotic chora) within a symbolic framework: "At the intersection of sign and rhythm, of representation and light, of the symbolic and the semiotic, the artist speaks from a place where she is not, where she knows not" (Kristeva 1980: 242). However Kristeva does not ascribe the use of the semiotic to women and thus does not acknowledge the existence of *écriture*

féminine even though she has contributed to the constitution of the theory. Kristeva rather emphasises the fact that the semiotic can be employed by anyone regardless of their sex (Moi 163-164). This point will be further discussed in the part called ‘bisexuality’, after an analysis of Irigaray’s views on the plurality of female sexuality.

1.2.3 Lucé Irigaray: Two Lips

Only a mother breathes for her child.
Once born, we all must, should,
breathe for ourselves.

(Irigaray 1996: 121)

Irigaray emphasises the difference between female and male sexuality because she believes that in order to create their own language women should first know their own bodies. For centuries women have been taking for granted the definitions of their sexualities from a masculine point of view. However these definitions do not tell the whole truth. Like Cixous, Irigaray argues that women should claim back their bodies and only then can they make a difference.

In the patriarchal tradition women have always been defined in relation to men who stood for the norm. In many languages femininity is identified with the other of the masculine, with the negative or the lack (Irigaray 1990: 81). This is because the rules of these languages are man-made. Irigaray argues that although languages are claimed to be universal, they are not because they are “produced by men only” (1990: 80). This situation gives power to men and as long as this is the case “woman can only appear as a lack or negative” (1990: 81). This ideology, which ascribes universality to the masculine, dominates all the discourses including psychoanalysis. Hence Irigaray’s criticism of Lacan’s work: since the universal is the masculine, how can a definition of the unconscious in universal terms be valid for women? If this is the case then the feminine element is censored in the constitution of the unconscious (1990: 89).

In the patriarchal ideology men are in possession of the phallus in all senses of the word and women desire it because they don't have it. Thus ownership, in a Marxist sense, is assigned to man whereas the "woman is traditionally a use-value for man, an exchange value among men; in other words, a commodity" (1985b: 31). That is why Irigaray defines the status of women in patriarchal societies as "subjugated to love and reproduction" striving to fulfill their duties as wife and mother, lost in "self-sacrifice" instead of realizing their own identities (1996: 22-26). Therefore women should first get their bodies back from men and begin to know their sexuality as it truly is.

In the phallographic world it's always been men who spoke for women. In that respect Irigaray criticises Lacan's theoretical work:

It is up to him to describe what is the pleasure of the woman, not a woman! If a woman tries to express her pleasure, which, obviously, challenges his male point of view- he excludes her, because she upsets his system...only men may say what female pleasure consists of. Women are not allowed to speak, otherwise they challenge the monopoly of discourse and of theory exerted by men (1990: 91).

Thus for the sake of the preservation of the prevailing system which gives men all the power and privilege, men silence women by hiding from them the true nature of their sexuality. Irigaray gives the example of schizophrenia and talks about the difference between the male and female patients' methods of handling this state. According to her research results male patients use language as a medium to express their delirium whereas female patients remain within their bodies: "women do not manage to articulate their madness: they suffer it directly in their body, without being able to transpose it in some different mode". Furthermore, Irigaray draws a parallel with those women and the rest of the society: "Nearly all women are in some state of madness: shut up in their bodies, in their silence and their 'home'" (1990: 94). This is because they have lost touch with the semiotic. They are strangers to their own bodies and although they feel the need to go back to the maternal chora, they are too distant from it.

Thus women's sexuality is defined via male sexuality which makes it easier for men to stay in power. However Irigaray wants to put an end to this. First of all she advocates difference. She argues against the idea of *oneness* because accepting oneness would mean to her accepting man's dream of being that universal one. Irigaray believes that no human being can experience the wholeness of nature since "the natural is at least two: male and female" (1996: 35). She argues that any idea of wholeness would eventually be attributed to man whereas "he should rather understand that he represents only half of humanity" (1996: 41). Men and women are different: "women who are simply 'equal' to men would be 'like them', and therefore not women" (1990: 87). Irigaray wants women to learn that they have a different sexuality which does not in any way place them in a hierarchical position. Unlike the needy representation of woman in patriarchal discourse, female sexuality is more self-sufficient than male sexuality:

In order to touch himself, man needs an instrument: his hand, a woman's body, language...And this self-caressing requires at least a minimum activity. As for woman, she touches herself in and of herself without any need for mediation, and before there is any way to distinguish activity from passivity. Woman 'touches herself' all the time, and moreover no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact. Thus, within herself, she is already two- but not divisible into one(s)- that caress each other (1985b: 24).

Such a different sexuality requires a different language to express itself. Women cannot use a man-made language when there is such a big difference in their experiences. Women cannot use a language which defines them as the other, the negative, the lack to express their plurality, multiplicity, fluidity and openness:

If we keep on speaking sameness, if we speak to each other as men have been doing for centuries, as we have been taught to speak, we'll miss each other, fail ourselves. Again...Words will pass our bodies, above our heads. They'll vanish, and we'll be lost. Far off, up high. Absent from ourselves: we'll be spoken machines, speaking machines. Enveloped in proper skins, but not our own (1985b: 205).

That is why women have to invent a language of their own which will be a means of expression for their own, different, plural sexuality, not only for the sake of expressing but also for making men know *our body*. Like woman's sexuality her language should also be plural. When Irigaray describes the sexuality of woman as two lips in constant embrace, she also describes her language. Female language is also in touch with her body; the unity of the lips is present in the language as well because there is no lack in her language. The subject as *one* is decentred and the self is united with all its others: "when one starts from the 'two lips' of the female sex, the dominant discourse finds itself baffled: there can no longer be a unity in the subject, for instance. There will always therefore be a plurality in feminine language" (1990: 83). As Cixous argues in "The Laugh of the Medusa", Irigaray also tells women to embrace the multiplicity of their sexuality. (Irigaray 1985b: 210).

Without any lack or hole, expressing her plurality, female language is always open. Since there is no centre, there is no end to anything: "we are never finished. If our pleasure consists in moving, being moved, endlessly. Always in motion: openness is never spent nor sated" (1985b: 210). Hence the open-endedness in writing which Cixous talks about.

Another aspect of the female language would be its fluidity. Although it is essential in the female body, solidity of the matter has been privileged over fluidity. Irigaray points this out with a subtle reference: "Between us, 'hardness' isn't necessary. We know the contours of our bodies well enough to love fluidity" (1985b: 215). She also refers to the underestimation of fluidity with reference to male sexuality when she asks why the fluidity of the sperm is not given enough emphasis and instead of that its solid outcome –children– are emphasised (1990: 90).

Therefore female language should emphasise all these aspects of female sexuality: plurality, openness, fluidity, multiplicity. Second, it should deconstruct the grammatical structure of the patriarchal language. Female language should transcend the logic which situates women in the position of a

lack. Therefore subject-object relations should be reconsidered. Irigaray describes such a female language as follows, first mentioning the difficulty of making a description of it:

First of all I would say it has nothing to do with the syntax which we have used for centuries, namely, that constructed according to the following organization: subject, predicate, or; subject, verb, object. For female sexuality is not unifiable, it cannot be subsumed under the concept of subject. Which brings into question all the syntactical norms (1990: 82).

Hence Irigaray's *I Love To You* instead of 'I love you'. She insists that grammar should be changed because as long as the subject-object positions remain the same, women will always be the object, the other, the lack:

But how can I put 'I love you' differently? I love you, my indifferent one? That still means yielding to their language. They've left us only lacks, deficiencies, to designate ourselves. They've left us their negative(s). We ought to be-that's already going too far-indifferent (1985b: 207).

Thus she uses the *to* in her sentence to keep her language from reducing the other to a direct object and to keep her language from giving either party a privileged position in the communication. She thus rejects possession and creates two subjects instead of a dominant *one*:

I love to you thus means: I do not take you for a direct object, nor for an indirect object by revolving around you. It is, rather, around myself that I have to revolve in order to maintain the *to you* thanks to the return to me (1996: 110).

Only if women change the language in this way will there be communication between them.

Communication between women is another important issue that has to be handled in order to make a real difference in the discourse. Because of the exclusion of women from the patriarchal discourse, the world lacks a female culture. Women have always been a property and it has always been men who owned the properties and who put the rules. This is why we live in "a civilization without any female philosophy or linguistics, any female religion or politics. All of these have been set up in accordance with a male subject" (1996: 44). Therefore women should use their female language to speak to one

another and thus find their identities somewhere other than just motherhood or marriage: “We must, in short, define a culture of the female” (1996: 47).

Irigaray gives her research results in *I Love To You* which show that women’s desire to communicate is oriented toward men. According to her analyses “men use *I*, women *you/the other*” (65). Women rather use “verbs expressing a situation of indirect communication” (81). When the addressee of the sentence is ambiguous, a majority of the women tend to choose the masculine. This is related to the *universalisation* of the masculine in patriarchal discourse. Man refers to the whole of humanity and this powerful status gives him transcendence, however such a transcendence is denied to the feminine (1996: 67). Thus in Irigaray’s findings women address themselves particularly to a he and men are, rather, interested in the possession of an object (1996: 95). Therefore women should make their own language to be able to communicate as themselves without revolving around a *he*.

Irigaray also points out the fact that, unlike the difference between man and woman, the language which exists between them is modifiable (1996: 117-118). That is why she invites women to believe in the possibility of change. Although Irigaray’s theory of a different grammar is deemed impossible by some critics in terms of a total social change, *écriture féminine* does not claim to change the whole system anyway and neither does Irigaray (Cameron 11). Her intention is “to *undo* the effects of phallogocentric discourse simply by *overdoing* them” (Moi 140). Thus she agrees with Kristeva’s claim that female language from the chora should be put within a symbolic framework to make it comprehensible. After all, as Derrida also argues, there is no way out of the notions of logocentrism when it comes to the conceiving of the world (1976: 13).

1.3 Bisexuality of the Text

Even though there are a great variety of words to define different kinds of sexualities only two of them -female and male- are used for the categorisation of the human sex. The rest are considered perversions:

English also includes *tomboy, sissy, bisexual, gay, lesbian, hermaphrodite, androgyne, transvestite, transsexual, transgendered individual*, etc. The negative connotations often associated with these words suggest that although such a multiplicity exists, these are aberrations and departures from a basic dichotomy: *female* and *male*. The simple belief in 'only two' is not an experiential given but a normative social construction (Bing and Bergvall 2).

Henry Havelock Ellis in his studies on psychology finds out that the basis of human nature is actually bisexual. Therefore, he suggests, homosexuality is not in fact a perversion but one of the sexual categories. However within the duality of the patriarchal system such a classification would create discomfort since it would destroy the binary, let alone the discomfort resulting from "uncertainty and doubt" (Ellis 18-19).

As mentioned earlier, *écriture féminine* tries to deconstruct such binary oppositions which are the means of establishing hierarchical relations. This means the elimination of the main binary: female-male. *Écriture féminine* achieves this through a theory of bisexuality. As Irigaray suggests the difference between two sexes should be emphasised, and Cixous furthers this argument by saying that these differences can be and in fact *are* united in one body. Binary oppositions are present everywhere, however this does not mean we have to separate them and regard them as hierarchical concepts, one dominating the other. Each binary opposition has the potential to unite in a whole. Just as good and evil are united in a human being or black and white in gray, similarly male and female can be united in bisexuality. It is the norms of the patriarchal system that keep binaries apart in order to sustain the prevailing power relations.

French feminists get the idea of a bisexual human nature from Freud and also from his disciple Jung. That is why first the theories of these two psychoanalysts will be discussed in this part of the chapter. Although Freud and Jung give the idea of an innate bisexuality, the feminists agree with them only to a certain point after which they form their own theory. Contributions to this theory of bisexuality in *écriture féminine* come from Cixous especially and also from Kristeva.

1.3.1 Freud's Theory of Bisexuality

Freud's main contribution to *écriture féminine* is his realisation that human beings are bisexual by nature. He accepts the fact that "a certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism occurs normally. In every normal male or female individual, traces are found of the apparatus of the opposite sex" (1971: 28). He further argues that during the course of evolution this bisexual nature has turned into a unisexual one and left only a few traces of the other sex. However Freud uses this theory to explain *inversion*, which is the term he attributes to homosexuality. He calls homosexuals "psychosexual hermaphrodites" with the idea that some people retain this former biological bisexuality on a mental level (1971: 23). He is against an idea of pure femininity or pure masculinity:

all human individuals, as a result of their bisexual disposition and of cross-inheritance, combine in themselves both masculine and feminine characteristics, so that pure masculinity and femininity remain theoretical constructions of uncertain content (1986a: 258).

He suggests that mentally every human being carries traces of both sexes and he calls this "psychological bisexuality" (1986b: 188). He embraces this idea because it gives him a valid explanation for the cause of homosexuality. That is why he breaks apart from feminist theory at this point. Freud considers homosexuality a mental disease which has to be treated. He treats this psychological bisexuality as a problem to be solved because it does not fit into

the categories that are established by the patriarchal discourse which takes the straight male as the norm:

The conclusion now presents itself to us that there is indeed something innate lying behind the perversions but that it is something innate in *everyone*, though as a disposition it may vary in its intensity and may be increased by the influences of actual life (1971: 64).

Freud gives three labels to human sexuality: *perversion* is the label for those who combine the two sexes in one body, *neurosis* is for those who reach back to the maternal chora to find the real there and finally *a normal sexual life* for those who abide by the rules of the Law. Freud, or any other person under the rule of patriarchy, does not accept the possibility that a biological distinction between two sexes does not necessarily require a psychological distinction. At this point the feminists argue that one may accept the difference of the bodies yet may continue to experience both sexes inside psychologically without being labeled an *invert* or a *pervert*. The problem here is in the definition of *normal* which is based on the patriarchal hierarchies. Patriarchy instantly discards those who are different/other than the *normal*.

Although Freud finds some answers to human nature in the theory of bisexuality, he sees it as a problem which is solved in *normal* human beings through the process of the Oedipus complex. Thus because of the fear of castration the boy represses his feminine side and becomes a man, and the girl due to her so-called penis-envy represses her masculine side to become a woman and compete with her mother to attract the father. However, Freud tells us that this experience of the Oedipus complex might in some cases have a reverse effect:

even in boys the Oedipus complex has a double orientation, active and passive, in accordance with their bisexual constitution; a boy also wants to take his *mother's* place as the love-object of his *father*- a fact which we describe as the feminine attitude (1986a: 250).

Thus if the boy's feminine side is stronger than the masculine side, the fear of castration will strengthen the feminine and bring him closer to his mother while on the other hand establishing fear and hatred against the father (1986b: 190).

As for the girl, she goes through a similar process according to Freud. He claims that penis-envy might lead girls to “the masculinity complex of women” in which a girl identifies being a man with possessing a penis and refusing “the fact of being castrated”, convinces herself that she has a penis (1986a: 253). Thus she obtains a masculine attitude and behaves like a man as in the definition of a patriarchal man who is strong, powerful and active. As a result effeminate men and masculine women are grown.

Naturally, as a feminist it is impossible to agree with Freud’s explanations since they are all based on the misconception of man having the phallus and woman being the lack. A feminist would only agree with Freud that human beings come to life as bisexual creatures. Bisexuality here refers to psychological bisexuality. Although people cannot choose their biological sex, yet they are *naturally* free to choose their mental sex. Or better still, as a writer of *écriture féminine* would do, they can choose to retain both sexes in one body. It is not nature but society that makes people choose only one of them in accordance with their sexual organs. People are taught by the institutions of patriarchy to be pure woman or pure men. Those who are neither are treated as cast outs or perverts as in Freud’s arguments. This is because patriarchy cannot put these people in either category. In order to be human one has to conform to the definitions made by the symbolic law. However what *écriture féminine* desires is to break free of those male-centred definitions.

1.3.2 Jung’s Anima/Animus

As the anima produces *moods*,
so the animus produces *opinions*
(Jung 1992: 95).

Jung too finds bisexuality in human nature but again he analyses it from a totally phallogentric point of view. His acceptance of the existence of the opposite sex in every person is a view with which feminists would agree. However, like Freud, Jung suggests that this opposite sex remains hidden in the

unconscious. This part of his argument clashes with the feminist theory. Furthermore, he uses the two terms anima and animus in quite a sexist manner, to establish the roles of the female and the male. These concepts are used to attribute the stronger aspects of a female to her *masculinity* and consequently to attribute the weaker aspects of a male to his *femininity*.

To begin with, Jung agrees with Freud that all human beings have both masculine and feminine elements in their nature. However these remain in the background and should remain there: “If one lives out the opposite sex in oneself one is living in one’s background, and one’s real individuality suffers. A man should live as a man and a woman as a woman” (1992: 60). Here Jung refers to the socially constructed gender roles and argues that everyone should play the *appropriate* role. He defines anima as the soul or psyche which “has a feminine character [and] compensates the masculine consciousness” (1992: 60). Like Freud, Jung makes a comment on the masculinisation of woman giving the example of a woman taking up a masculine profession:

...the mental masculinization of the woman has unwelcome results. She may perhaps be a good comrade to a man without having any access to his feelings. The reason is that her animus (that is, her masculine rationalism, assuredly not true reasonableness!) has stopped up the approaches to her own feeling. She may even become frigid, as a defence against the masculine type of sexuality that corresponds to her masculine type of mind. Or, if the defence-reaction is not successful, she develops, instead of the receptive sexuality of woman, an aggressive, urgent form of sexuality that is more characteristic of a man (1992: 61).

Besides attributing rationalism to the masculine in woman, Jung argues that if a woman brings forward her masculine side, she will lose touch with her feelings, with her sexuality and thus become a frigid comrade to man. Because she will no longer fit the role that society has constructed for her. He also believes that such masculinisation might lead her to homosexuality. Just as Freud, Jung can define a foregrounded psychological bisexuality only as perversion:

A woman possessed by the animus is always in danger of losing her femininity, her adapted feminine persona, just as a man in like circumstances runs the risk of effeminacy. These psychic changes of sex are due entirely to the fact that a function which belongs inside has been turned outside. The reason for this *perversion* is clearly the failure to give adequate recognition to an inner world which stands autonomously opposed to the outer world, and makes just as serious demands on our capacity for adaptation (1992: 98).

His phallogentric world view keeps Jung from admitting that the positive qualities of a woman are her own as well as her negative qualities. He rather attributes intelligence, reason and strength to her *animus*, thereby placing the woman in a status inferior to man. Thus even a concept like bisexuality is turned into a binary. He explains the anima of man with such terms like “needful feminine insight”, weakness and stupidity even: “the strong man must somewhere be weak, somewhere the clever man must be stupid, otherwise he is too good to be true and falls back on pose and bluff” (1992: 69). Thus the male is exalted whereas the female is degraded. The woman is defined as the “negation” of this *too good to be true* man: “Her love wants the whole man—not mere masculinity as such but also its negation...A man who is loved in this way cannot escape his *inferior side*” (1992: 69 my emphasis). Through such sexist definitions Jung contributes to the sustainance of the patriarchal gender roles. He gives them a legacy paradoxically using the Law-of-the-Father.

Jung believes that a man’s choice of partner depends on his anima: “a man, in his love-choice, is strongly tempted to win the woman who best corresponds to his own unconscious femininity” (1992: 78). Thus he gives priority to the female in the man’s unconscious rather than to the woman *per se*. Furthermore, he claims that men have an apprehension of the nature of woman due to “an inherited collective image of woman” which exists in their unconscious (1992: 79). However, that is a misapprehension since it only employs the male point of view which is obvious in the following description of the anima:

The persona, the ideal picture of a man as he should be, is inwardly compensated by feminine weakness, and as the individual outwardly plays the strong man, so he becomes inwardly a woman, i.e., the anima, for it is the anima that reacts to the persona (1992: 83-84).

Besides providing for the man an escape from his social mask, the anima is also a tool of projection for the unconscious. Thus it is projected first to the primal soul-image of the mother and then to the wife. Jung uses this explanation for man's behaviour subsequent to marriage:

the anima, in the form of the mother-imago, is transferred to the wife; and the man, as soon as he marries, becomes childish, sentimental, dependent, and subservient, or else truculent, tyrannical, hypersensitive, always thinking about the prestige of his superior masculinity (1992: 86).

Thus Jung not only attributes all the negative aspects of human kind to femininity, he also legalises man's negative behaviour by putting the blame on his *feminine side*. Moreover, whereas the anima is a projection of the mother, the animus is "an assembly of fathers" who produce opinions "whenever a conscious and competent judgment is lacking (as not infrequently happens)" (1992: 96).

For his patients who have individuation problems Jung suggests a confrontation with their anima and in doing that he accepts man's fear of the unknown inside: "We can understand at once the fear that the child and the primitive have of the great unknown. We have the same childish fear of our inner side, where we likewise touch upon a great unknown world" (1992: 92). It is the task of the *écriture féminine* writer to make this world known because it is obvious that a male-centred theory cannot ever be sufficient to understand and thereby explain anything related to femininity.

Therefore these theories should be deconstructed and reconstructed from a female point of view. Nancy Chodorow's accusations of Freud in presenting "female desire and sexuality...entirely through male eyes" are applicable to Jung as well (Chodorow 4). Both Freud and Jung treat woman as the object of a male psyche and consequently they come out with accounts of

women “viewed through the mind of a man” (Chodorow 21). In each theory women are defined as complements orbiting the phallus. However a theory of bisexuality requires absence of a centre. Since this is not possible within the male discourse, it is up to women to write about it. After all only women and some exceptional men can reach beyond the boundaries of patriarchal law because they do not construct their whole being on a single organ.

1.3.3 Bisexuality in *Écriture Féminine*

Écriture féminine aims at deconstructing the binary oppositions, therefore, bisexuality is essential in decentring the hegemony of the male sex. Like Freud, feminists of *écriture féminine* promote a bisexual mind which is open to both sexes. However, unlike Freud and Jung, French feminists argue that this bisexuality should be sustained throughout the experience of writing. Women should write with both their anima and animus, repressing neither.

The emphasis in *écriture féminine* is on the equality of the two sides in one body. They are not two halves of a whole but they are a whole in which neither is repressed (Conley 51). Writing only about femininity and only through the female body would be as sexist as the phallogentric language. Bisexuality, however, establishes a neutral ground and hence equality. The importance in *écriture féminine* is being human whether female or male. That is why, although the emphasis is on the female body, men can employ *écriture féminine* as well. Cixous gives Jean Genet as an example in “The Laugh of the Medusa” (1986a: 315), and in “Castration or Decapitation” too she mentions the possibility of coming across writing by men which does not exclude femininity (2000: 286).

The objective is to get rid of discrimination and of domination. Only then will the writer be free of power struggles and the words will flow. It is bisexuality together with her different sexuality that makes a woman’s writing plural. She does not only have one glorious thing which would stand for

everything from power and status to creativity and language. Instead she has her feminine self and masculine other not to mention her multiple sexual organs and open body. Cixous explains this kind of bisexuality in “The Laugh of the Medusa”:

Bisexuality: that is, each one’s location in self of the presence - variously manifest and insistent according to each person, male or female- of both sexes, nonexclusion either of the difference or of one sex, and, from this ‘self-permission’, multiplication of the effects of the inscription of desire, over all parts of my body and the other body (1986a: 314).

In the bisexuality of *écriture féminine* neither sex is privileged and neither is repressed. They are both equally present and equally acknowledged. Cixous argues that she gives her masculine side a place in her texts because it is a part of her: “I want all. I want all of me with all of him. Why should I deprive myself of a part of us? I want all of us” (1986a: 319). Cixous follows Freud’s argument on bisexuality and claims that although the boy lets go of his bisexuality due to the fear of castration, the girl does not necessarily do so. That is why men who employ *écriture féminine* are *exceptional*. Being closer to the mother’s body, having the mother’s body in herself, the girl is more able to celebrate the masculine other in her self because she knows the truth in her body. She knows the truth that the father’s law is an illusion because she experiences the real in her body. That is why, Cixous argues, “writing is woman’s”:

That is not a provocation, it means that woman admits there is an other. In her becoming-woman, she has not erased the bisexuality latent in the girl as in the boy. Femininity and bisexuality go together, in a combination that varies according to the individual, spreading the intensity of its force differently and privileging one component or another. It is much harder for man to let the other come through him. Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me- the other that I am and am not, that I don’t know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live- that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who? -a feminine one, a masculine one, some?- several, some unknown, which is indeed what gives me the desire to know and from which all life soars (1986b: 85-86).

Writing is a political act. Therefore women who write these bisexual texts will create a new language and through that language they will make the world know the true nature of human beings. Theirs will not be biased works praising one sex while scorning the other because women's writing will be bisexual; praising both sexes at once. In such texts sex will not matter anyway because it will not be any sexual organ that is doing the talking. As in Cixous's essay "Tancredi Continues":

The body's insistence that in order for a man to love a woman as Tancredi loves Clorinda or Amenaide, he has to be a woman -I mean Tancredi...Tancredi loves Clorinda. Tancredi does not know who in Clorinda is loved by who in him? A moment ago it was a man, a second ago a woman, but was it really that? (1988: 39).

Here there is no phallic mother and no penis involved. Sexual identities are lost and what really matters is just love. Both sexes are already present in both persons. Therefore there is no struggle or no domination. There are only wholes. This plurality turns the writing into a harmonious chorus rather than a single authorial voice.

Although she never mentions the word, Kristeva also contributes to the theory of bisexuality. She argues that both the symbolic order and the semiotic chora are present in human beings. This recalls the masculine and the feminine parts of the mind respectively. This point is elaborated by Weedon as follows:

together the semiotic and the symbolic constitute the two modes of signification and are aligned with feminine and masculine libidinal energy, which are both aspects of the bisexual individual, even if this bisexuality is repressed. All signification incorporates both modes to some degree (67).

As discussed earlier, Irigaray emphasises difference and she persistently declares that there are two different sexes and neither of them can experience the whole in one body. Her concern is that if the existence of a whole is acknowledged than it will be usurped by the male sex at once. However, when she says that woman "is indefinitely other in herself" or when she says "woman always remains several, but she is kept from dispersion because the

other is already within her and is autoerotically familiar to her” , the other and the plurality she is talking about are very similar to the masculine other and the plurality of the self in the theory of bisexuality (1985b: 28, 31). Thus although she defies the idea of a union with man and insists on woman’s difference, she still believes in the union with the other inside a woman’s own body.

Écriture féminine deconstructs the hierarchy between female and male by giving both of them an equal space to share inside the writer’s body. That way binary thinking, which has been the most powerful tool of patriarchy, is destroyed. Plurality takes the place of oneness and everything that is repressed comes out to the surface. The definition of *norm-al* is thus deconstructed. Thus the woman positions herself in a place where she is not the other but the whole with the other inside her. And this other within will be the subject of the next part.

1.4 The Other

1.4.1 The Other in Lacanian Psychoanalysis

In patriarchal discourse, the self is always split and hence in a constant search for the other somewhere outside of her/himself. It is a two-way split: both the child and the mother lose their union with the other in Lacanian discourse. For Lacan there may be several definitions of the Other because of its functional value:

representing both the ‘significant other’ to whom the neurotic’s demands are addressed (the appeal to the Other), as well as the internalisation of this Other (we desire what the Other desires) and the unconscious subject itself or himself (the unconscious is the discourse of -or from- the Other) (Wilden 264).

As discussed earlier in the description of Lacan’s Real, before the entrance into language the infant is one with the mother. Since there is no language, the concept of an other is inconceivable to the infant yet. However

this situation dramatically changes in the mirror stage and thus begins the process of othering. First of all, the infant sees the image in the mirror and identifies with that image. According to Lacan this is a misrecognition since it is not the real self but an image of the self. That is why Lacan claims that at this mirror stage the infant identifies her/himself with the other which is the other-me or the not-me in the mirror and calls this “the Ideal-I” (1977a: 2-3). However at this stage the child does not have a full realisation of an other since s/he is not yet introduced to language. Without the notions of lack or absence s/he creates the fantasy of a whole self. Thus the loss of the idea of being one with the mother is compensated.

During all this time the child takes it for granted that the mother has a phallus so the child’s only desire is the desire for the mother. However, when s/he discovers the absence of the phallus in the mother, first s/he separates from the mother, recognises her as the other who doesn’t have one and then s/he transforms the desire for the mother into a desire for the desire of the other. This other is the mother and what the mother desires is the phallus. Therefore the child desires the phallus to fulfill the m/other’s desire:

the child, in his relation to the mother, a relation constituted in analysis not by his vital dependence on her, but by his dependence on her love, that is to say, by the desire for her desire, identifies himself with the imaginary object of this desire in so far as the mother herself symbolises it in the phallus (1977a: 198).

That is why the child’s whole life is spent for the search of this object of desire and thus her/his whole life orbits around the other. Since the phallus is the unattainable centre, the child will never be able to fulfill the m/other’s desire.

This realisation of the m/other’s lack approximately coincides with the entrance into the symbolic order where the child discovers all the others and the unconscious becomes “the discourse of the Other” (1977a: 172). It is in the symbolic order that the child realises that the self’s existence depends on the others. The child first learns that the other is an absence: the absence of the phallus. Then s/he learns that language is also based on absences and comes to

the conclusion that the self and the others must coexist. Since language is the Law-of-the-Father, the child realises that s/he has to obey the father's rules and thus s/he replaces the desire to fulfill the mother's lack with the desire to be the phallus by taking up a position in the symbolic order. Hence the child becomes a subject of the system (1977a: 311). Lacan explains the relation between the subject and the Other with Schema L saying that the subject is dependent on the discourse of the Other as long as s/he takes part in that discourse:

He is, indeed, a participator, in that he is stretched over the four corners of the schema: namely, S, his ineffable, stupid existence, *o*, his objects, *ó*, his ego, that is, that which is reflected of his form in his objects, and O, the locus from which the question of his existence may be presented to him (1977a: 193-194).

It is a stupid existence because it is based on an imaginary identification with nothing but an image. The ego is formed through an identification with an image in the mirror. The small-*o* objects stand for the other egos who are mirror relations since the self identifies them based on their difference from her/himself. Therefore both the ego and the others are on the same imaginary axis. The capital-O Other, however, stands for the symbolic system against which the subject posits her/himself right after the entrance into language. In Lacan's schema the subject is in an unconscious relationship with the Symbolic and this relationship is cut across by the imaginary relationships between the ego and the others. Lacan suggests, therefore, that any symptom of tension related to the subject's question of her/his existence will be articulated in the discourse of the Other (1977a: 194). Thus it is the self's relation to small-*o* others and the capital-O Other that gives her/him a position in the symbolic order as a speaking subject.

As for the mother, when pregnant she is united with the child inside her body. They are one and whole. Even after birth, the mother has a connection with the infant while satisfying its needs: "It is demand of a presence or of an absence -which is manifested in the primordial relation to the mother, pregnant with that Other to be situated *within* the needs that it can satisfy" (1977a: 286).

Thus, once patriarchy reaches his hands to the child, s/he becomes an Other to the mother.

Since *écriture féminine* requires a return to the maternal body, it also requires a reunion with that body. Furthermore, the primary objective of *écriture féminine* is to deconstruct the language which is only possible by decentring the phallus. Since the Other is the phallus, it has to be discarded. That is why *écriture féminine* advocates bisexuality where the other is within one's own body, already attained.

1.4.2 The M/Other in *Écriture Féminine*

One of the most essential arguments of *écriture féminine* against patriarchal language is a rejection of binary oppositons and Lacan's analysis places a person in such a binary when he splits the ego into the self and the other. French feminists reject this split as they reject the subject-object relations. Irigaray asks in *This Sex Which is Not One*:

But 'how can anyone live without that?' With a single side, a single face, a single sense. On a single plane. Always on the same side of the looking glass. What is cut cuts each one from its own other, which suddenly starts to look like any other. Oddly unknown. Adverse, ill-omened. Frigidly other (1985b: 16).

Therefore women should get to the other side of the looking glass and be one with their image instead of seeing it from the outside as an other. However Irigaray puts it in another way than *oneness* because she prefers emphasizing woman's plurality in order not to confuse this *oneness* with the patriarchal centre:

Let's leave one to them...And the strange way they divide up their couples, with the other as the image of the one. Only an image. So any move toward the other means turning back to the attraction of one's own mirage (1985b: 207).

Irigaray further argues that woman's plurality makes her "indefinitely other in herself" (1985b: 28). There still *are* others however they are all inside.

That is one of the reasons why Irigaray insists on separating man and woman as two. Man cannot conceive the other the way woman does because he does not have the ability to *not possess*. Whereas man would put the other in the position of an object so as to define his own position as subject, woman embraces all the others within her being and lets all of them flow:

Woman always remains several, but she is kept from dispersion because the other is already within her and is autoerotically familiar to her. Which is not to say that she appropriates the other for herself, that she reduces it to her own property (1985b: 31).

What distinguishes Irigaray from Kristeva and Cixous is that Irigaray expresses a wish to be the other, though a *real* other. That is why she urges two instead of one. She wants both the self and the other to be subjects instead of a singular, masculine subject. Irigaray finds in her research that a subject-subject relation is already present in the language of women whereas men choose a subject-object relation. Therefore, she suggests, this women's language should be foregrounded and brought to consciousness (2004: 83-91). Thus for the purposes of this dissertation Irigaray's views on woman's plurality and self-contained status, and her arguments on destroying the subject-object relations will be employed.

Kristeva, as well, argues against the patriarchal structure which positions the woman as the Other: "an *Other* entity, which has no value except as an *object of exchange* among members of the *Same*" (1980: 50). She claims that such a devalorisation of women serves the identification of the Same, that is of the men, with the centre. However this is a pseudo-centre (1980: 50). As mentioned earlier, unity is in the mother's body where the semiotic chora resides. It is the unity of the self with the other; either the anima or the animus. Since the semiotic and the symbolic function together, both sides of the bisexual nature should be present in the process of signification. Kristeva puts this in one simple sentence: "The other is my ('own' and 'proper')

unconscious” (2004: 228). It is not a double outside the self but a whole femininity or a whole masculinity inside.

Cixous emphasises this wholeness as pointed out in the section on bisexuality. Both the feminine and the masculine sides of a person are whole, they are not halves. To the theory of bisexuality Cixous also adds the theory of *the other woman* who is the mother and hence the slash: m/other. We said earlier that women have this potential for motherhood in their bodies and that is why they are closer to the semiotic than men. This potential also puts them in touch with the m/other:

There always remains in woman that force which produces/is produced by the other -in particular, the other woman. *In* her, matrix, cradler; herself giver as her mother and child; she is her own sister-daughter...Everything will be changed once woman gives woman to the other woman. There is hidden and always ready in woman the source; the locus of the other (Cixous 1986a: 312-313).

Thus the other, which is at the same time the mother, is the source of writing in *écriture féminine*. Then a woman is both the mother of the child and the child of the mother simultaneously: “In women there is always more or less of the mother who makes everything all right, who nourishes, and who stands up against separation” (Cixous 1986a: 313).

This openness to the other inside makes women more open to an acceptance of the masculine other as well. Hence women’s ease in admitting the necessity of a bisexual writing:

To admit that writing is precisely working (in) the in-between, inspecting the process of the same and of the other without which nothing can live, undoing the work of death-to admit this is first to want the two, as well as both, the ensemble of the one and the other, not fixed in sequences of struggle and expulsion or some other form of death but infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another (Cixous 1986a: 314).

Like Irigaray, Cixous emphasises the plurality of woman. She exclaims that having a desire for an other inside her body does not mean she lacks anything:

Woman be unafraid of any other place, of any same, of any other. My eyes, my tongue, my ears, my nose, my skin, my mouth, my body-for-

(the)-other- not that I long for it in order to fill up a hole, to provide against some defect of mine (1986a: 318).

Cixous relates the other in her body to pregnancy but she makes sure that it is not the child's penis that the pregnant woman desires. In fact what she talks about is *headbirth*. It is giving birth to her other through writing:

Decide for yourself on your position in the arena of contradictions, where pleasure and reality embrace. Bring the other to life. Women know how to live detachment; giving birth is neither losing nor increasing. It's adding to life an other (1986a: 318).

Thus the mother brings her other to life, detaches from it, yet continues to live all her others inside her body.

Cixous accepts the idea that the other complements the self: "The other in all his or her forms gives me *I*" (2004: 189). However, it is not an other in the patriarchal sense which complements the woman with a penis: "I do desire the other for the other, whole and entire, male or female" (1986a: 319). It is a loving other, possessing nothing, dominating no one but just being there. A woman's writing should then include this other as a whole so as to reach beyond the phallus-oriented limits of patriarchal language where s/he will find the voice.

1.5 The Voice in *Écriture Féminine*

In *Of Grammatology* Derrida makes a distinction between speech and writing in order to prove wrong Saussure's and the classical philosophers's privileging of speech over writing. Saussure, Aristotle and Plato agree on the superiority of speech over writing. They all believe that writing is the representation of language and therefore has a secondary place (Derrida 1976: 30). Derrida, on the other hand, promotes speech because he believes in the cooperation between writing and the voice: "Natural writing is immediately united to the voice and to breath" (1976: 17). He believes that good writing should come from inside the body as a mouthpiece to the divine voice of the

soul. He gives this explanation of a good writing with reference to the Platonic diagram. In Plato's view good writing is the one that comes from the "heart and the soul" whereas bad writing is "exiled in the exteriority of the body" as a "perverse and artful" technique. Derrida combines these two in *his* version of good writing and suggests a writing of the interior together with a writing of the exterior, that is, uniting the voice of the soul with the voice of the body (1976: 17-18). In this unification of the two voices -of the body and the soul- Derrida comes very close to the idea of the voice in *écriture féminine* which also combines the two voices.

The voice in *écriture féminine* is a combination of the rhythms of the body with the voice of the bisexual soul. Unlike the Platonic view, both the voice of the soul and the voice of the body come from deep within and are the voices of human nature since there is no notion of a patriarchal divine being in *écriture féminine*. The voice is both the voice of all the others inside and also the voice of the mother coming from the semiotic chora.

Before making an explanation of the voice, Cixous points out the difficulty or rather the impossibility of making a definition of *écriture féminine* because it moves against the symbolic order although it is placed within it:

it will always exceed the discourse governing the phallogocentric system; it takes place and will take place somewhere other than in the territories subordinated to philosophical-theoretical domination (1986b: 92).

Since there is no formula for *écriture féminine*, it can only be conceived through the concepts it uses and one of these concepts is the voice. Cixous describes the voice, with reference to Kristeva's semiotic, as the presymbolic maternal voice: "song, the first music of the voice of love, which every woman keeps alive" (1986b: 93). It is a song which is full of those rhythms and ruptures that Kristeva ascribes to the chora. It is not a song of words but a song of the body:

Listen to woman speak in a gathering: she doesn't 'speak', she throws her trembling body into the air, she lets herself go, she flies, she goes completely into her voice, she vitally defends the 'logic' of her discourse with her body; her flesh speaks true. She exposes herself.

Really she makes what she thinks materialize carnally, she conveys meaning with her body (Cixous 1986b: 92).

Thus the song of the body, the voice of the mother, the rhythm of the chora will be expressed as eruptions in the symbolic in women's novels.

Cixous once more emphasises the privilege of women in *écriture féminine* in relation to the voice. She argues that women are closer and more open to the voice:

because no woman piles up as many defenses against instinctual drives as a man does...Even if phallic mystification has contaminated good relations in general, woman is never far from the 'mother' (I do not mean the role but the 'mother' as no-name and as source of goods) (1986b: 93-94).

Thus women should answer those who have *silenced* them with the voice of the m/other. They should make the others inside them speak instead of repressing them. They should make their animus be heard as an individual voice and they should show men that man's anima has a voice of her own too. Women should teach people both to speak with several voices and to listen to those voices. Only then will hierarchies be deconstructed and the hegemonic system be destroyed.

Thus, the theories of the male philosophers from Barthes to Derrida and of the psychoanalysts from Freud to Lacan have all contributed to the establishment of *écriture féminine*. French feminists borrowed some of the ideas of these gentlemen and built their own theories on top of these, or in other cases they used the ideas of the male philosophers to form counter-arguments. However their intention was not to create yet another binary opposition as male vs female language. Far from it, what French feminists intended was to establish a *different* world view by underlining and trying to make accepted the fact that there is a difference between men and women, and the way they both perceive the world. Although this chapter intended to make a definition of the theory of *écriture féminine*, it is not quite possible to put it into words within the symbolic order. Therefore it will be more appropriate to portray how it is practised in fiction from next chapter on. Since it is not quite

possible to employ *écriture féminine* in the language *per se*- except in poetry- and since the focus of this dissertation is novels, the three concepts of *écriture féminine*- bisexuality, the m/other and the voice- will be handled in relation to the content of the novels.

CHAPTER III

BISEXUALITY IN THE NOVELS OF *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE*

In each of the four novels- *The Passion of New Eve*, *Orlando*, *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *The Left Hand of Darkness*²- the concept of bisexuality is handled in a different way. In *Passion* it is the existence of both gender identities in one person: Eve/lyn and Tristessa. Eve/lyn, also being the narrator of the book, serves a double purpose. First, s/he is an example of psychological bisexuality of feminism and as such s/he shares his/her experiences both as a man and as a woman. Second, s/he is the narrator who is capable of depicting the events both in the matriarchal world of Mother and in the patriarchal world of Zero with a double perspective. In *Orlando*, the protagonist lives half of his/her life as a man and the other half as a woman in different periods of time. Thus in the second half of his/her life, s/he has already experienced manhood and to that s/he adds his/her new experiences of womanhood. Therefore, just as Eve/lyn, Orlando has a double perspective on human life. The characters in the utopian future of Piercy's *Woman* are exempt from their gender roles although each one has a definite biological sex. However since there are no roles related to gender, there are no binary relations that would require strict heterosexuality. Individuality is emphasised rather than patriarchal family structure in which the children are dependent on the parents as the wife is dependent on the husband. The Gethenians in *Left Hand* have no sex at all but only during a certain period of time do they acquire a random sex in order to reproduce. Thus, during a life time a Gethenian would be able to experience both sexes in the act of copulation and also as a parent

² Subsequent references to the novels will be given as *Passion*, *Woman* and *Left Hand*.

after the birth of the child. However, they would never identify with or cling to either sex.

In the first two novels the protagonists experience both sexes with appropriate social roles as imposed upon them by the patriarchal society. In terms of this study the essential point in these two novels is the way these experiences are reflected in the psychology of the protagonists. Therefore the portrayal of their twofold nature by the narrators will be analysed in the light of the theory chapter. As for the latter two novels, since the characters are not under any pressure of social roles, the focus will be on the construction of society, the relationships between the members of each society and the language they use to express themselves. In the analysis of each of the four novels, the objective will be to display the process of the protagonists' self-realisation and awakening. Throughout this analysis the emphasis will be on the absence of binary thinking and the presence of a unity of sexes. This chapter thus deals with the fact that in each of these novels the male/female binary is transcended in various ways and patriarchal institutions are deconstructed and reconstructed.

2.1.1 Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*

“And here I am in Beulah, the place
where contrarities exist together.”
(*Passion* 48)

Carter's novel is counted among the novels of *écriture féminine* first of all because it is narrated from a bisexual point of view. The narrator, who is Evelyn at the beginning and turns into Eve later on, happens to experience both sexes in a lifetime. The significance of the retrospective narration of the novel in terms of *écriture féminine* is that Eve/lyn is capable of relating Evelyn's experiences as Eve and Eve's experiences as Evelyn. Evelyn's castration is a reference to Freud's implications that woman is a castrated man. Carter explores what would have happened if the theory Freud so insistently pursued

would have come true. However, her castrated protagonist retains in him/herself his/her whole manhood while experiencing everything anew as a woman: virginity, rape, exploitation, degradation, motherhood, menstruation, the gaze, objectification. Eve/lyn's double perspective as a castrated man and a whole woman, is unique. As a man of the patriarchal world, Evelyn makes a journey to the matriarchal world where he turns into a woman and then as a woman goes back to the patriarchal world. Evelyn goes to the desert to be purified and to find his self. However, what he finds at the end of his search turns out to be his female other: Eve.

It is a journey of self-discovery at the end of which Evelyn is able to realise a true self as a whole man and a whole woman without any need for a phallus, to bring about Eve/lyn. Thus a binary becomes united in one body, that is, in the body of the protagonist. This is foreshadowed at the beginning of the novel with reference to alchemy. According to Aidan Day the metaphor of alchemy is associated with the hermaphrodite (108). It is the alchemist's task to obtain *prima materia*, that is the primary matter which is the essence of all substances. Adding the necessary qualities to this *prima materia* the alchemist would get any substance he desired. Aidan Day also points to the fact that the *prima materia* was identified with mercury which "in alchemical thought was personified as a hermaphrodite" (109). Thus, the idea of a primary unity and of oneness in *écriture féminine* is introduced at the very beginning of the novel. Baroslav, the alchemist, refers to chaos that governs New York city at the time:

Chaos, the primordial substance...the earliest state of disorganised creation, blindly impelled towards the creation of a new order of phenomena of hidden meanings. The fructifying chaos of anteriority, the state before the beginning of the beginning...chaos embraces all opposing forms in a state of undifferentiated dissolution (*Passion* 14).

These words in a way foreshadow Evelyn's journey back to Mother's womb to be united with his opposite self and be reborn.

The novel opens with Evelyn lost in the spectacular image of his favourite actress: Tristessa. The way Evelyn describes Tristessa as a goddess is

in perfect harmony with Evelyn's phallogocentric view of women. Tristessa is a very beautiful woman because she is a perfect match for the male gaze. She is the male desire reincarnated and that is exactly how Evelyn sees her. This opening is significant because, as Eve/Iyn is a retrospective narrator, by the time s/he starts the narrative s/he is biologically a woman. Yet s/he is perfectly capable of sharing Evelyn's sensations as a man at the time, which is evident in the description of Evelyn's feelings when he first lays eyes on Leilah: "As soon as I saw her legs, I imagined them coiled or clasped around my neck" (19). He describes her body, her clothes, her voice however says nothing about her personality because that's how Evelyn sees a woman: as a sexual object made only for the male gaze. Nothing matters to him except for her body so "as soon as I saw her, I was determined to have her" (19). After they become intimate, Evelyn's phallogocentric nature gets even more obvious through his treatment of Leilah. Toying with her for a while as a lion toys with its food before devouring it, Evelyn turns into a total phallogocrat. Eve/Iyn describes this process quite objectively, giving the reader full access to Evelyn's male psyche: "I was nothing but cock and I dropped down upon her like, I suppose, a bird of prey" (25). The more Leilah submits, the more Evelyn exploits. Thus he ties her to the bed, beats her, degrades her in very possible way. However, this complete submission of Leilah bores Evelyn: "I had enough of her, then more than enough. She became only an irritation of the flesh, an itch that must be scratched; a response, not a pleasure" (31). Ironically, Leilah, just as Tristessa and Eve, is a construct: "nothing more than a masquerade, a deliberate personification of Evelyn's misogynistic fantasies, designed to snare him for the purposes of gender reassignment" (Morrison 169).

Leilah's pregnancy, followed by an abortion and the loss of her womb, leads Evelyn to the desert in search of purification. He gets out of the chaos of the city to be reborn in the desert which he describes as "the post-menopausal part of the earth" (40). He expects to find there the "most elusive of all chimeras, myself. And so, in the end, I did, although this self was a perfect

stranger to me” (38). Up to this point Evelyn is portrayed as a phallogentric male. However, the narrative voice belongs to Eve/lyn who embodies both the masculine and the feminine sides of the character. This double perspective is evident where Eve/lyn talks about Leilah’s pregnancy and afterwards. He says “How do I know it’s my baby, Leilah?” – a typical male response to the news. Yet, the sentence following the question is a comment by Eve on Evelyn’s response: “The oldest abuse, the most primitive evasion” (32). Similarly when s/he comments on the later events, s/he does this as the already abused, raped, exploited Eve who is capable of empathising with Leilah as a woman: “I was a perfect, sanctimonious hypocrite. Nothing was too low for me to stoop to if it meant I could get rid of her” (33). The reason for this empathy is the treatment Eve/lyn gets in Beulah. After Mother castrates Evelyn as a punishment for his maltreatment of women, Eve is exposed to various consciousness raising sessions in which she is shown movies and accounts of women’s exploitation in different cultures. These sessions prove successful in making Eve feel contempt for the patriarchy. Later, when she runs away and falls into the vicious hands of Zero, Eve begins to identify with women. Eventually, combining the two experiences- the one in the matriarchal world and the other in the patriarchal one together with his past as Evelyn and her future as Eve - Eve turns into Eve/lyn.

In the past, when he was still Evelyn the man, his actions were misogynistic. Yet, the fact that he feels the need to get away from all this to purify his soul might suggest that even before the sex-change operation, there was something of Eve inside him. After all, as Makinen suggests, Evelyn’s or any other man’s “systematic mistreatment of his lovers is not an innate sexual drive but is instead the result of how he has been culturally taught to view femininity” (156). Carter’s main objective being the demonstration of femininity as a social construct, she subverts the patriarchal representations of femininity through Tristessa, Leilah and Eve. After all, in order to deconstruct the patriarchal system, first she had to deconstruct this illusory notion of

femininity. All three of these characters are “constructed” women aimed at portraying the socially constructed nature of femininity in the world we live in. Tristessa is a cross-dresser, Leilah is a masquerade and Eve is a transsexual. All of them have exaggerated feminine qualities which serve the binary of the patriarchy by putting these women in an object position.

Tristessa is as important a character as Eve/Iyn in symbolising the bisexuality of the mind. S/he is as beautiful as Eve for the same reason: s/he is reconstructed out of the desires of a man. However, Tristessa’s case is a little bit more complicated since s/he is his/her own creator. S/he is the “perfect woman” in the eyes of men. S/he contributes to Carter’s “notion of femininity as a male construct” (Wyatt 64). Therefore, instead of searching for his own anima in a partner from either sex, Tristessa searches for her inside himself, finds her and gives her life. This unification is extremely important in terms of *écriture féminine* since it represents “the phallic woman who unites masculinity and femininity, subject and object, within a single body” (Palmer 1997: 31). Tristessa is the means to deconstruct the patriarchal representations of femininity. Through him/her Carter shows that the perfect woman you worship might as well be a man so long as he displays himself as the object of his own desires. Hence “the fact that she turns out to be a celluloid illusion enacted by a drag artiste functions to foreground this very quality of constructedness” (Morrison 169).

Evelyn’s reconstruction however, is not voluntary like Tristessa’s. The main aim for the reconstruction of Evelyn as Eve is to break down the phallic towers through the new Messiah to whom, Mother and her followers expect, Eve will give birth. This new Messiah will reconstruct the world and time. This is where Mother fails because their cause is as phallogocentric as the patriarchy. When Eve/Iyn first refers to Mother’s civilisation as “the source” (39), when s/he describes her followers wearing “the scarlet arm-band the Women wore” (45) and finally when s/he describes Beulah as “the place where I was born” (47), the reader expects a utopian society where phallogocentric

notions do not exist. However, Mother's society turns out to be, in the words of Anja Müller, "a failed matriarchy.... [which] although celebrating the feminist paradigm of subversive difference, repeats male structures under feminine conditions" (28). Mother herself is a reconstruction with huge breasts and a monstrous body. Her appearance is a deconstruction of any goddess myth. She also deconstructs the Freudian Oedipus story by calling herself "the Great Parricide" and "Grand Emasculator". In her society it is the mother who literally castrates the child and becomes the Law. Therefore she basically takes the place of the father instead of establishing an alternative. That is why her society is equally phallogocentric. On the other hand, Mother is a representation of bisexuality as well; being both phallic and feminine at once.

The most important failure of Mother is creating Eve as the exact representative of male desire. This is a failure on the part of Mother. Since the idea is to bring to life the new Messiah, Mother rapes Evelyn in order to impregnate Eve with Evelyn's own semen. While Evelyn has dreams of blindness with reference to Oedipus before his castration and to Tiresias after, the women also impose on Eve the maternal instinct through videos, pictures and sounds. Thus everything that the patriarchy does to women is reversed and applied to a man. Although this is a failure, because it shows that there is no way out of the patriarchal phallogocentric order, it works for Eve/lyn for it enables him/her to reach self-realisation in the end through Eve's experiences of femininity. Thanks to those experiences, which will be dealt with shortly, Eve/lyn realises what it is like to be a woman in a patriarchal world and thus for the first time in his life he sees himself from the outside. Evelyn thus realises what kind of a man he has been and how he has served patriarchy. Even before falling into the hands of Zero and going through the rough times, the consciousness raising programme in Beulah succeeds in making Eve/lyn identify with women's sufferings all around the world and makes him/her ask "but, then, why should I have thought it was a punishment to be transformed

into a woman?" (74). In that sense, Eve is not a failure because she creates Eve/lyn.

Therefore Carter's tone is ironic in her depiction of the totalitarian structure of Mother's society. She depicts the failure of patriarchy, but still Evelyn's self-discovery is a success. It is the discovery of the real thing:

In the process his journey will take him towards Tristessa -not the artfully presented symbol of 'romantic dissolution' preserved on scratched and faded film stock, but the 'real' thing- and also into the depths of his own disassembled and reassembled self (Gamble 121).

Eve/lyn refers to his/her two-headed nature saying "all of New Eve's experience came through two channels of sensation, her own fleshly ones and his mental ones" (78). As Eve, she only remembers the mothers and their children in the videos. As Evelyn, he is still "the cock in my head" (75). When s/he has the first menstruation experience however, Eve/lyn realises for certain that s/he has been transformed. Yet s/he is not a true bisexual in the *écriture féminine* sense because although the body is female, the mind is still male: "as I fled the Woman's town, I felt myself almost a hero, almost Evelyn, again" (81). S/he will manage only later to combine these two selves in his/her mind as well.

Eve/lyn's reentry into the patriarchal world -this time as a woman- is quite traumatic like the child's entry into the symbolic law of the father. The law in this new world of Eve/lyn is Zero who is an autocratic patriarch. As a sort of initiation ritual Zero rapes Eve/lyn in front of his seven wives while they applaud in a circle (86). This is how Eve/lyn for the first time as a woman gets in touch with the patriarchal world. Zero's home is a microcosm of the patriarchal system where he is the great phallus and his seven wives are his worshippers who believe anything he tells them:

In whispers, they told me how Zero believed women were fashioned of a different soul substance from men, a more primitive, animal stuff, and so did not need the paraphernalia of civilised society such as cutlery, meat, soap, shoes, etc., though of course, he did (87).

In order to make these women worship the phallus which is embodied in his penis, Zero imposes on them the belief that “sexual intercourse with him guaranteed their continuing health and strength” (88). So they believe that they would die without him. Eve/lyn, having been a man before, does not fall for these lies. After all, Evelyn had exploited women in a similar fashion in the past.

Still Eve/lyn is a captive in the hands of Zero and even though s/he sees the truth behind Zero’s lies, s/he cannot escape the exploitation or degradation. The Eve side of Eve/lyn considers Zero’s penis “a weapon” while s/he is being raped (91). There is a lot being satirised through Zero: the appraisal of the male sexual organ and its connotations, the competition between women for any man’s attention, the institution of marriage, the religious institutions. It is extremely ironic that Zero blames Tristessa for his own barrenness: “Alas! it won’t print out any new Zeros until the Witch, the Bitch, the Dyke is dead!” (92). It is ironic because he hates Tristessa for being so beautiful, knowing that a lady as beautiful as she is would never consider any kind of relation with a man like him.

Zero has a flawed body with one eye, one leg and sterile testicles. Therefore to prevent his wives from seeing these flaws and judging him, he creates this illusion that he is great and that they should worship him to stay alive. Representing the law, or the phallus if you will, he orders his women to speak an unintelligible language:

So our first words every morning were spoken in a language we ourselves could not understand; but he could. Or so he claimed, and, because he ruled the roost and his word was law, it came to the same thing. So he regulated our understanding of him and also our understanding of ourselves in relation to him (96-97).

After witnessing all these, Eve/lyn realises how hard, even impossible it is for women to establish solidarity against patriarchal oppressions while they are being thus ruled with fear, dogmas and violence:

Their common passion for the one-eyed, one-legged monomaniac predicated their conviction in his myth and since belief was the proof of

love, each girl strived to outdo all the others in the strength of her conviction because they fretfully competed amongst themselves all the time for more than their fair share of his attentions. But his myth depended on their conviction; a god-head, however shabby, needs believers to maintain his credibility. Their obedience ruled him (99).

While being violated by Zero, Eve/lyn achieves self-realisation which helps him/her make it through the horrible experience. So when Zero rapes him/her, Eve/lyn puts himself in the place of Zero and this introspection forces him to “know myself as a former violator at the moment of my own violation” (102). Thus Eve/lyn has a crash course on being a woman in a patriarchal world and this experience makes him/her get in touch further with his/her femininity which consequently leads him/her to become the psychologically bisexual Eve/lyn. S/he confesses to him/herself that “the mediation of Zero turned me into a woman. More. His peremptory prick turned me into a savage woman...My anger kept me alive” (108). Thus the feminine symbol becomes full circle with Eve/lyn turning into one of the angry women he came across in the streets of New York at the beginning of his/her journey.

Eve/lyn gets one of the most significant lessons in his/her new life when the true nature of him/herself and Tristessa is discovered and as a result of this discovery the two of them are cast out by the patriarchy. Here again there is the circular structure of femininity: in the opening of the novel Evelyn represents the male gaze watching the female object, Tristessa, on the white screen. Later, they become one when Eve/lyn finds him/herself in the glass house of Tristessa with Zero and his gang, and when the two of them are forced to have sex. Thus the opposites -subject and object- are united and the binary is destroyed. Exactly because of the elimination of the binary, Tristessa and Eve/lyn are both rejected by members of the patriarchal world- first by Zero and his wives, then by the young crusaders in the desert: “the discovery of Tristessa’s dual nature excites a dramatic response among Zero’s group, whose understanding of their own world, divided neatly along the strict binary lines of gender, is severely disturbed by this disclosure” (Johnson 1997: 175). This

discovery of bisexuality is shattering for Zero and his women because it is something absolutely contrary to their binary way of conceiving the world. That is why Zero arranges a mock marriage ceremony between Eve/lyn and Tristessa. It is not just to make a mockery of their *abnormal* sexuality but also “Zero seeks to arrest sexual indeterminacy and impose the binary logic of marriage on them” (Johnson 1997: 175). The reference to hermaphrodites at the beginning of the novel through alchemy was mentioned previously. Following that reference, what Zero does to Tristessa and Eve/lyn recalls the treatment of hermaphrodites:

Michel Foucault³ has shown that from the Middle Ages through to the last century, anyone whose sexual status was open to question was required to choose one sexual identity for life and usually it was a doctor’s task to decipher which was the ‘true’ sex of the body. And now, in the twentieth century, the idea of one sex being close to ‘the truth’ has not been completely dispelled (Johnson 2000: 131).

Similarly Tristessa and Eve/lyn are forced to choose one sex by being pushed into marriage. This rejection of the bisexual, just like the rejection of the hermaphrodite, is due to patriarchy’s desperate need for binaries for the system to function as it does. Carter attempts at pointing out the arbitrariness of human sexuality and the fact that there are other possibilities than just male or female to make up the whole identity of any human being. There cannot be any rigid rules about human identity or gender. Evelyn has become a woman while Tristessa’s masculinity is revealed. This is a timely coincidence since neither of them wants to be what s/he has become. Therefore it is the mind and the feelings that count. The moment Eve/lyn sees Tristessa, s/he begins to feel like a man again and refers to his female side in the third person as “New Eve” (119). Tristessa does the same thing later on referring to herself as “she” (144). After Tristessa’s reality is revealed, Eve/lyn mixes up all the pronouns in his/her confused state of mind. However, once the confusion is over, s/he comes to a realisation about his/her own nature. S/he realises that as a man he

³ *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, trans. Richard McDougall, introd. Michel Foucault (Brighton, 1980), p. x.

adored Tristessa so much only because Tristessa was a man disguised as his own desire: “He had made himself the shrine of his own desires, had made of himself the only woman he could have loved!” (*Passion* 128-129). Thus Eve/lyn realises the illusory nature of sex and femininity as constructs of men. This realisation paves the way for an even greater realisation which comes after Eve/lyn’s union with Tristessa.

Carter deconstructs everything related to institutions, and marriage is one of them. Hence Eve/lyn’s words: “My bride will become my child’s father” (136). Moreover, when Tristessa and Eve/lyn are alone in the desert they represent Adam and Eve with a previous reference to the fruit of the tree of knowledge (146). However, Adam feels like a woman and yearns to be one whereas Eve was once a man and does not want to be a woman at all. Yet, in the end this new relationship, initiated unintentionally by Zero, proves to be a success in making Evelyn achieve wholeness and come to a self-realisation:

Eve realises, voicing the miraculous impact of their transcending the boundaries of gender. Both embody both sexes, and in embracing each other in all their ambiguity, confound the oppositional categories of male and female: Woman is man at the same time that man is woman; gender *does* float free (Müller 35).

Eve/lyn first understands that time and history have no validity in their story: “I, she, we are outside history. We are beings without a history, we are mysteriously twinned by our synthetic life” (*Passion* 125). Later on s/he believes that their union brought forward “the great Platonic hermaphrodite” (148) and s/he describes this being as whole and perfect. Therefore it is thanks to Tristessa that Eve/lyn stops rejecting his newly found femininity, comes to terms with it, embraces it and thus becomes whole. Although there are still questions to be answered, it is sufficient for the time being for Eve/lyn to have learned that s/he is neither one nor the other but both:

Masculine and feminine are correlatives which involve one another. I am sure of that -the quality and its negation are locked in necessity. But what the nature of masculine and the nature of feminine might be, whether they involve male and female, if they have anything to do with Tristessa’s so long neglected apparatus or my own factory fresh incision

and engine-turned breasts, that I do not know. Though I have been both man and woman, still I do not know the answer to these questions. Still they bewilder me (*Passion* 149-150).

So the issue is not about sex but about the mind and about the way one perceives the world. However, the way the Colonel handles Eve/lyn and Tristessa shows that neither religion nor patriarchy comprehends this bisexuality. Hence they free Eve/lyn, taking him/her for a woman, and they imprison Tristessa, believing him/her to be a man. They punish Tristessa in accordance with the rules of the Bible because in their binary-oriented minds Eve/lyn is the weak and desperate lady who needs to be protected from Tristessa who is armed with the phallus. Although the soldiers are not able to see what these two people really are, Eve/lyn is still able to see Tristessa as a woman even after they shave her and clear her make-up. That is because Eve/lyn is able to see the bisexuality of Tristessa's mind (*Passion* 156). All those encounters add something to Eve/lyn's new psyche. S/he experiences another first when s/he has maternal feelings for the Colonel out of pity and concern (158). In the end s/he goes back right to the beginning and finds him/herself in the middle of the chaos of the city facing Leilah. Thus everything is complete: Eve/lyn is both Eve and Evelyn, it is both the end and the beginning, Leilah is both the old Leilah and the new Lilith with her mission for the women's cause completed, the phallic Mother is back in her cave probably to be reborn. When Eve/lyn makes a final visit to Mother in her cave, s/he realises in that darkness, silence and the absence of a sense of time, her nature is beyond the grasp of any ordinary human being because it is "a miraculous, seminal, intermediate being whose nature I grasped in the desert" (*Passion* 185). S/he realises then that it is not the end of his/her journey but always the beginning because "the destination of all journeys is their beginning" (186).

There is much criticism on the novel's unsuccessful break with realism but that is only because it is quite difficult for people to understand fully the world of Eve/lyn and Tristessa since it is the world of the semiotic where

binaries are united and have become one. Lilith, for example, though a woman with a cause against patriarchy, cannot understand it. Lilith can only think of Eve/lyn in terms of binaries and sees him/her as a man condemned to live the life of a woman for the rest of his life. Similarly, neither Zero nor the Colonel can grasp the nature of Eve/lyn and Tristessa because they cannot conceive the world without the notions of patriarchy. As for Carter, she considers her work only from the point of the social creation of femininity and although she has very masterfully created the world of psychological bisexuality, she does not mention it in her essays or interviews.

2.1.2 Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*

But the sight of the two people getting into the taxi and the satisfaction it gave me made me also ask whether there are two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness.
(Woolf 1993: 88).

Orlando is a novel of *écriture féminine* in many senses: First of all because the protagonist's psychological bisexuality, that becomes prominent after his/her physical transsexuality, is the portrayal of a vivid and natural bisexual mind. Furthermore, Woolf deconstructs the binaries of the patriarchal system as well as the conventions of time. She portrays the bisexual mind, as opposed to the imposed heterosexuality, not only through the protagonist, but also through the imagery and the figurative language of the narrator. Another element of bisexuality in the novel is that although it begins as the biography of a man, it is in fact about a woman: Vita Sackville-West. The whole structure of the novel is thus a deconstruction and a reconstruction of the patriarchal notions. The above quotation from *A Room of One's Own* indicates that long before the French feminists, Woolf had already discovered the truth on her own, without any assistance from Freud since she "claimed not to have read Freud until 1939, the year she met him" (Watkins 118).

Orlando has mostly been discussed in terms of androgyny with reference to the ambiguous gender of the protagonist. This is probably because androgyny is easier to accept for the male-dominated world of literature than bisexuality. In the absence of women who are courageous enough to talk about the existence of both sexes in one mind and body, it was only possible to make it pass as ambiguous. Lyn Pykett suggests that there was something different in Woolf's writing, yet she defines it as "neutral" instead of bisexual: "Like W. L. Courtney, Woolf –at least in theory- saw the 'truly artistic mind [as] neutral, it does not...take sides'⁴" (Pykett 1995: 109). As mentioned in the first chapter, bisexuality or any other kind of sexuality outside the category of heterosexuality is considered perversion. That is why, during the time Woolf wrote this novel and long after that, it was not quite easy to give it a name which would not cause controversy. Hence Pykett's argument:

Like Havelock Ellis and Edward Carpenter had done before her, Woolf attempted to dance through this particular minefield by developing a conciliatory model of the post-gendered mind, a concept of gender that lay both between and beyond traditional sex-gender categories (1995: 110).

However, Orlando is a man and Orlando is a woman. There is no ambiguity about that. Orlando is bisexual on a psychological level even if s/he is androgynous on a physical one. Now that Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray are already on stage, it is high time to look at this novel from this different point of view.

At the beginning of the novel the sex of the protagonist is stressed, just as Evelyn's masculinity is emphasised through his male gaze in the act of watching Tristessa on the white screen. Orlando is described as a man following the path of his forefathers who sliced heads with their blades. With reference to the very first sentence of the novel ("He –FOR THERE COULD BE NO DOUBT of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it -was in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor which swung from the

⁴ W. L. Courtney, *The Feminine Note in Fiction* (Chapman & Hall, 1904), p. xii.

rafters”), Susan Watkins comments on the deconstructive and reconstructive attitude of Woolf:

The opening sentence of the novel is immediately suggestive of the ambivalent, playfully deconstructive style of Cixous’s and Irigaray’s essays...Orlando is performing the typically aggressive action of a young Renaissance nobleman, yet his masculinity is cast in doubt by the parenthetical statement which apparently seeks to confirm it (110).

Watkins argues that this is a foreshadowing of Orlando’s transformation at the centre of the novel. However, even before that, it turns out that Orlando is not concerned only with swords and blades. He is a poet and that makes a great difference. It is poetry that brings him closer to nature and thus to the semiotic; and thereby to his own nature. This is evident in the opening pages of the novel: right after the scene where Orlando imitates his fathers, fighting the air with his blade in the attic, when he looks out the window, he plunges into thoughts about the beauty of nature and cannot help but write poetry. As the narrator plunges into thoughts on Orlando’s beauty and puts these in poetic words in his biography, Orlando as well loses himself in the beauty of nature:

Sights disturbed him, like that of his mother, a very beautiful lady in green walking out to feed the peacocks with Twitchett, her maid, behind her; sights exalted him –the birds and the trees; and made him in love with death- the evening sky, the homing rooks; and so, mounting up the spiral stairway into his brain –which was a roomy one- all these sights, and the garden sounds too...began that riot and confusion of the passions and emotions...Soon he had covered ten pages and more with poetry (6).

His closeness to poetry can be interpreted as a proximity to the semiotic because it is the place where metaphors and metonymies reside. As discussed earlier, poetry is the eruption of the semiotic into the symbolic. Therefore Orlando’s poems are the outcome of his semiotic. The image of Orlando sitting under the oak tree, in silence, as if one with everything around him, gives one the sense that he is incredibly close to nature. This sensation is strengthened through the indirect narration of Orlando’s thoughts:

He loved, beneath all this summer transiency, to feel the earth’s spine beneath him ... and he lay so still that by degrees the deer stepped nearer and the rooks wheeled round him and the swallows dipped and

circled and the dragonflies shot past, as if all the fertility and amorous activity of a summer's evening were woven weblike about his body (8). Such proximity to nature has a feminine quality about it; moving the male protagonist away from his rational masculinity and placing him on mother nature's lap. Therefore, it may be suggested that early in the novel, beginning with the doubtful first sentence, the poetic nature of the protagonist anticipates the existence of a female self within him.

Orlando's poetic nature is also evident in his oscillating mood and his depressive musings on death: "Then, suddenly Orlando would fall into one of his moods of melancholy; the sight of the old woman hobbling over the ice might be the cause of it, or nothing; and he would fling himself face downwards on the ice and look into the frozen waters and think of death" (21). However, during these musings words fail Orlando: "Ransack the language as he might, words failed him. He wanted another landscape, and another tongue" (22). Later he finds this other tongue in himself when he becomes a woman and only then can s/he finish his/her great poem. Until then words fail him because he is not yet in touch with the semiotic completely. First he discovers his femininity and then he manages to write. As Watkins agrees "*Orlando* resists what Kristeva would term 'thetic' language and allows the semiotic to erupt in the text in its digressions, contradictions, interruptions, ellipses and hiatuses" (112). Furthermore, the paragraph beginning on page twenty-one as "All ends in death..." and finishing on page twenty-two as "the passion of a poet whose poetry is half pressed out of him by pain", is a good example for the eruption of the semiotic in the symbolic order. The imagery and the figurative language in this paragraph present both Orlando's awakening to the semiotic and also the author/narrator's awareness of it. Orlando tries to describe Sasha through images such as waves seen from a height, wandering flames and the sun prisoned in a hill, however no word is sufficient to describe her. Then, elsewhere, he likens Sasha to rushing waters whereas Sasha likens him to:

a million-candled Christmas tree...hung with yellow globes; incandescent; enough to light a whole street by...for what with his glowing cheeks, his dark curls, his black and crimson cloak, he looked as if he were burning with his own radiance, from a lamp lit within (25). Especially the water imagery, which is recurrent in Woolf's works, and also the contrasting images of light and dark; and their relation to the body are frequent in *écriture féminine*. Towards the end of the first chapter this imagery gets even more intense. After the carnival scene, there is the description of the rain where rain drops are imagined to be sword blows and Orlando's deception by Sasha is described as poisonous snake bites (28-29). These are unconventional images; unconventional because contrary to the signifying relations of the symbolic order; contrary because they stem from the semiotic. Then there is the flood scene in which the powerful water imagery is at work: "Where, for three months and more, there had been solid ice of such thickness that it seemed permanent as stone, and a whole gay city had been stood on its pavement, was now a race of turbulent yellow waters" (29). Similarly Orlando's solid masculinity, which is considered permanent by patriarchy, will be washed away by the waters of the chora "as if a sulphur spring...had risen from the volcanic regions beneath" (29). The flood is the chaotic state which Baroslav in *Passion* defines as the beginning of the beginning. Therefore it is the chaotic beginning of Orlando's self-realisation. Discovering Sasha's deceit, Orlando swears at her femininity and in return "the swirling waters took his words, and tossed at his feet a broken pot and a little straw" (30). Thus the waters wash away his insults against the sex he is about to turn into.

Despite the obvious possession of a strong anima, still Orlando is a man in the first two chapters of the novel and being a man, just like Evelyn, he does not miss any opportunity to be with a woman. Hence his escapades with various girls whose names or professions do not matter at all: "For Orlando's taste was broad" (12). Being such a ladies' man, he gets engaged three times yet never marries. The reason behind all this manly behaviour has nothing to do with his true nature. He acts this way only because society expects him to.

His true nature, however, is partially revealed when he is attracted by a person whose sex is ambiguous to him at the time:

a figure, which, whether boy's or woman's, for the loose tunic and trousers of the Russian fashion served to disguise the sex, filled him with the highest curiosity. The person, whatever the name or sex, was about middle height, very slenderly fashioned, and dressed entirely in oyster-coloured velvet, trimmed with some unfamiliar greenish-coloured fur. But these details were obscured by the extraordinary seductiveness which issued from the whole person (17).

This scene is significant for various reasons. First of all, it suggests that Orlando can be drawn to a person regardless of the sex and this implies the innate bisexuality of the protagonist. At the heat of the moment all he can think of is his enchantment with the person, however a little bit later he recalls his responsibilities as a male member of the society and prays that the person is from the opposite sex: "Orlando was ready to tear his hair with vexation that the person was of his own sex, and thus all embraces were out of the question" (17), although he wouldn't mind embracing no matter what the sex was, had not culture forbid it. Furthermore, when one reaches the second half of the book this scene becomes extremely ironic, since Orlando changes his sex from male to female at which point it does not matter at all which sex he is attracted to. Besides, a similar scene occurs after he becomes a s/he when the Archduke disguises as a duchess and Orlando disguised as a lord is tempted by the duchess. The irony here recalls the situation of Eve/lyn and Tristessa in the hands of Zero. Each one of them disguised as the opposite sex, yet each also embodying that opposite sex somewhere inside; confused by their own seduction each curses their present sex under the disguise for fear of losing the new found love. It is the irony of the patriarchal binaries which force people into categories and dictate who should/n't be with whom. However, if someone like Orlando, contains both a masculine and feminine self within him/her, it doesn't matter who wears which clothes. It is only the mind that matters and that mind is bisexual.

Thus, clothing – which is a very significant issue in the novel- and its interrelations with gender is first introduced through the Russian princess. Later on, after Orlando’s transformation into a woman, the incident with the Archduke takes place and it is at that point that the narrator intervenes and comments on the relationship between clothes and sex. She argues that Orlando as a man and as a woman is one and the same person. However, the clothes s/he wears affect the way s/he behaves: “Had they worn the same clothes, it is possible that their outlook might have been the same” says the narrator and adds that “[c]lothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath” (92). Therefore one may suggest that the qualities patriarchy assigns to each sex are in fact clothes that people wear because underneath those clothes everyone is both man and woman at once. The narrator comments on this as follows:

Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above (92-93).

After that explanation the narrator gives various examples from Orlando’s life which support the co-existence of both sexes in his/her body and mind. Therefore, as in the case of Tristessa, in order to conform with the society a person has to make a choice between the two sexes and behave, dress and think accordingly. Otherwise s/he might create confusion which would lead to his/her being cast out.

The importance of Orlando for *écriture féminine* is not only the fact that s/he represents the bisexual mind, but also the fact that s/he is a writer. To the writer, who is in touch with his/her femininity, pauses and silences are important. As a writer with a bisexual constitution, fitting Cixous’s description of a writer in “The Laugh of the Medusa” (314), pauses are significant to Orlando as well. Cixous defines femininity in writing by the interrelation between writing and voice; and says that together they “make the text gasp or form it out of suspenses and silences, make it lose its voice or rend it with cries” (1986b: 92). Orlando needs these pauses in his/her life in order to go on

with that life and in order to be able to write; and Woolf needs these pauses in her text. As Moi argues with reference to Kristeva, in order to release the semiotic tension through the symbolic, a person engages in the activity of anal/oral expulsion or rejection. In writing, this activity is considered “a negativity masking the death-drive...The poet’s negativity is then analysable as a series of ruptures, absences and breaks in the symbolic language” (Moi 170). Orlando’s pauses are short breaks from life and from action which give him time to breathe. That is why he sleeps for seven days at the beginning of chapter two. He uses sleep as a way to escape his hurtful past and cleanses his memory of the unpleasant records. The narrator, on the other hand, relates this behaviour to the death-drive: “Are we so made that we have to take death in small doses daily or we could not go on with the business of living?...Had Orlando, worn out by the extremity of his suffering, died for a week, and then come to life again?” (32). Using this break in Orlando’s life, Woolf creates a rupture in the symbolic and thus proves Kristeva right. After this pause Orlando takes up his pen and ink to write poetry. However, once more he is taken over by pauses and this time the semiotic pulsion is so intense that he even remembers his previous ruptures and loses himself in his stream of consciousness:

But Orlando paused. Memory still held before him the image of a shabby man with big, bright eyes. Still he looked, still he paused. It is these pauses that are our undoing. It is then that sedition enters the fortress and our troops rise in resurrection. Once before he had paused, and love with its horrid rout, its shawms, its cymbals, and its heads with gory locks torn from the shoulders had burst in. From love he had suffered the tortures of the damned. Now, again, he paused, and into the breach thus made, leapt Ambition, the harridan, and Poetry, the witch, and Desire of Fame, the strumpet; all joined hands and made of his heart their dancing ground (38-39).

Orlando’s transformation occurs after another chaotic scene - like the foreshadowing flood scene. First the reader is given Orlando’s description by a Miss Penelope Hartopp as a charming prince with whom all the ladies are in love (63). Right after this description of the impressive masculinity of Orlando

and right after he is pronounced Duke, a riot takes place. Thus the beginning of the beginning of Orlando's new life as a woman is preceded by chaos. Orlando, again, falls into his trance-like slumber to die and be reborn –this time a woman. Here there are two significant points to be discussed: one is the symbolic significance of the setting of Orlando's transformation and the other is the ritual that takes place with the participation of three sisters as symbols of virtues.

The transformation takes place in Constantinople and this is significant because this setting is in harmony with the bisexual nature of Orlando. In patriarchal terms the relationship between East and West is usually considered to correspond to the female-male relationship with East representing the female. However, Constantinople is neither East nor West but it is right in the middle. Thus:

In Constantinople, the boundaries between East and West dissolve; it is the place where East and West meet...Unlike 'solid' London, Constantinople, where buildings seem to float above ground defying fixity, is a place where even sexual fluidity is possible; here Orlando can become a woman (Pawlowski XIX).

This fluidity of the setting makes it an ideal place for Orlando to turn into a woman and hence into a psychologically bisexual person. Julia Briggs also asks if the "golden domes" Woolf talks about in her diary⁵ while mentioning Constantinople might stand for "the voluptuous curves of the female body" (181). There is no definite answer to that question.

As for the ritual, its significance lies in one word that is emphasised in the scene: "The Truth!" (*Orlando* 67). The truth is that there is in Orlando a female self that needs to come out, and that he is not only a man but at the same time a woman. The Ladies Purity, Chastity and Modesty –which by the way are parodied as representations of female virtues of the period- dance and sing around Orlando because they do not want him to wake up to the truth. As feminine virtues of the patriarchal society they would rather have the truth

⁵ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 3 (1925-30), ed. A. Olivier Bell with Andrew McNeillie, London: Hogarth Press, 1980, p. 131.

hidden. Hence they shout: “Truth come not out from your horrid den. Hide deeper, fearful Truth” (66). Realising that there is nothing they can do to prevent what is to come, the sisters leave. As notions of the patriarchy, the sisters can neither understand nor accept a man transforming into a woman. After they leave, Orlando wakes up: “He stood upright in complete nakedness before us, and while the trumpets pealed Truth! Truth! Truth! we have no choice left but confess –he was a woman” (67). According to Marder, all the events up to this point in the novel portray “a movement from repression to freedom” (114). What is repressed is the woman inside. Thus with the wake up call to truth, Orlando frees the woman inside him from repression. However, it is not exactly correct to say simply that Orlando becomes a woman because: “...in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity” (*Orlando* 67). This comment by the narrator suggests that from that point on, Orlando is still a man as much as a woman. Therefore from now on in the study Orlando must be referred to with a slashed pronoun –s/he. It is also worth mentioning that the author of the novel as well refers to the protagonist in the above quotation with the possessive pronoun “their”. This proves Woolf’s intention to portray Orlando as a s/he.

After the sex change, Orlando returns to nature following a gipsy. As s/he begins to experience his/her own true nature, s/he feels closer to mother nature as well: “The English disease, a love of Nature, was inborn in her, and here, where Nature was so much larger and more powerful than in England, she fell into its hands as she had never done before” (70). After all, maybe it is this closeness to and love of nature that helps Orlando realise the truth about him/herself. At this point comes the first clash between male and female when the male gipsy doubts his female company’s belief system. As a woman and closer to nature, Orlando is able to see the beauty of nature, unlike the gipsy. For the gipsy, nature is cruel and retributive; whereas for Orlando, it leads to “Love, Friendship, Poetry”(70-71). Such is the difference of perception

between a man with a heterosexual/masculine mind and a man/woman with a bisexual mind. Even before the sex change, Orlando used to see nature in a similar light. However, as he frees his female self from confinement, these feelings become more intense because s/he is no longer trapped in a masculine world. The transformation brings Orlando even closer to nature; feeling it inside him/herself, s/he feels the need to write it: “[his/her meditations] made her long, as she had never longed before, for pen and ink” (71). S/he cannot find ink, yet even that does not stop him/her writing. S/he uses berries and wine as ink. His/her creativity, his/her semiotic needs an outlet no matter what. Orlando is different –both as a poet and as a bisexual- so the gypsies do not understand him/her and thus cast him/her out: “Already the young men had plotted her death. Honour, they said, demanded it, for she did not think as they did” (74). This is the exact reaction any patriarchal group would give.

At the beginning of chapter four Woolf satirises the women of the period who are concerned solely with chastity and purity. That is why her protagonist is a woman transformed from a man. Thus s/he does not have the same notions as those virtuous women. Up until that time when s/he decides to turn back to England, Orlando has the body of a woman but wears the clothes of a man. That is why “she had scarcely given her sex a thought” (75). However, on board the ship taking him/her home, s/he starts brooding on the facts of being a woman. Yet s/he does this with the point of view of an outsider which makes him/her more objective than any other person. In a similar fashion, from then on, his/her experiences as a man will lead him/her in his/her experiences as a woman.

Orlando’s first views regarding being a woman are significant because s/he considers every single point twice: once from the point of view of a woman and once of a man. For example, when s/he considers his/her skirt, as a woman, s/he loves it with its flowers and the way his/her skin glows beneath it. However as a man, s/he sees the impracticality of it all: “Could I, however, leap overboard and swim in clothes like these? No! Therefore, I should have to

trust to the protection of a blue-jacket” (75). That way Orlando’s two-way thinking helps Woolf portray how superficially women of the period view what they are provided with; and how in reality these things set barriers for them and make them dependent on men. In between these thoughts Orlando remembers Sasha and sees the connection between Sasha’s acts of coyness and his/her own acts with the Captain. This realisation makes Orlando ask a crucial question: “Which is the greater ecstasy [to fled or to pursue]? The man’s or the woman’s? And are they not perhaps the same?” (76). Although s/he answers “no”, still whenever s/he dreams of the joys of femininity, the masculine side of his/her mind reminds Orlando of the way men think. Thus, even though s/he thinks it would be hilarious to throw him/herself overboard so as to be rescued by a blue jacket, then s/he remembers what they used to call such women with his male comrades and changes his/her mind.

Orlando’s transformation enables him/her to understand the constructedness of male thought and the true nature of femininity:

She remembered how, as a young man, she had insisted that women must be obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled. ‘Now I shall have to pay in my own person for those *desires*,’ she reflected; ‘for women are not (judging by my own short experience of the sex) obedient, chaste, scented, and exquisitely apparelled by nature’ (76-77 my emphasis).

Therefore his/her bisexual thinking opens Orlando’s eyes to the fact that such female qualities are the reflection of male desire and are in no way innate. After that realisation, Orlando thinks about the education s/he got as a child and the things s/he had been supposed to do to prove himself to be a man. For the first time s/he sees the stupidity in all that:

‘To fall from a mast-head,’ she thought, ‘because you see a woman’s ankles; to dress up like a Guy Fawkes and parade the streets, so that women may praise you; to deny a woman teaching lest she may laugh at you; to be the slave of the frailest chit in petticoats, and yet to go about as if you were the Lords of creation –Heavens!’ she thought, ‘what fools they make of us –what fools we are!’ (77).

This feminist outburst obviously belongs to the narrator, yet the important thing is that the narrator points at the possibility of a man going through such an awakening if he is given the opportunity to free his repressed anima and see the truth instead of believing blindly in the lies of patriarchy. Realizing the truth makes Orlando angrier at the male sex as s/he gets closer to the female. S/he begins to refer to the female sex as “we” and calls men “ignorant” and “poor” (78). This new consciousness also enables Orlando to embrace the binary opposites as wholes. After all s/he him/herself is a binary united in one. Hence: “ ‘To refuse and to yield,’ she murmured, ‘how delightful; to pursue and to conquer, how august; to perceive and to reason, how sublime.’ Not one of these words so coupled together seemed to her wrong” (79). Similarly, everyone at home is so comfortable with the fact that their Lord has become a Lady that they do not question this transformation at all. Mrs Grimsditch and Mr Dupper even expect Orlando to have children in future (83).

Orlando’s awareness of patriarchy’s lies creates a distance between him/her and the patriarchal institutions; and religion is one of those institutions. Closing Queen Mary’s prayer book, Orlando says: “I am growing up...I am losing some illusions...perhaps to acquire others” (85). His/her growth refers to the self-realisation s/he acquires and the illusions s/he is losing are the illusions that are established by the system to put everyone into the place patriarchy wishes them to be. As for the possibility of acquiring other illusions, it is a realistic assumption since there is no way out of the system.

An irony –which takes place due to the oppressions of female-male binaries by patriarchy- is revealed and it should be discussed with reference to Orlando’s masculine past. The Archduchess Harriet, who forced Orlando to flee to Turkey because of her suffocating love for him, shows up once again. However this time, under the comforting circumstance of Orlando being a woman, Harriet has no hesitation to reveal the fact that she is in reality Harry the Archduke. The irony is that it is the patriarchy who obliges Harry to get disguised as a woman in order to declare his love for a man. Although nothing

changes in terms of his feelings, everything changes in terms of the legitimacy of his love once his object of love becomes one of the opposite sex. Orlando him/herself finds it ridiculous that the Archduke waits until Orlando's transformation before he declares his love. Such incidents raise Orlando's awareness of society's hypocrisy. Orlando's bisexuality gives him/her the opportunity to evaluate everything from a double perspective:

What with the crowd, what with the Duke, what with the jewel, she drove home in the vilest temper imaginable. Was it impossible then to go for a walk without being half-suffocated, presented with a toad set in emeralds, and asked in marriage by an Archduke? (94).

Orlando soon gets tired of society's pressures and understands what it is like to be a woman in that society. Had s/he been a woman all along and not a transformed man, s/he most probably wouldn't have seen this reality. S/he would have been brought up with those illusions then. Woolf knows this as well and uses a man transformed into a woman as a mouthpiece to criticise her society: "And what was all this stir about? Society. And what had society said or done to throw a reasonable lady into such an excitement? In plain language, nothing" (94). Thus Woolf's main objective is to point out the illusions and to break them through deconstruction. She deconstructs the illusions via her protagonist: society imposes its rules, which are meant for the ladies, on Orlando; yet Orlando is at the same time a man.

When Orlando is accompanied by poets, s/he starts to think of the illusions again. S/he feels condemned for being the two-headed person s/he is, because this make him/her aware of the illusions. Knowing the truth leaves him/her in conflict. As s/he travels with Mr Pope, Woolf uses the images of darkness and light in depicting the journey. These images also apply to what goes on in Orlando's mind at the time. When s/he lets the illusions take over, s/he remains in the dark:

'How noble his brow is,' she thought (mistaking a hump on a cushion for Mr Pope's forehead in the darkness). 'What weight of genius lives in it! What wit, wisdom, and truth – what a wealth of all those jewels,

indeed, for which people are ready to barter their lives! Yours is the only light that burns for ever (101).

Then as the street is lighted, Orlando is also enlightened and s/he sees the truth this time:

‘Wretched man,’ she thought, ‘how you have deceived me! I took that hump for your forehead. When one sees you plain, how ignoble, how despicable you are! Deformed and weakly, there is nothing to venerate in you, much to pity, most to despise’ (101).

Just as s/he vacillates between masculinity and femininity, s/he vacillates between darkness and light; illusion and reality.

Under the influence of these vacillations, Orlando dresses up as a lord, goes out and acts like one. Right then s/he comes across a prostitute –Nell. This encounter is quite significant for it reveals the contrast between the illusory world of heterosexual relationships and the world of actual communication. During the whole time that Nell thinks Orlando is a man she acts her part of the masquerade: her timidity, her hesitating answers, her fumbling with the key in the latch etc. Yet all along, Orlando –because s/he is awakened- is aware of the whole truth. Therefore as Nell keeps on playing her games to amuse her lover, Orlando “could have sworn, from the tone of her voice, that her thoughts were elsewhere” (107). Orlando’s bisexuality gives him/her the ability to understand what goes on inside a woman’s mind and hence his empathy with Nell. As soon as Nell discovers the truth about Orlando, their relationship turns into a genuine one devoid of pretensions. This experience gives Orlando an insight into the illusory nature of the relationships between men and women. Even though true communication is possible between any couple, it is prevented by the roles people feel themselves obligated to play. A bisexual mind, on the other hand, is exempt from any such role-playing.

Thus Orlando, having no obligation to stick to a role, begins to enjoy life to its fullest. Sex change is as easy as a quick change of clothes for him/her. S/he knows the truth about both sexes, s/he is content with his/her twofold nature and sees everything clearly, without any bias or impositions of binaries. S/he is free to indulge in any kind of activity as long as s/he wears the

appropriate outfit. However, with a new chapter comes a new period of time and it is not that pleasant any longer. Chapter five takes place in the Victorian Age when men and women have drifted apart due to the pressures of society. Sally Robinson suggests that “[t]o become a Woman means to place oneself in a position that is sanctioned by, and guarantees, masculinist structures of representation” (9). This is a view that is valued in the Victorian Age and that is why Orlando blushes deeply as s/he passes Buckingham Palace wearing black breeches (115). This scene is a portrayal of the enormous power of patriarchy over a woman. Although Orlando’s clothes cover two sexes, s/he cannot choose which one will be on the surface and which one underneath. S/he is trapped inside a crinoline this time and as such s/he has to abide by the rules of society by acting as a proper lady. Thus s/he is made to dress and act against his/her will and then “was forced at length to consider the most desperate of remedies, which was to yield completely and submissively to the spirit of the age, and take a husband” (120), because this is what women were supposed to do in the Victorian Age: to get married and give birth to children.

Orlando’s experiences in the Victorian period are important because unlike many women of that time, s/he is capable of seeing the ills of society. Other women do not question crinolines because they have always worn crinolines, however Orlando knows how relieving it feels to wear breeches instead. S/he knows that the clothes women are made to wear confine them and limit their freedom to move. Thus Orlando realises that the spirit of the age is so powerful that it subjugates anyone. Orlando’s knowledge of the truth makes it harder for him/her to bear this subjugation than anyone else. S/he yields to this power but not for long. When s/he gets in touch with nature again, s/he experiences a second awakening, s/he dies into nature and when s/he is reborn s/he is in love with a man - Shelmerdine.

Orlando’s declaration of love is significant because that declaration opens both his/her and Shelmerdine’s mind to the truth:

‘You’re a woman, Shel!’ she cried.
‘You’re a man, Orlando!’ he cried.
(124).

Once again s/he is able to have a genuine relationship and true communication with another human being, only because –as the above quotation suggests– Shelmerdine has a bisexual mind as well. Therefore, although s/he has to have her sex determined by law in order to get a divorce from his/her previous husband and reclaim his/her fortune, his/her biological sex does not matter at all for Orlando and Shelmerdine to be happy together. They discover the presence of the other sex in each other, neither of them represses anything and thus they are happy: “Orlando and Shelmerdine take pleasure in the desire this difference and plurality create. Their love and marriage allows Orlando to write well for the first time” (Watkins 113).

The last chapter of the novel handles another important subject which is what *écriture féminine* is all about: women and writing. Though married in conformity with the role designed for a woman in the Victorian society, Orlando is not content. S/he yearns for writing. S/he has no other choice but to give way to the explosions of the volcanic semiotic inside him/her. That s/he does, however without the required freedom of a poet. Being a woman Orlando feels the pressures of the institutions over her writing. That is why s/he applies self-censor to his/her writing:

As she wrote she felt some power...reading over her shoulder, and when she had written ‘Egyptian girls’, the power told her to stop. Grass, the power seemed to say, going back with a ruler such as governesses use to the beginning, is all right; the hanging cups of fritillaries – admirable; the snaky flower – a thought, strong from a lady’s pen, perhaps, but Wordsworth, no doubt, sanctions it; but – girls? Are girls necessary? You have a husband at the Cape, you say? Ah, well, that’ll do (131).

What s/he is expected to write as a woman is just notes to her sweetheart and nothing else. Yet this will never happen to Orlando because s/he is not just a she. S/he has the slash, s/he is different and s/he is awakened. Orlando’s bisexual consciousness and his/her awareness of the power schemes behind

patriarchy's impositions causes him/her to defy such enforcements. Just as s/he begins to think of literature as "an elderly gentleman in a grey suit talking about duchesses", her long poem, 'The Oak Tree', bursts out of her breasts (138). The fact that s/he produces this creative work from his/her female sexual organs which are closely related to motherhood recalls Irigaray's emphases on women's sexuality and Cixous's insistence on women writing through their bodies and with bisexual minds. It is only after s/he gives birth to a child that the poem is published. This symbolises the headbirth of the writer that Cixous talks about. The poet's baby in the form of a poem is given more importance than the actual baby, for the delivery of the actual baby is just pointed at matter of factly as Bowlby argues: "The actual baby...emerges almost parenthetically: in the formal style of a newspaper announcement, and from the hands of another woman rather from Orlando's body" (61). Thus it is necessary for Orlando to get in touch with his/her femininity and give birth in order to finish his/her poem. The experience of writing is thus linked to the mind's bisexuality, female sexuality and maternity. Orlando's bisexuality helps him/her see the truth in nature; his/her female sexuality helps reach the semiotic and let it flow; finally his/her maternity helps produce a work of art.

Like Eve/lyn, Orlando experiences a journey to different places and different times. Simultaneous with this literal journey is his/her journey within. Again like Eve/lyn, Orlando's journey ends in self-realisation. In the end s/he becomes a fulfilled poet. Orlando's sex change results in his/her fulfillment yet it does not change who Orlando is and this is important. It shows that no matter who one is, she/he has this potential in him/her. It is only a matter of opening oneself to the other within. Hence "through all these changes she [Orlando] had remained, she reflected, fundamentally the same" (*Orlando* 117). Critics agree with that statement as well and Clare Taylor is one of them: "in each era she remains a consistent persona despite undergoing a 'sex change'" (21). That is also why nobody, including Nick Greene, questions Orlando's identity when s/he turns back from the journey as Lady Orlando. Something in him/her

definitely changes but it is not his/her person. Furthermore, it is not only the protagonist that has a bisexual constitution of mind. The author/narrator as well has a fluidity of gender: “*Orlando’s* narrator ends up as something like a woman posing as a man posing as a woman to investigate the identity of a man who becomes a woman and poses as a man”(Bowlby 60). Woolf does this not only to parody gender and to stress its fluidity, but also to deconstruct the roles assigned by society. To that deconstruction she also adds the deconstruction of time by taking her protagonist for a circular three-century-long journey which begins and ends in the West. Throughout that journey Woolf mocks and deconstructs the patriarchal institutions –religion, marriage, social norms. As a result she comes out with a work that is beyond the age she lives in. It is a feminist work which includes all the elements that Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray prescribe for women’s writing; and it criticises the gender-biased, hypocritical, binary oriented way that the patriarchal system operates.

2.1.3 Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time*

All coupling, all befriending goes on between biological males, biological females, or both. That’s not a useful set of categories. We tend to divvy up people by what they’re good at and bad at, strengths and weaknesses, gifts and failings.

(*Woman* 214)

Some critics put Piercy’s novel into the category of utopia whereas others put it into the category of dystopia. Bartkowski calls it “utopia as waking dream” with reference to Consuelo’s need for a fantasy world in her “displaced and dispossessed” status (52). According to that point of view the parts that take place in Mattapoissett give the novel a status of utopia. It depends on one’s angle really. For instance Kerstin W. Shands quotes critics who take the New York setting as the real focus of the novel and hence analyse it as a dystopia. In the view of such critics the realistic issues handled in the novel make it far from a utopia. Even Piercy herself suggests that it is not a utopia:

because it's accessible. There's almost nothing there except the brooder not accessible now. So it's hardly a utopia; it is very intentionally not a utopia because it is not strikingly new. The ideas are basically of the women's movement (qtd. in Shands 65).

One might argue, then, that the novel is divided into two parts: the realistic part with a dystopian atmosphere set in New York and mainly inside a mental institution; and the utopia part set in Mattapoissett in the year 2137. Via the contrast between the two worlds, Piercy handles the issues of gender and patriarchy. In the realistic part she portrays the operation of the patriarchal institutions and the prevailing gender roles. Then in the utopia part she deconstructs all the norms and roles inflicted on society by patriarchy. This deconstruction is revealed to the reader through two main characters: Consuelo and Luciente. The relationship between the two protagonists is significant in an analysis of the concept of bisexuality.

Consuelo is a traveler like the protagonists of the previous novels. However her journey is inwards. Shands calls it "mind-travel" (66), whereas some agree that Connie is a time-traveler. For the purposes of this analysis it would be appropriate to consider Connie a mind-traveler who goes through a schizophrenic experience while getting to know her different selves projected into a future world of binary-free utopia. An understanding of Consuelo's situation as a poor Hispanic woman living in America is essential before getting into the details of her interactions with Luciente throughout this journey. Consuelo is thrice marginalised by society: first because she is a woman in a patriarchal world, second because she is lower class and finally because she is Mexican. As Walker agrees:

Consuelo, as a Mexican-American woman living in New York, is at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, a fact that makes it easy for those in control to interpret her despair and rage as madness, and to silence her with drugs (58-59).

Being poor and uneducated, she has no financial independence which puts her right in the hands of the government. That is why her hands are tied when the government takes her child away from her just as they take her womb out of

her: “at Metropolitan when she had come in bleeding after that abortion and the beating from Eddie. Unnecessarily they had done a complete hysterectomy because the residents wanted practice” (*Woman* 45). She has no control over her own body. She has no control over her life. Be it the male doctors Argent, Redding, Hodges or the female social worker Miss Ferguson, they all treat Connie as a degraded subject:

The social worker was giving her that human-to-cockroach look. Most people hit kids. But if you were on welfare and on probation and the whole social-pigeonholing establishment had the right to trek regularly through your kitchen looking in the closets and under the bed, counting the bedbugs and your shoes, you had better not hit your kid once (26). Thus she loses her child to the State because of one mistake. Afterwards it is always some authority that tells Connie what to do, where to go and how to feel. They tell her that she is sick and she agrees to be committed. They tell her that they will take better care of her child and without even realising it she loses her daughter forever.

Each time she is institutionalised by a man: by her brother Luis and by her niece’s pimp, Geraldo. Luis is not any different from Geraldo because he “never admitted his oldest daughter was a whore, but made her feel like one whenever he got her in his house” (31). This man finishes what the other one starts and signs his sister in where her self will be murdered through drugs dulling her brain and she will become just another subject in a scientific experiment. At the institution she has no privacy and she is not treated as an individual at all. She is prevented from going to the bathroom and when she has to pee on herself finally, the nurses treat her like a dog. These are institutions where: “[f]riendship is suspect, touch prohibited; matches, for example, are unavailable, and communication is always blocked by drugs and regulations” (Bartkowski 63). Nobody listens to what she has to say or when they listen, they do not believe her because they believe she is just another crazy lady. They only take into account what her male *protectors* tell about her.

Thus no matter how hard she tries to explain that all she did was to protect her niece, nobody listens to her.

Consuelo's niece, Dolly, is an abused woman just like her aunt, and having lost her own daughter to the authorities Consuelo tries to act as a protective mother to Dolly. The opening scene of the novel, where Dolly is followed by her pimp who crashes doors and cries out swear words, is a dramatic entrance into the dystopian world of patriarchy. Looking at Geraldo and at how he abuses her niece reminds Consuelo of her own exploitation through the years:

Geraldo was her father, who had beaten her every week of her childhood. Her second husband, who had sent her into emergency with blood running down her legs. He was El Muro, who had raped her and then beaten her because she would not lie and say she had enjoyed it (14-15).

Just as doctors have control over Consuelo's body, Geraldo controls Dolly's body and orders her to get an abortion so that she can continue prostitution.

Consuelo dreams of a different life where she lives together with Dolly and Dolly's children without any interference of men (14). It is at such a state of mind that she has begun to see a person from a utopian future. Though confined at the institution, she will time-travel with this person and witness the possibility of deconstructing all those institutions, breaking the man-made rules, decentring the whole system and experiencing freedom. Luciente, as the name suggests, throws light into Consuelo's way. Thus she not only guides her through Mattapoissett but she also helps Connie realise that "the morality which she has accepted as 'natural' is the product of relations of power and economic interest which function to deprive her of agency as effectively as electrodes implanted in the brain" (Waugh 211-212). It is under the influence of this internalised morality that Connie assumes Luciente is a man. Yet, upon realising Luciente's femininity, Connie's whole socially-induced ideas of gender are shattered and for the first time she comes across a deconstruction of patriarchal norms. For Connie, according to the norms of her society, Luciente

is too masculine to be a woman. Thus, when Connie feels Luciente's breasts she is stunned. Her first reaction is that Luciente is a trans-sexual. As Bartkowski explains: "[s]uch misrecognitions are inevitable in a culture where heterosexuality is the norm, and where biological sex is immediately trained into a cultural gender identity" (67). As Connie begins her travels with Luciente, she learns what femininity actually is and realises that if she struggles against patriarchy there may be an alternative future.

Therefore, throughout the discussion of bisexuality in relation to Luciente's world, Consuelo's New York and Luciente's Mattapoisett will also be compared and contrasted in order to make the distinction clear. The treatment at the hospital, the hierarchies between the patients and the doctors, together with the behaviour of the family members towards Connie stand for the microcosmic representation of the whole patriarchal society and its institutions. The heterosexism and hierarchical power relations due to capitalism pave the way for a struggle that leads to an alternative future as depicted in Luciente's world where all such relations are deconstructed. Waugh explains the distinction between the two worlds as follows:

Piercy's psychiatric hospital is the contemporary world of consumer capitalism where human beings function as potential percentages of profit and where those who are economically dysfunctional can simply be controlled through electrodes in their brains. The utopian world of Mattapoisett is a society organized through a decentralized anarcho-communism which functions in terms of high-tech pastoralism drawing on scientific knowledge in the service of fundamental human needs, desires, and relational impulses (211).

The first person Connie encounters from Mattapoisett is Luciente who gives a pretty good idea of gender and sexuality in her world. Connie is completely confused about Luciente's gender yet she is quite certain that Luciente is a man. After assigning Luciente an appropriate gender, that is, after categorizing Luciente based on the definitions of her society, Connie begins to find faults with Luciente's gender. Because no matter how she tries to

rationalise it, Luciente somehow does not fit into any category. S/he is too feminine to be a man and yet too masculine to be a woman. Luciente has long hair and a smooth skin. S/he is muscular and has “workman’s hands” but s/he also lacks “the macho presence of men in her own family” (36-37). Since Connie considers Luciente from a patriarchal, sexist, gender-biased point of view, she fails to see Luciente’s actual biological sex. Blinded by these norms, Connie cannot realise that Luciente has no fixed role to play in order to fit her sex. Her muscular body and authoritative manner make Connie sure that Luciente is a man: “He moved with grace but also with authority” (41). Thus, according to Connie, all the feminine qualities make Luciente not a female but an effeminate, girlish male. This is exactly how the binary logic of patriarchy works.

Luciente, on the other hand, notices very important truths about Connie. She alerts Connie to the fact that she is a catcher, that is, a receiver and explains: “A catcher is a person whose mind and nervous system are open, receptive, to an unusual extent” (42). This openness and receptiveness suggests Kristeva’s chora through which women channel the semiotic. As mentioned in the first chapter, Kristeva borrows the term from Plato who associates this receptacle with the womb. It is noteworthy here to emphasise that Connie’s womb is taken out by powers higher than her. Yet she still is open and receptive because as Luciente suggests it is the mind that matters. Since it does not require to have a woman’s body in order to reach the semiotic, it does not require an actual womb either. Connie’s mother, however, does not feel herself even a woman after her hysterectomy: “They took her womb in the hospital. Afterward that was a curse Jesus threw in her face: no longer a woman. An empty shell” (45). The important point here is that, unlike Connie or her mother, Luciente has a bisexual mind and as such she is capable of seeing the true nature of a person. The social blindfolds that cover Connie’s eyes do not work for Luciente. Whether it is because she believes Luciente is a male that Connie expects him to exert power over her; or whether it is because Luciente

seems to be an authority figure that Connie takes her for a male is uncertain. Either way: “[h]ere she was, abandoning herself to the stronger will of one more male. Letting herself be used, this time not even for something simple like sex or food or comfort but for something murky” (52). All Connie expects from a male is some kind of exploitation. After all she has been raped, beaten, abused and even put to “genteel slavery” by Professor Silvester (53). For Luciente, on the other hand, it is very difficult to grasp the hierarchical relationships of Connie’s time since in her world they do not even know what a president is.

Before learning Luciente’s actual biological sex, Connie learns that everybody in Luciente’s world is bisexual by nature. Luciente explains to her that she usually likes males but she had one female sweetfriend. This time Connie considers Luciente a homosexual, which is another patriarchal assumption. Instead of admiring the fact that Luciente and Diana had separated because they were about to possess each other, which is a common approach to relationships in Connie’s world, Connie rather focuses on Luciente’s lack of sexual interest in her and is filled with self-pity (64). Even after feeling her breasts, Connie cannot accept Luciente as a woman but considers her “one of those sex-change operations” (67). This time she has to go through Luciente’s qualities the other way around. Thus she considers the smooth skin, the long hair, the gentle face and concludes: “You’re well muscled for a woman” (67). Connie is a member of a patriarchal society and as such she cannot help thinking in patriarchal terms. Later in the novel it is revealed that Connie had strived hard to get married and become one of those housewives that society promotes as fulfilled women:

she had done all those things she had always been told to do -the small pretenses, the little laughs. Her natural modesty subtly twisted by nervous fingers into something assumed and paraded. Anything to be safe. Anything to belong somewhere at last! (254-255).

Long after that marriage, confined in the institution, already a cast out, she strives even harder to comply with the norms. Therefore Connie expects a woman to fit the definition of femininity and muscles do not fit this definition. For Luciente Connie's confusion is surprising because in her world there are no clear-cut definitions for any sex. People are just as they are and they do not restrain their bodies in any way. That is why:

Luciente spoke, she moved with that air of brisk unselfconscious authority Connie associated with men. Luciente sat down, taking up more space than women ever did. She squatted, she sprawled, she strolled, never thinking about how her body was displayed (67).

Even though Luciente has these masculine manners she is only a woman and that is why "Connie no longer felt in the least afraid of Luciente" (67). No matter how authoritative she may be, as long as Luciente is a woman she has no authority in Connie's dulled eyes.

In Luciente's world it is difficult for Connie to tell anyone's sex at first sight because they do not feel the need to manifest their biological sex to everyone around. These people have no restrictions. They do not repress anything because they do not try to fit into some role designed for them. As a result they set their emotions free. There is no such rule as *men don't cry* in Mattapoissett:

At the far end a man with a mustache was weeping openly into his soup and all about him people were patting his shoulders and making a big fuss. People were arguing heatedly, laughing and telling jokes, and a child was singing loudly at the table nearest the door. Really, this could be a dining room in a madhouse, the way people sat naked with their emotions pouring out (74-75).

Connie likens these people to children in a kindergarten. She does not understand that this is true human nature devoid of social restrictions. Just as her society would have done, she relates these natural behaviour to madness. Thus she proves to be a true subject of the culture which confines her. However, as a woman, she still has the memories of the semiotic and every now and then she remembers: "Touching and caressing, hugging and fingering, they handled each other constantly. In a way it reminded her again of her

childhood, when every emotion seemed to find a physical outlet” (76). This different and at the same time liberating atmosphere is always broken by the intrusion of the reality at the hospital ward. Unlike the unrestrained world of Luciente, inside the walls of the institution Connie is constantly under surveillance (81).

The very existence of such institutions is a controversial question considering the people that are kept there. People like Connie, Sybil, Alice or Skip are cast out of society only because they do not fit in the roles that are cut out for everyone. In Luciente’s world healers are admired and respected whereas in Connie’s world a woman like Sybil would be committed and labeled a lesbian because she struggles to help women. In Mattapoissett people are free to express or not to express their sexuality and they may choose celibacy too. Sybil, in the patriarchal world, chooses celibacy as well, however, she is still considered a lesbian which equals perversion in heterosexist terms. That is why, unlike Luciente and her people, Connie and Sybil are afraid of contact. So they restrain themselves: “Too much animation, too obvious a pleasure in each other’s company would bring down punishment. The hospital regarded Sybil as a lesbian. Actually she had no sex life” (85). The same stigmatising is applied to Skip. He is a homosexual all right, but although he is at peace with his homosexuality, the State and his parents decide to *cure* him of this *disease* so as to make Skip one of them. When they finally succeed in *fixing* Skip, “[h]e told her he felt dead inside” (270). Then he was dead for real because he couldn’t bear to live without being himself. In-between her travels to Mattapoissett Connie begins to understand this constructedness of sexuality and to appreciate the individuals at Mattapoissett as complete human beings whatever their sexual choices or personal qualities are. It is then that she realises the similarity between Mattapoissett’s people and the people in the institution (122). They are similar because in the patriarchal world those who are considered mad by the ruling majority are those who do not abide by the father’s rules. That is why the only people Luciente and her friends can reach

in Connie's world "are females, and many of those in mental hospitals and prisons" (196). It is not surprising to notice then that in Mattapoisett madhouses have a very different meaning and function. They are places where people are free to search for their chora:

Our madhouses are places where people retreat when they want to go down into themselves -to collapse, carry on, see visions, hear voices of prophecy, bang on the walls, relive infancy- getting in touch with the buried self and the inner mind (66).

This explanation is exactly the same as Kristeva's explanation of the semiotic which is buried deep down, is related to the preoedipal stage (infancy) and comes out as voices erupting the symbolic. Luciente's explanation also corresponds to Kristeva's argument that the semiotic is detected in the psychotic discourse because it does not follow the rules of the symbolic law: "the implication is that women can do nothing within the symbolic order to change their position, and if they speak outside this order they will either not be heard or be heard as insane" (Waugh 59). This act of going down "far inward" (*Woman* 65) requires a break with language, hence the retreat to the madhouse. The important point is that in Mattapoisett people are encouraged to go to these places in order to disintegrate and then reintegrate, whereas in New York madhouses are practically prisons no one seems to leave in a healthy way or at least alive.

The secret of this utopian yet potential society is the final step of their revolution to break the hierarchies: women give up their privilege of giving birth. They create an artificial womb which they call the brooder and thus all roles are shared by men and women both. This results in the breaking of the hierarchy in families: father as the law and mother as the domestic. In fact, family bonds are altogether broken. People do not live in nuclear units but everybody has his/her own *space*. They do not share their space with anyone except for the babies. This is outrageous for Connie who comes from a society that gives her no privacy at all. Luciente explains this as follows: "How could one live otherwise? How meditate, think, compose songs, sleep, study?...We

live *among* our family” (72). Such privacy is incomprehensible to Connie when compared to her life at the mental institution. She even considers peeing with a closed door a huge privilege. In Mattapoisett family members are not bonded forever. They do not make any contracts but just go with the flow of their emotions. There are different names for different relations: “sweet friends” or “core” for those who are closest, “hand friend” for a nonsexual relation and “pillow friend” for a sexual one. Therefore on the whole they are all nothing but friends. There are no institutionalised relationships and no kinships. Consequently prohibitions of culture are avoided. The absence of kinships is a means of deconstructing the symbolic law whose roots lie in the rules of kinship as explained in the second chapter with reference to Lacan.

Although both male and female human beings exist in Mattapoisett, there is no father concept but there are only mothers. Each child is brought to life in the brooder and once born, the baby is brought up by at least three comothers. Thus any kind of binary existence and possession of the child are avoided. While raising a child, relationships are carefully formed not to impose any ideas on the child. That is why: “Comothers are seldom sweet friends if we can manage. So the child will not get caught in love misunderstandings” (74). This comothering, regardless of the mothers’ sex, enables men to find an outlet for their femininity (they even breast-feed) and women to share the work, denounce the traditional role of the female sex and follow their careers. Thus the father-mother binary is broken and children are brought up in an environment where work is not associated with masculinity and childcare with femininity. However Connie finds this kind of life meaningless. In her male-oriented world, as a poor Mexican-American woman, her only function in society is being a mother. Women are so abused and degraded that motherhood and everything related to it make women feel special and in power. Motherhood is the only status that men have no place in. However the powers of patriarchy have taken Connie’s ability to give birth and then her only child from her. She has nothing left to give her an identity, to define her existence in

the symbolic law. Just as she is a subject of the doctors's experiment at the hospital, she is a subordinated subject of the symbolic law. From this subordinated position she fails to see Luciente's world in other terms than the symbolic. The absence of binaries do not make any sense to her. This is because Connie, like many other women, has been systematically kept away from the semiotic. Her womb, her source of the semiotic chora, is taken out. Then she is confined in a hospital and labeled mad for acting against the symbolic law and for defying men's authority over her. That is why Connie feels extremely angry when she sees Barbarossa, a man, breast-feeding a baby:

how dare any man share that pleasure. These women thought they had won, but they had abandoned to men the last refuge of women. What was special about being a woman here? They had given it all up, they had let men steal from them the last remnants of ancient power, those sealed in blood and in milk (134).

Piercy's intention in making Connie react like this is probably to reveal to the reader, who might think along the same lines, that equality is only possible through sharing everything. This is what the French feminists argue as well. It is not a world dominated by women that they are dreaming of. As seen in the example of Mother in Carter's *Passion* that is as autocratic as patriarchy. It is humanity that matters. Therefore all human beings should be treated equally. The bisexual minds of these free individuals should be able to move beyond binary oppositions and hierarchies.

The huge difference between the two worlds is caused by patriarchy's taboos, morals and its notions of good/evil which are all centred around sex. In Mattapoissett sex is not a taboo since the notions making up the society do not orbit the phallus. There is no father to cause a fear of castration, no one mother for the child to desire and when threatened to replace it with a desire of being the phallus. In the absence of such notions, sex is no longer forbidden but is a natural part of human development. Hence children are free to discover their sexuality without the unnatural interference of the father's law. When Connie sees a boy and a girl of six or seven "playing sex", she bursts out: "They're

babies! If they were...playing with knives you'd stop them. What's wrong with you?" (138). However, when Magdalena responds to her overreaction by reminding Connie of her own childhood experiences, Connie realises the truth:

every so often they [Connie and José] climbed into the old car up on blocks behind the chicken coop nest door and they touched each other where it felt best to touch. They did not need to warn each other not to say anything. Both of them sensed that what felt really good must be forbidden (139).

Thus Connie realises that no law can stand before nature. Forbidden or not, hiding or out in the open, children "play sex" in both worlds. The difference is that in Connie's world, through these prohibitions, children learn that everything is centred around the phallus and thus the operation of the hierarchical patriarchal system is sustained. Whereas in Luciente's world children learn to express their sexuality freely and to lead decentred lives as equal members of society.

Another important revolution of the people of Mattapoissett in family matters is what they call *naming*. Since children are not possessed by any member of society, at a certain age they are set free to take care of themselves. After spending one week alone in the wilderness, the child proves his/her independence and becomes a free individual, also getting a new name of his/her own choosing and s/he can change her name whenever s/he feels the need: "This right is an expression of the self, of its continual growth and transformation. Connie is puzzled by this possibility, because in her culture names serve as means of bureaucratic identification and control" (Keulen 101). Thus people in Mattapoissett become full grown individuals with minds free of binaries or heterosexist impositions, whereas in Connie's world a child is carried from one place to another by the authorities if any of his/her own family members prove harmful. The authorities have the power to make decisions for children so that they are brought up by people who will give them the much needed patriarchal education. In Mattapoissett there is no such authority to tell anyone what to do as there is no father.

Bisexuality of the mind is also reflected in the language of Mattapoissettians. Luciente, in the first chapters of the novel, points at the differences between her language and Connie's: "Your vocabulary is remarkably weak in words for mental states, mental abilities, and mental acts" (42). These mental states and abilities do not have lexical references in Connie's language because they are under suppression. It is these unrepressed states that give Luciente and her friends the ability to catch and receive. In Connie's autocratic world people use the language of the father which is a tool of the dominant ideology. Through this symbolic law, patriarchy establishes and controls people's roles in society. Being receptive, opening oneself to the truth of human nature and awakening to the reality of one's exploitation are not states or abilities that patriarchy favours. Hence these states and abilities have no existence in the symbolic law. Piercy uses verbs such as "inknowing" or "interseeing" in order to define these states within the boundaries of the symbolic. This weakness of language in certain subjects can be found in Luciente's language as well. However, in her case, it is the lack of unpleasant concepts, which her nonpatriarchal culture has done away with. For example, when Connie complains to Luciente about Geraldo selling her niece's flesh, Luciente has a hard time understanding what she means: "Uh, I know you people ate a great deal of meat. But was it common to feed upon person?" (63) Words such as mad or sick have different meanings in Luciente's world. Being mad is a phase that a person feels the need to go through. It is a natural part of a person's life and because these people find nothing wrong with going through an inner journey they give this state names such as "going down" or "being far inward". Luciente then refers to their reform in pronouns: they have replaced gender-specific pronouns with "person" for subjects and "per" for objects and possessives. Their vocabulary for relationships –such as "sweet friends"– is already mentioned. People in Mattapoissett do not have a concept of possession. They do not possess anything and hence they do not need any word that connotes possession in any way. This goes for relationships, for the pronouns

and for motherhood. Luciente says that she is mother *to* Innocente instead of saying she is *my* child or I'm her mother (74). Related to the same concept is "comothering". In the absence of binary oppositions and possessions, people in Mattapoissett share the business of mothering equally. By calling it "comothering" they prevent giving anyone any precedence. Children who grow up in such an environment with such concepts learn equality as a norm and become free individuals. Their dispossession is also reflected in their names. People have only one name and no surname because they do not belong to a father or to a husband unlike Consuelo Camacho Alvarez Ramos. The final three names show which father and which two husbands Consuelo belonged to.

While deconstructing the power structures of patriarchy on the level of relationships, social structures and the language, Piercy also deconstructs the historical time. Connie's past in flashbacks, her present in the hospital ward and her dream of/ travels to future are all blended. As a result of this there is no linear continuum. It is more of a circular movement which takes place in Connie's consciousness. This circular movement gives the novel a rhythm moving the reader back and forth. However, it is not a dull movement because at any given moment it might be interrupted by an alternate future. While expecting a trip to Mattapoissett one may find oneself in another point on the spiral such as Gildina's New York. This possibility of parallel futures again disrupts the linearity of time. It is more convenient to call it "women's time" with reference to Kristeva because the novel embodies the rhythms and "a monumental temporality" that is "all-encompassing and infinite like imaginary space" (Kristeva 1986: 191). Such an idea of time denies an inevitable destiny and opens up many possibilities depending on the actions one takes.

Consuelo not only realises the possible existence of alternate futures but she also realises the possible existence of alternate social structures. As she takes off the blindfolds of the system, she wakes up to the truth that she might actually react against patriarchy. She realises that what she has taken for granted to be her duties and responsibilities are in fact impositions that

privilege the undeservedly powerful forces. Opening up her body and mind to the realities as to the nature of human beings she learns to accept Luciente and all the others as both masculine and feminine persons. She learns to get rid of her heterosexual prejudices which, she realises, are based on power structures rather than on natural laws. Thus Connie goes through a continuous consciousness raising process. However, the more truth she discovers as to the functioning of the patriarchal system, the more she is suppressed and neutralised. This again displays the fact that the institutions of patriarchy are powerful enough to obliterate any subject that would question and threaten their existence. Yet Piercy proves this reality to be alterable by making her confined protagonist struggle against the system on her own using their own weapons –a bottle of poison, “a powerful weapon that came from the same place as the electrodes and the Thorazine and the dialytrode” (*Woman* 362). Although this act does not save Connie from her confinement, her determination for struggle gives hope for the possibility of a future like Mattapoissett.

2.1.4 Ursula LeGuin’s *The Left Hand of Darkness*

Our curse is alienation, the separation of yang from yin [*and the moralization of yang as good, of yin as bad*]. Instead of a search for balance and integration, there is a struggle for dominance. Divisions are insisted upon, interdependence is denied. The dualism of value that destroys us, the dualism of superior/inferior, ruler/ruled, owner/owned, user/used, might give way to what seem to me, from here, a much healthier, sounder, more promising modality of integration and integrity (Le Guin 1997: 16).

Just like Piercy’s alternative future worlds, Le Guin presents an alternative society with an alternative biology which seems to have solved the above-mentioned problem of duality in *Left Hand*. The main reason for that is the different physiology of Gethenians. The bisexual nature of these people result in plurality instead of duality and this leads to the kind of integrity Le Guin

suggests. There are many things to consider in the novel in terms of bisexuality and its outcomes. First of all, as in the previous novels, there is the theme of journeying: Genly Ai's journey to Gethen and his journey through Gethen with Estraven. The relationship between Genly Ai and Estraven is significant because Estraven acts as a sort of guide for Genly Ai on his journey towards self-realisation and understanding of true human nature. The language of the novel is equally significant due to Le Guin's choice of pronouns and the way she plays with words so as to deconstruct the symbolic law as in the sentence: "The king was pregnant" (100). Although the novel sets a good example for an *écriture féminine* kind of bisexuality in a variety of ways, it does not fit wholly into the same category with the previous examples.

To begin with, *Left Hand* is neither a utopia, nor a dystopia. Margarete Keulen considers Gethen a mirror of the Earth and as such "Gethen is not a utopia because Earth at present is not utopian, either" (35). Le Guin herself points at this fact in her article "Is Gender Necessary?" and declares that the purpose of the novel is to raise questions and thus to engage the reader in the above-quoted process of replacing dualism with integrity: "my Gethenians, are simply a way of thinking. They are questions, not answers; process, not stasis" (1997: 9). Thus Le Guin raises the questions about humanity and leaves it to the reader to find the answers, which compels the reader to question the status quo instead of taking in everything that the author(ity) offers to them. Yet, one problem that distinguishes *Left Hand* from the previous novels remains unsolved: the problem of the other. Despite their bisexual nature both psychologically and physiologically, Gethenians have not got over this problem of otherness which leads to the power relations and conflicts in society. This is evident in the dialogue between Genly Ai and Estraven as they journey back towards Erhanrang:

Ai brooded, and after some time he said, "You're isolated, and undivided. Perhaps you are as obsessed with wholeness as we are with dualism."

“We are dualists too. Duality is an essential, isn’t it? so long as there is *myself* and *the other*” (234).

Le Guin creates a bisexual people yet she does not break the self-other binary probably because she finds it impossible within the boundaries of the symbolic law. Her conflict with language is obvious in her discussion of the pronouns in the Afterword to the 25th anniversary edition of the novel (1994).

Le Guin prefers using the masculine pronoun for her genderless characters. In her Afterword, she includes several versions for parts of the novel. She explains there that none of these attempts –the use of *e* for ‘he or she’; *en* for ‘her or him’; *es* for ‘her, his, hers’; *enself* for ‘herself or himself’ or the use of feminine pronouns- suggest neutrality. She even refuses to use *s/he* regarding it as bisexual and not genderless (1994: 290). However later on, when she realises her flaws, she regrets using the masculine pronoun instead of any other of these options. Just like her misconception of heterosexuality being the norm at the time she wrote the novel, she assumes the patriarchal imposition that the masculine pronoun is generic. She realises this as she indicates in the second edition of “Is Gender Necessary?” in brackets: “*If I had realized how the pronouns I used shaped, directed, controlled my own thinking, I might have been ‘cleverer’*” (1997: 15). The confusion of the writer is evident in the opening pages of the novel where the protagonist, Genly Ai, refers to Estraven as “the person” first and later as “the man” (4-5). Here Le Guin feels the need to explain the pressure of language on her: “*man* I must say, having said *he* and *his*” (5). She also admits in the Afterword that she could have at least replaced words such as ‘man’ with ‘person’ or ‘people’ (293). This admission indicates Le Guin’s realisation of the internalisation of the symbolic order by women and men alike. Keulen defends the novel and its masculine pronouns arguing that it is in fact due to the shortcomings of the English language: “LeGuin does not write about the future but about the present, and at present the English language contains sexist elements which obscure that –

according to LeGuin- human beings are really psychologically androgynous” (101).

Nevertheless, it is not a serious flaw because after all Le Guin manages to deconstruct the patriarchal notions by breaking the binaries and by bringing feminine qualities together with masculine vocabulary as when Genly Ai refers to his landlady with a masculine noun: “My landlady, a voluble man” (47). Other than such deconstructions, Le Guin also uses depictions of characters both as masculine and feminine so as to prevent their misrecognition as men due to the pronouns. The landlady’s description is such an example:

he had fat buttocks that wagged as he walked, and a soft fat face, and a prying, spying, ignoble, kindly nature...He was so feminine in looks and manner that I once asked him how many children he had...He had never borne any. He had, however, sired four (48).

It is important to bear in mind that Genly Ai represents a typically gender-oriented male who categorises human beings in patriarchal terms and hence assigns certain qualities and roles to femininity and others to masculinity. As he admits at the beginning of the novel:

Though I had been nearly two years on Winter I was still far from being able to see the people of the planet through their own eyes. I tried to, but my efforts took the form of self-consciously seeing a Gethenian first as a man, then as a woman, forcing him into those categories so irrelevant to his nature and so essential to my own (12).

However, Genly Ai’s heterosexist point of view does not keep the reader from noticing the bisexual nature of Gethenians who are capable of both giving birth and siring children. Furthermore, Genly’s alienation in Gethen might also stand for the author’s alienation in the symbolic order. If the above-mentioned quotation is read through this point of view, it may indicate the difficulty Le Guin had while trying to convey the nature of the people she created in her imagination through the patriarchal, male-oriented, gender-biased language. Further in the novel she explains this hardship by means of the Investigator:

Yet you cannot think of a Gethenian as ‘it’. They are not neuters. They are potentials, or integrals. Lacking the Karhidish ‘human pronoun’ used for persons in somer, I must say ‘he’, for the same reasons as we used the masculine pronoun in referring to a transcendent god: it is less

defined, less specific than the neuter or the feminine. But the very use of the pronoun in my thoughts leads me continually to forget that the Karhider I am with is not a man, but a manwoman (94-95).

Thus Le Guin tries to make up for the masculine pronoun she feels obliged to use, by reminding the reader one more time that Gethenians are manwoman.

Another point that should be considered before moving on to a detailed discussion of the novel is the concept of androgyny. Feminists, writers and critics all seem to prefer androgyny over bisexuality –as in the example of *Orlando*- in order to suggest a psychological duality in one body instead of a one rigidly assigned gender for each person. However, the term androgyny does not fully cover the idea of unity in *écriture féminine*. According to the definitions of androgyny man and woman are considered parts of one whole which to Cixous means the encouragement of the idea that man and woman are complementary and which is why she rejects hermaphroditism to explain the nature of a bisexual writer. In *écriture féminine* both man and woman are wholes in one body just as Orlando is a whole man and a whole woman. Division of sexes, as explained with reference to Plato's *Symposium*, is the punishment that the unified human being gets for defying the gods: "The punishment for its defiance is division into the two parts of man, male and female. Each part then continues to desire the other half, trying to gain completion" (Brown 93). According to this explanation the original unified human being, that is the androgyne, consists of two halves that are in need of one another. Therefore many myths and stories, not to mention the psychoanalysts, agree on the original unified state of human beings and their separation into male and female later by the authorities. However, they all fail to see this initial state of unity as anything other than a complementary state which again raises the problem of dividing the individual into a self and an other, thereby preventing wholeness and unity. It is probably safer to call this unity androgyny for some people because the first implication of the word bisexuality is unheterosexuality which is a dangerous territory in a patriarchal world.

Similarly, Keulen does not call Gethen an androgynous society but a “hermaphroditic/androgynous” society as she explains further in the article that the term androgynous alone cannot help define the characters in the novel (31, 37). This is because there are three different levels that Gethenian sexuality works at: psychological, biological and physiological. Keulen still calls it androgyny with an emphasis on its existence on a psychological level and refers to the contribution of this androgyny to free the mind from gender identities (39-40). Le Guin herself is critical of her novel due to certain flaws she has realised over the years. She suggests that some of the flaws in the novel -such as the acceptance of heterosexuality as the norm- are due to the fact that she had not been familiar with certain concepts when she wrote it: “I wish I had known Jung’s work when I wrote the book: so that I could have decided whether a Gethenian had *no* animus or anima, or *both*, or an animus” (1997: 14). Therefore what she actually had in mind while creating Gethenians might well be bisexual characters since Le Guin further admits in the article that her characters “seem like *men*, instead of menwomen” as she intended them to be (1997: 14). She admits that she had failed to see beyond heterosexuality. In the second edition of her article “Is Gender Necessary?” where she has made revisions in bracketed italics she says:

I quite unnecessarily locked the Gethenians into heterosexuality. It is a naively pragmatic view of sex that insists that sexual partners must be of the opposite sex! In any kemmerhouse homosexual practice would, of course, be possible and acceptable and welcomed – but I never thought to explore this option; and the omission, alas, implies that sexuality is heterosexuality. I regret this very much (1997: 14).

As mentioned in the first chapter of the study with reference to Havelock Ellis, any kind of sexuality other than heterosexuality is considered perversion. As a result, even critics find it difficult to use the word *bisexuality* although the characters in *Left Hand* are indeed bisexuals. After all, they experience both femininity and masculinity biologically and not just as several aspects of their characteristics. Even though the emphasis is on their genderlessness in the somer state, Gethenians still have these female and male selves inside them on

the psychological level which is more important to *écriture féminine* than their physical bisexuality. Furthermore, one of the objectives of *écriture féminine* is to eliminate gender roles through this concept of bisexuality. That is why, in this study the Gethenian characters will be considered bisexuals and not androgynes.

One of the great contributions of *Left Hand* to *écriture féminine* is its deconstruction of sexuality and relationships. The nature of Gethenians is a deconstruction of sex and gender as we know it. A Gethenian is a genderless being with the potential for both femininity and masculinity in the somer state. Once every month s/he goes into a kemmer state when his/her body chooses one sex randomly so that s/he can have intercourse and reproduce. This cycle, as the Investigator from the Ekumen suggests, is quite similar to the menstrual cycle (91). Thus, Le Guin uses a significant female experience to explain the sexuality of her characters which is something Cixous suggests to all women writers in “The Laugh of the Medusa”. Furthermore, the fact that “the mother of several children may be the father of several more” makes childbearing everybody’s responsibility (*Left Hand* 91). Therefore, just as in Mattapoisett, bringing up the babies is not a burden on a single sex. Le Guin draws other contrasts with the patriarchal world: the structure of genderless Gethenian society is based on their sexual cycle whereas in patriarchal societies sexuality is something to be repressed and not talked of in public. Yet, Gethenians have nothing to do with sexuality “four-fifths of the time” whereas in our world it is the other way around (93). Furthermore, the fact that the sexual cycle coincides with the lunar cycle and that descent is reckoned from the mother, who is called “parent in the flesh”, are other feminine elements that Le Guin adds to Gethenian sexuality (90-92). This different kind of sexuality breaks a lot of binaries for Gethenians –the male/female binary being the most important. Thus neither pairing nor marriage is required in the society of Gethen which means the celebration of plurality. As a result of this, children in Gethen are not brought up in nucleus families subject to the law of the father and

therefore: “A child has no psycho-sexual relationship to his mother and father. There is no myth of Oedipus on Winter” (94). This also leads to a dispossession just as in *Mattapoisett*.

In the absence of the law of the father, incest is not prohibited. That is why two brothers can have a sexual relationship and even have children as portrayed in one of the mythical stories of Erhenrang: “The Place Inside the Blizzard” (22). Not being subject to a father, the child remains free of hierarchical orderings that make up the power relations in today’s patriarchal world. Thus Le Guin breaks the nature-culture paradox by creating a culture which is based on nature. Since society is not based on the repression of sexuality and since rules are not made by patriarchal authorities, rapes and wars are eliminated in *Gethen* (96). The absence of war and exploitation in *Gethen* is to Le Guin an interesting result of experimental creation as she indicates in “Is Gender Necessary?” (1997: 10-12). The experiment is the elimination of gender “to find out what was left. Whatever was left would be, presumably, simply human. It would define the area that is shared by men and women alike” (1997: 10). It turns out that in this “simply human” state, in “the absence of sexuality as a continuous social factor” (1997: 12), people do not exploit each other and they do not fight. At this point it would be appropriate to remember that at least one rape occurs in all three of the previous novels and they all take place in the patriarchal world. These rapes occur in a world where sex and gender roles are permanent. In that case it is not surprising to find out that *Gethenians* consider any human being who is permanently male or female, a pervert and call him/her *halfdead* (64). Considering the male-oriented system of today’s world, it is quite understandable –even suitable- to call the men and women of this patriarchal world perverts from a *Gethenian’s* bisexual point of view. After all it is a system which enables one sex to dominate another despite the fact that they are both the same due to their innate bisexuality.

The plurality of *Gethen* is to be enhanced with Genly Ai’s proposal of union with his eighty worlds. Although he belongs to a heterosexist society,

Genly Ai as an envoy comes from the void which might well stand for the chora. This envoy from the void offers plurality and unity to Gethenians because “the Ekumen...had woven all aliens into one fabric that reflects both the unity and diversity of the civilized world” (Brown 96). That is why Genly’s supporters in Gethen believe that this union will be a means of discarding their present hierarchies: “If you should follow the Envoy a little way, he might show you a way out of the Sinoth Valley, out of the evil course we’re caught in” (87). They believe that after the union they will become one world with the other eighty worlds as brothers.

One of the two religions in Gethen is the Yomesh religion according to which Meshe is the centre of time (162). This religion emphasises the oneness which Cixous appreciates but Irigaray denies. The centre is not a phallic centre as in the symbolic order but the place where “all things are” (164). Le Guin deconstructs the idea of a centre by calling the centre of time Meshe and giving it feminine attributes through exclamations such as “By the breasts of Meshe!” (116), “By the milk of Meshe!” (139) or “By Meshe’s tits!”(146). Thus Irigaray’s suggestion that women should use their many sexual organs to establish their difference is realised. The other religion, the Handdara, on the other hand, seems to be all about wholeness and unity as is obvious in the following lines:

*Light is the left hand of darkness
and darkness the right hand of light.
Two are one, life and death, lying
together like lovers in kemmer,
like hands joined together,
like the end and the way (233-234).*

Therefore both lightness and darkness are embodied in one and the same just as man and woman are embodied in one and the same Gethenian.

The relationship between Estraven and Genly Ai is also significant in establishing bisexuality as a deconstruction of the heterosexual and sexist

structure. Through his relationship with Estraven, Genly Ai manages to see the possibility of a world without binaries. Since it would have been almost impossible to portray such a world in words from the symbolic order, Genly experiences this different world through Estraven. As a male from a heterosexist world, Genly does not spontaneously accept everything that is going on in Gethen. Most of the time he tends to categorise Estraven's traits. For example, when Estraven shares with him his thoughts on love and hate in terms that defy binary thinking, Genly gives it to his femininity: "There was in this attitude something feminine, a refusal of the abstract, the ideal, a submissiveness to the given, which rather displeased me" (212). Elsewhere Genly feels degraded for being patronised by a person rather like a woman: "I was galled by his patronizing. He was a head shorter than I, and built more like a woman than a man, more fat than muscle" (218). Nevertheless, he gradually understands and respects the nature of Gethenians while he progresses in his journey as an envoy with the help and support of Estraven. That is why even though Genly finds it disturbing to discover feminine traits in Estraven, most of the time regarding him as a male companion, Estraven realises Genly's not so masculine traits as well: "There is a frailty about him. He is all unprotected, exposed, vulnerable, even to his sexual organ which he must carry always outside himself" (227). Estraven is aware of the contrasts between their natures as when he realises that Genly hides his face while crying, afraid of showing emotions as a strong man (229), although Estraven's own people cry whenever they feel like it as Estraven's old kemmering does when he hears that Genly is going to see him (106). Thus being unashamed of their emotions is yet another aspect of Gethenians that they have in common with the people in Mattapoisett. In the end Genly admits that it was his fear and ignorance which kept him intentionally from seeing the truth all along:

And I saw then again, and for good, what I had always been afraid to see, and had pretended not to see in him: that he was a woman as well

as a man. Any need to explain the sources of that fear vanished with the fear; what I was left with was, at last, acceptance of him as he was (248).

Only when Genly is able to bring down his patriarchal notions and see Estraven with the eyes of a Gethenian; only after establishing in his mind a unity of his nature and Gethenians' nature, is it possible for Genly to accept and love Estraven as he truly is. Keulen agrees that this acceptance of Gethenian sexuality is closely connected with Genly's character development (36). As Brown also suggests "[t]he unification of all these dualities, the acceptance of these ambiguities, prepares both Genly and the reader to accept the central thematic unity of the sexual hermaphroditism of the Gethenians" (97).

Genly and Estraven manage to build a bridge across their seemingly different natures only because Genly had the same potential for bisexuality as a human being all along. Through the interactions between these two characters Le Guin shows that the ideal is a unity of Gethen and its sexuality with the Ekumen and its plurality. That is why when Estraven and Genly Ai are bonded in the end, Genly Ai is no longer a man from the Ekumen but something else, something different. When his friends from the star ship arrive at Karhide, he finds them strange as "two different species", whereas when he looks at the face of a Gethenian physician he feels relieved with familiarity (296). Thus, as Estraven sacrifices his life for the sake of unity, he leaves behind a man who has been through an experience of self-realisation. Genly's journey through Gethen, takes him to the conclusion that they are of the same whole and therefore unity is inevitable:

It's found on Earth, and on Hain-Davenant, and on Chiffewar. It is yin and yang. *Light is the left hand of darkness...*how did it go? Light, dark. Fear, courage. Cold, warmth. Female, male. It is yourself, Therem. Both and one. A shadow on snow (267).

Brown argues that Le Guin's suggestion is "[t]ranscending male, transcending female, we can become fully human" (99). This is what Genly Ai has become in the end after his consciousness raising journey in a different world and in that

sense *Left Hand* raises the reader's hopes for a similar transformation on the societal level.

CHAPTER IV

THE OTHER WITHIN THE SELF

Écriture féminine is all about eliminating the binaries, and self-other dichotomy is one of them. As mentioned earlier, in Lacanian psychoanalysis the other is a substitution of the mother with the so-called desire of the mother, and also it is a projection of this desire to the sexual partner. The other is the phallus because this is what the mother desires and therefore the other means absence. However, in *écriture féminine* the other is within one's own existence. It is no longer an absence. It is there inside one's mind. Since there is no place for the other outside the body, we are one with the other; hence there is no binary. Thus the subject and the object are united as one. The individual is self-sufficient, plural and whole. S/he is in no need to search for a soul-mate to complement him/her. Cixous associates this self-other unity with writing. According to her women should write the other. It is headbirth, that is, giving birth to the other through writing: "for Cixous, writing from the imaginary implies the invention of 'other I's', the poet *is* more open to otherness. She follows the post-revolutionary myth of the artist as subversive and effeminate" (Conley 59). It is *écriture féminine* writer's task to give birth to the other because "woman admits there is an other. In her becoming-woman, she has not erased the bisexuality latent in the girl as in the boy" (Cixous 1986b: 85). For that Cixous praises Clarice Lispector who deals with questions such as "how to talk of the other, how to leave space for the other: how to create the other's space". Lispector finds the answer by transforming herself "to the point of changing roles, changing sex" (Sellers 1988: 153).

This is exactly the way Carter makes her protagonist act. The sexual transformation of Evelyn turns him into a whole human being in touch with the

other inside his body and mind. Thus he stops being only the subject of the binary searching for an object to project his desire on. Tristessa, as well, becomes one with his feminine other. Although at first he wants to get rid of his masculinity altogether, in time he learns how to unite the two and live in harmony. As for Leilah, her relationship with the other is rather Lacanian since she constructs herself as a reflection of the desire of the other. Leilah's idea of other is ironically phallogentric and serves patriarchy. Therefore, the concept of other in Carter's novel will be discussed in relation to these three main characters and their relationship with the other.

Woolf's *Orlando* deals with the other in a similar manner. The protagonist being a bisexual, again there is the achievement of a similar unity and wholeness towards the end of the novel. When Orlando begins to live the second half of his life as a female, s/he has no other choice but to find this female other inside his/her own mind. In the process of his journey, both literal and figurative, Orlando learns to let his feminine and masculine selves coexist as one instead of repressing one of them as the other in order to conform with the social role of the self. Thus, in the novel it is only the main character, Orlando, who abides by the prerequisites of an *écriture féminine* kind of relationship with the other and thereby will be discussed in this chapter.

The final novel that falls under this category is Piercy's *Woman* in which the protagonist, Consuelo, is a seemingly schizophrenic woman, experiencing two different worlds -one patriarchal and the other not so-simultaneously. Whether the bisexual society of this future world is Consuelo's imagination or not, the people she encounters in that world represent her many others. Connie learns from them that plurality is possible as opposed to the hierarchical subject-object relations in her own confining space. She goes through a mind opening experience and realises the potential for other alternatives to the life she is taught to live. Thanks to the bisexual, dispossessive, integrated people in Mattapoissett, Connie realises her own plurality and the true nature of being a m/other. This consciousness raising

experience and its outcome will be analysed by comparing and contrasting the two different worlds in different times.

3.1.1 Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*

Through the same opening that is her danger, she comes out of herself to go to the other, a traveler in unexplored places; she does not refuse, she approaches, not to do away with the space between, but to see it, to experience what she is not, what she is, what she can be (Cixous 1986b: 86).

In this quotation Cixous is not referring to Carter's protagonist, Eve, although one might as well think she is. What Cixous actually refers to is the woman who writes with a bisexual mind and a heart open to all gender possibilities. This woman would have to go on a journey through life and experience all the possibilities and the impossibilities of her mind and body. This is exactly what Eve/lyn does in Carter's novel. His/her long and suffering journey in the end takes him/her to a peaceful unification with the other. As Heather Johnson agrees, Eve/lyn "sets out on a journey of discovery and, through the reading of his/her own body, embraces the full spectrum of gender identities, some of which were once alien to him- most notably those of the female" (2000: 131).

In the phallogocentric view of psychoanalysts woman is the man's other because she lacks the phallus. Thus Carter creates a perfect woman out of a castrated man and makes him/her the object of male desire. So Eve/lyn becomes both the subject -as Evelyn who exploits women like Leilah- and the object -as Eve who is one of those women being exploited. Therefore, Eve/lyn is both the self and the other. As such s/he is a perfect illustration of deconstructed binaries. Since there is no external other for Eve/lyn to desire, there is no centre. S/he is a completely free individual without the need to search for the unattainable because the so-called unattainable is already inside, as Eve.

It was mentioned earlier that Kristeva argues unity is in the mother's body where the semiotic chora resides. Accordingly, Evelyn's other is reborn from Mother and this is quite ironic since in masculine psychoanalysis it is the mother who causes the child to look for the other elsewhere. As Eve/lyn relates: "Mother has made symbolism a concrete fact" (*Passion* 58). When Evelyn turns into Eve after the operation, s/he is brainwashed with the following words for Evelyn's other to be born: "Kill your father! Sleep with your mother! Burst through all the interdictions!" (64). Eve/lyn thus fulfills the Lacanian desire to reunite with the mother. S/he has no fear of castration since s/he is already castrated. Carter thus deconstructs every myth of the patriarchal world. Then, in the end when Eve/lyn is one with the other as a bisexual mind, having been castrated and reunited with Mother, s/he is no longer subject to the Symbolic Law. This is a great accomplishment against patriarchy. The fact that Carter makes Eve/lyn have intercourse with Mother, though she is not Eve/lyn's real mother, is a successful attempt at symbolically tearing down the incest prohibition of the Symbolic Law.

Furthermore, first in Beulah looking at Mother's giant body and then at Zero's house living in the same room with the seven wives, Eve/lyn witnesses the plurality of women; both in the sense of female sexual organs as Irigaray talks of them and in the sense of female solidarity. The wives of Zero are actually self-sufficient, both sexually and financially. They don't need the other: Zero. He is the one who possesses them whereas when they are on their own, there is no possession but just being. The difference between the seven wives and Eve/lyn is that the wives are not aware of their plurality and self-sufficiency, but Eve/lyn is enlightened thanks to them. Unlike the wives, Eve/lyn never falls for Zero's lies, and tries to get him/herself out of the household. S/he is aware of his/her individuality and freedom. However, before s/he can manage to escape s/he has to go through some unpleasant experiences such as rape and violence. These experiences prepare Eve/lyn, along the way, for his/her union with the other. Eventually s/he manages to combine Eve, from

the semiotic chora, with Evelyn, from the symbolic law of the father, and goes on his/her way as Eve/lyn.

In Cixousian terms, Eve is the m/other inside Evelyn and thereby is the one who brings him closer to the semiotic. It is not in vain that Mother reconstructs Eve as a potential mother. S/he is given a womb to get in touch with the chora. It is not a penis that the other provides Evelyn with, on the contrary, it is a womb. The only important thing is to accept both Eve and Evelyn as whole individuals, and to get out of the boundaries of binary thinking. Carter's narrator manages to accomplish that deconstruction of the binaries. S/he accepts his/her bisexuality and consequently s/he accepts the other. S/he realises that from then on both Eve and Evelyn will exist in one body. At the end of the novel, Eve/lyn draws a circle and goes back to the beginning -to Tristessa. As s/he accepts her new nature, s/he accepts Tristessa's too. They are both men, both women, dissolved in one another.

For Tristessa, though, acceptance of the other is not so easy until s/he meets Eve/lyn. Tristessa has turned himself into the object of his own desire and thus has created the glorious actress: "*That* was why he had been the perfect man's woman! He had made himself the shrine of his own desires, had made of himself the only woman he could have loved!" (*Passion* 128-129). The only woman he can love is the woman inside himself; his anima. Thus Tristessa takes his anima and turns her into a whole individual. However, this is not enough for Tristessa to become whole because s/he has been taken over by this female other and rejects the male self. S/he goes through a constant inner conflict since there is always something that needs to be hidden:

...as if he were attempting to hide herself within himself, to swallow his cock within her thighs; and when I saw how much the heraldic regalia of his sex appalled him, I thought that Mother would say he had become a woman because he had abhorred his most female part- that is, his instrument of mediation between himself and the other (*Passion* 128).

This constant hiding changes the reality for Tristessa him/herself as well and thus s/he becomes attached to the other. S/he explains this to him/herself when they are in the desert, free from Zero and the others:

Tristessa is a lost soul who lodges in me; she's lived in me so long I can't remember a time she was not there, she came and took possession of my mirror one day when I was looking at myself. She invaded the mirror like an army with banners; she entered me through my eyes (151).

S/he speaks of Tristessa in the third person as "she" because s/he can only think according to the laws of patriarchy. "She" and "he" cannot exist as one according to those laws. Since Tristessa has a penis, the most glorious sign of masculinity, s/he feels that anything female can enter this body only from the outside. However, s/he seems to have a vague feeling that this female lodger has always been there since s/he can't remember a time Tristessa was not there. What has happened is that he has come face to face with his other in the mirror. There is no entrance, there is only acceptance.

The mirror image Tristessa uses to define his/her female other is significant because it is again a deconstruction of psychoanalysis. Remembering Lacan, one can say that Tristessa goes through a second mirror stage. Tristessa turns this stage upside down and unlike the child in Lacan's mirror stage, he does not recognise the image as his self but as an other. Thus, instead of establishing the "ideal I", Tristessa establishes the ideal other. From then on s/he identifies with this female other and hides his masculinity within his femininity. As for the male Tristessa, he "had no function in this world except as an idea of himself; no ontological status, only an iconographic one" (*Passion* 129).

There comes a time when Tristessa comes to terms with the duality of his/her body and mind, although s/he is not awakened as much as Eve/lyn is. The time comes when Eve/lyn and Tristessa meet in the glass house, and are forced to copulate by Zero. As the nature of Tristessa is revealed, Eve/lyn realises that they are similar: "You and I, who inhabited false shapes, who

appeared to one another doubly masked, like an ultimate mystification, were unknown even to ourselves” (136). Up until then, neither Eve/lyn nor Tristessa was aware of their own nature because they were under the influence of the impositions by patriarchy. However, when they come across someone just like themselves, with a female presence inside, they realise that they are not castouts. This encounter with Tristessa makes Eve/lyn realise that Eve has been there all along, only repressed for the sake of the binaries. Later on, in the desert, Eve/lyn says: “we had made the great Platonic hermaphrodite together” (148). Even their love making is a deconstruction of binaries: Eve/lyn has the female, Tristessa the male body, yet Eve/lyn makes love to Tristessa as a man making love to a woman and vice versa. Hence Eve/lyn’s words: “I had lost my body: now it was defined solely by his” (149). Thus they both, though Eve/lyn more than Tristessa, recognise their other within their own body and within their mind. Sometimes it is the mind that is female and the body male, yet other times it is the male mind inside the female body. The important thing is that they coexist, not as parts of a whole, but each as a whole individual.

It is almost as if Tristessa and Eve/lyn held mirrors to each other so as to see what is inside themselves. Leilah, on the other hand, has a different kind of relationship with the mirror:

She became absorbed in the contemplation of the figure in the mirror but she did not seem to me to apprehend the person in the mirror as, in any degree, herself. The reflected Leilah had a concrete form and, although this form was perfectly tangible, we all knew, all three of us in the room, it was another Leilah. Leilah invoked this formal other with a gravity and ritual that recalled witchcraft; she brought into being a Leilah who lived only in the not-world of the mirror and then became her own reflection (28).

Of course Eve/lyn is able to make such a comment on Leilah because s/he is a retrospective narrator who already knows the truth about Leilah. What Leilah sees in the mirror is the mask she wears and pretends that it is her actual self. It is the mask of a woman who dresses, thinks, speaks and uses her body to touch the anima of men or to reflect the desire of men. In the words of Aidan Day

“Leilah constructs herself as a reflection of a masculine view of what makes her erotically desirable” (110). However, this is only a decoy to lure Evelyn to Beulah for taking the first step towards bringing down the phallus. Leilah’s real self as an employer of Mother is called Lilith, although she is out there to deconstruct patriarchy, she is as phallocratic as Mother. Still, there is a huge contrast between Leilah and Lilith, and that is why Leilah is a being who lives “only in the not-world of the mirror”. Again that is why she does not “apprehend the person in the mirror as, in any degree, herself”. Contrary to Irigaray’s call to women to be one with the image in the mirror, Leilah detests that image but wears it as her own reflection only as a duty. For Irigaray the image in the mirror stands for the other who is split from the self by patriarchal psychoanalysis, whereas the image Leilah finds in the mirror is the self disguised as the reflection of the other’s desire. That latter “other” is not Leilah’s masculine other from her bisexual nature, but it is the masculine other who stands for the complementary half of the self as it is described by male psychoanalysts.

Thus, Leilah lives in two different worlds with two different personalities- Leilah in the city and Lilith in Beulah. Yet she cannot experience a wholeness like Eve/lyn and she cannot bring out her other because she has dedicated herself to a phallocentric cause. This dedication requires her to think and act according to binaries since Mother and her women aim at replacing the present centre -the Phallus- with their own centre, instead of decentering the entire system. Under these circumstances it would be impossible for her to see through the female-male binary and manage to accept a male other inside herself.

It is almost as if the characters were in a progressive order in terms of their realisation of the other; Leilah being the least progressed and Eve/lyn, since s/he is the protagonist of the novel with the slashed name, the most. It is only death that prevents Tristessa from reaching the same completeness as Eve/lyn. Therefore, deconstruction of patriarchy starts with the deconstruction

of binaries -the most important binary being male-female. This is achieved through the unification of Evelyn and Eve. Thus a bisexual mind is maintained and within the boundaries of this bisexual mind there is no centring of masculinity. The myth of man and woman being the complementary halves of one another is broken. The myth that one's other is this complementary half from the opposite sex, is broken. Consequently, the other is released from where it is repressed -inside one's own mind. Eve/lyn experiences both the myth and the reality through his/her long and painful journey. It is not just a simple sex-change operation that starts all this. There is more to it than castration. There is the voice which sings, educates, illuminates, reminds of the chora and its dwelling place -the semiotic.

3.1.2 Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*

Orlando's sex change and his/her motherhood are the most important issues to be considered on his/her way to being one with the other. The other in this case is Orlando's transformed self. After the transformation, Orlando gets in contact with his other and the dialogues he has with this other help Orlando know himself better. This self-realisation leads to a better understanding of his love with the change in subject-object relations. Orlando's own othering by the patriarchal society after he becomes a woman also contributes to his/her growth as a fulfilled individual. At the end of his/her journey Orlando realises his/her plurality and among the many voices within her s/he manages to establish a unity.

As in the scene where Orlando travels with Mr Pope, s/he has never-ending inner dialogues. S/he takes turns between the self and the other -one masculine and one feminine although which one is the self and which is the other is questionable. While having these consciousness raising dialogues, Orlando begins to have a clearer vision of the constructedness of certain thoughts and expectations. Such a realisation helps him/her better understand

the love of his/her life: Sasha. Being of the same sex with Sasha deepens Orlando's feelings because his love stops being the distant other but turns into the very intimate self:

though she herself was a woman, it was still a woman she loved; and if the consciousness of being of the same sex had any effect at all, it was to quicken and deepen those feelings which she had had as a man. For now a thousand hints and mysteries became plain to her that were then dark (79).

Orlando finds Sasha within himself. Sasha ceases to be the object of his desire and becomes a subject of this love embodied in Orlando's female self. The more s/he understands his/her female self, the more s/he understands Sasha.

Thus begins Orlando's journey toward a complete unification with the other. First s/he begins to become acquainted with the other through his/her love. Then comes the experience of women's othering by society and its patriarchal institutions. For example, after his/her return from Turkey s/he learns that s/he has lost his/her property because everyone thought s/he was dead. However, even after s/he proves that s/he is alive, the fact that s/he is a woman prevents him/her from getting his/her property back. Similarly, s/he realises along the way that s/he can no longer act as a man would but has to behave in ways that social norms deem appropriate for ladies. There are many instances in which s/he would much prefer a rapier, whereas s/he uses other ways –such as placing a toad in the Archduke's shirt- as more becoming to a lady. Orlando's realisation of women's othering becomes more heartfelt when s/he comes to the Victorian period. Inside the confining ladies' clothes of the period Orlando feels the pressure of society so much that even his/her double perspective cannot keep her from submitting to the gender-biased illusions:

All these things inclined her, step by step, to submit to the new discovery, whether Queen Victoria's or another's, that each man and each woman has another allotted to it for life, whom it supports, by whom it is supported, till death them do part (121).

Thus Orlando is brainwashed into thinking that s/he needs an other from the opposite sex to complement him/her for the rest of his/her life. The hegemony of patriarchy during this age is so powerful that even a person freed from all

these illusions of patriarchy has to yield: “It was not Orlando who spoke, but the spirit of the age” (121). Orlando has once seen the truth, therefore there is no going back for him/her. This experience of submission provides Orlando with essential knowledge of women’s status in society and thereby paves the way for his/her self-realisation as a free, united, unbiased individual at peace with all the others within.

Orlando’s plurality finds a way out with his/her frequent change of clothes. S/he changes sex together with the clothes, that is, s/he thinks and acts according to the sex indicated by his/her clothes. Therefore together with the clothes not only the sex but also the character changes. This is because society forces him/her to behave in certain ways. Orlando cannot remain in women’s clothes and still behave as a man. If s/he does, society will outcast him/her. However, the truth is that all those different selves belong to one person and since these selves reside inside the body, they are independent from the fabric covering the outer side of that body. After meeting Shelmerdine, Orlando manages to loosen the tight grip of the Victorian society, realises his/her plurality and begins to search for the true self among many others. What s/he fails to see at this point is that s/he has no need to single out one of those many voices but instead s/he should unite them in harmony as Irigaray suggests. During his/her search s/he calls inside: “

‘Orlando?’ For if there are (at a venture) seventy-six different times all ticking in the mind at once, how many different people are there not – Heaven help us- all having lodgment at one time or another in the human spirit? Some say two thousand and fifty-two. So that it is the most usual thing in the world for a person to call, directly they are alone, Orlando? (if that is one’s name) meaning by that, Come, come! I’m sick to death of this particular self. I want another (152).

The narrator stresses the existence of many selves in a person while portraying Orlando’s desperate yearning for the one self s/he has been waiting for. Orlando continues an inner dialogue with all these others as s/he keeps on looking for “the Key self” (153). During this search s/he falls into a stream of consciousness and it is then that s/he gives voice to all those other selves within

him/her. As s/he lets them speak freely, the self she's been looking for comes on its own and with it comes silence (154-155). The moment s/he accepts his/her plurality and frees all his/her others, s/he finds his/her self:

So she was now darkened, stilled, and become, with the addition of this Orlando, what is called; rightly or wrongly, a single self, a real self. And she fell silent. For it is probable that when people talk aloud, the selves (of which there may be more than two thousand) are conscious of disseverment, and are trying to communicate, but when communication is established they fall silent (155).

These selves communicate through the semiotic without the mediation of patriarchal language. That is why, once communication is established, they fall silent. All they need is to be. They do not need power, domination or hierarchy of any kind. Once Orlando lets them be, s/he becomes a whole person.

As such Orlando not only exemplifies Irigaray's theory of women's plurality, s/he also portrays the self-contained status of a person who is able to destroy the subject-object relations. Being both the self and the other(s), Orlando is the subject and object at once. As mentioned in his/her relation with Sasha after the transformation, Orlando no longer views relationships in such terms where the man is the subject and the woman is the object. After all, s/he is both the man and the woman no matter what sex his/her lover belongs to. Thus Orlando regards his/her relationships always from a dual perspective and creates two subjects and two objects instead of one from each.

Orlando's other, the woman inside him, first comes out to the surface and then becomes a mother. Therefore the female Orlando is Orlando's m/other inside him. Cixous argues that the potential for motherhood brings women closer to the semiotic (1986b: 85-86). Giving birth to a child, Orlando is as close to the semiotic as s/he can ever get. The semiotic mother thus comes to life literally turning Orlando into a mother. This m/other gives birth to Orlando's writing which fulfills Orlando as a poet and thereby completes the process of the birth of Orlando's other out of the semiotic chora. It is only after becoming a mother that Orlando is able to finish his poem and publish it. Thus his/her creativity is closely related to this unification with the m/other.

At the end of this long journey towards self-realisation, Orlando meets his/her other and knowing her helps him/her to know his/her self. This experience of the other breaks the illusions and makes Orlando see the truth and live the truth. However, it is not only the protagonist that experiences this awakening. The author herself is a whole person who has managed to combine the self and the other as well. After all, it is Woolf who creates this character with many selves and it is Woolf who points at all the significant concepts of *écriture féminine* long before the theory is established. She is able to do that without basing her ideas on any theory because she has experienced this bisexuality, plurality, m/other(s), voices in her own body and mind. Through the novel she shares the experience with her readers and at the same time criticises the system which places men over women. That way she guides the feminists that would follow her and provides them with the practice before they come up with the theory.

3.1.3 Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Only, after I make a decision, I feel thinned.
As if I just lost eight other selves.

(*Woman* 224)

There are four points to discuss in relation to the concept of the other in Piercy's novel: the relationship between Connie and the others in Mattapoisett, plurality of the self both in Mattapoisett and in Connie's consciousness, Connie's existence as a m/other and her subject-object relationship with male scientists. The futuristic world of Mattapoisett in this case stands for the vast and rich consciousness of Connie herself. Her journey inward takes her to this place where oneness is discarded and plurality is welcomed. In this semiotic space Connie meets her indefinite others and gets to know them. It is possible to assume that all these characters in Mattapoisett are Connie's many selves residing in her consciousness because each one of them bears a resemblance to

a figure in Connie's real life: Bee, with whom Connie has sex, resembles Claud; Luciente's daughter, Dawn, is very much like Angelina –Connie's lost daughter; Parra reminds Connie of Martin and Jackrabbit of Martin's youth; Sojourner is a reminder of her own sterilised but older self. Towards the end of the novel she refers to all those people as her family "gathered now in the innermost circle" (308). She sees them as family because they are all parts of her self and yet they are all complete individuals. In this alternate world, which is much better than her own time and where all problems are solved because it all takes place in her bisexual consciousness, Connie creates a life for herself in the body of Luciente and she watches this happy life as an outsider. Waugh explains this with reference to three utopian writers -Lessing, Russ and Piercy:

the impulse to connect, to dissolve the boundaries of the corporeal, is intentionally projected on to the material world itself in the image of a new and better society. The alienation and estrangement from their bodies experienced by the female protagonists as a consequence of their gender positioning releases a desire for transformation not simply of the body as an individual corporeal unit, but of the whole social structure (170).

The more Connie learns about her others the more conscious she becomes of her own othering by the society. Her others in Mattapoisett help Connie break free of her constructed self and get in touch with her true nature.

Considered "other" by society, Connie cannot be heard in the symbolic order and that is why she turns to the others inside herself who hear her and who talk back. Bartkowski explains the opening of the novel as:

a moment where 'light' (Luciente) first appears in her life, and one which precipitates her encounter with madness and the ways it is medicalized and institutionalized by a society which doubts, and often does not hear, the words of women (62).

It is not surprising therefore that Connie's first contact is with a person who is a woman with a masculine appearance. The fact that Connie no longer feels sexual, the kind of feminine woman her society favours, might well be the result of her hysterectomy. After all she's been through she feels herself an old nobody at the age of thirty-seven. Such feelings may be the cause of her

assumption that Luciente –possibly Connie’s projected animus- is a man. A significant indicator of this is the scene in which Connie sees the image of Luciente trying to come out of a wound ripped open in Connie’s body: “suddenly she felt Luciente in her like a scream. Luciente came through her like a great wound ripping open that knocked her to the floor of the ward” (306). It is the image of her repressed other trying to come out and struggle against further repression. As Patricia Waugh suggests, the struggle that will lead to the achievement of a utopian vision depends on “the release of repressed desire” (211). Thus Connie’s others wake her up to the reality that she needs to struggle in her own time. This realisation comes when she comprehends that the war she thought she fought in Mattapoissett where she saw the doctors at the hospital and the government officials as the enemy, was in fact a harbinger of her need to fight against those authorities in the actual world (336).

The parallels between the two worlds make it obvious that this is Connie’s fantasy world: She is poor and hates rich people whereas this future world is a communist one. Connie has many hardships trying to look after her daughter and finally loses her to the authorities whereas in Mattapoissett people share the task by comothering. Connie is frustrated by having to leave college after her second year and still yearns for education, and in Mattapoissett everybody studies whatever they want for as long as they like. One last parallel is that Connie lacks a womb and in Mattapoissett women do not give birth but they use an artificial womb for that. Thus Connie learns from these other selves in her consciousness that there are alternatives to the life she is forced to live. She learns that all those norms and regularities she is made to conform with do not come naturally but they are cultural impositions.

As Connie raises her consciousness through her communication with her others, she begins gradually to realise that she has had this information in her all along. For example, she remembers the time when she rebelled against her mother telling her that she will never waste her life like her mother had

done. Elsewhere she realises the similarity between the way people in Mattapoissett name themselves and the way she herself plays with her own name. Leaving aside the surnames that reveal which father and which husband she belongs to, her first name embodies three different names:

I've always had three names inside me. Consuelo, my given name. Consuelo's a Mexican woman, a servant of servants, silent as clay. The woman who suffers. Who bears and endures. Then I'm Connie, who managed to get two years of college -till Consuelo got pregnant...Then I'm Conchita, the low-down drunken mean part of me who gets by in jail, in the bughouse, who loves no good men, who hurt my daughter (122).

Thus she declares her plurality and her awareness of it. She is not just an other to a husband or a mother to a child. She is also Connie and Conchita. She is also Luciente and Jackrabbit. Similarly people in Mattapoissett are quite aware of their plurality. After the naming ritual a person can go on changing names as s/he pleases. Names in this world do not indicate whose possession one is, they only indicate a person's choices or priorities in life: "In Mattapoissett, people can change their names whenever they feel that they have changed. This right is an expression of the self, of its continual growth and transformation" (Keulen 101). Both in their love relationships and in their families the people of Mattapoissett prefer plurality instead of oneness which is the idea that Irigaray proposes. In Luciente's words:

It's not the one-to-one bind you had with your daughter, from what you say. We have more space, more people to love us. We grow up closest to our mothers, but we swim close to all our mems...We have handfriends and pillowfriends among other children in the children's house....It's hard for me to inknow what it would feel like to love only *one* and have only *one* soul to love me (132-133).

The plurality of their own selves makes it possible to have such relationships. They are both men and women, mother and independent individual, artist and worker at once. This plurality results in wholeness and unity which leads to peace and harmony. There is no one soul-mate for everyone in Mattapoissett. As long as they can feel love, they may have relationships with different people of different sexes. Communication and acceptance of nature are the key factors of

their ease in remaining friends. Since their relationships are not defined by the symbolic law, these people can base their relationships on love and not on gender roles, power structures or personal benefit. This plurality is also reflected in the sharing of babies by three mothers. The family binary is thus broken and women's plurality takes its place. Even though one of the comothers can be a male, he is provided with breasts so that the other two mothers are not in any way privileged against him.

Connie is also a mother and her motherhood has a great effect on her awakening. As explained in the first chapter with reference to Cixous, a woman is both mother to her child and child of the mother at the same time. This is demonstrated in the novel through Connie and her relationship with her daughter. Connie's self-hatred and self-pity causes her to see herself in Angelina: "she had borne herself all over again, and it was a crime to be born poor as it was a crime to be born brown. She had caused a new woman to grow where she had grown, and that was a crime" (62). It is at times like this -when she sees her daughter as herself reborn- that she feels the need to get in touch with her other, Luciente: "She felt then that sense of approach almost as if someone were standing behind her wanting to come through, that presence brushing her consciousness" (62-63). Thus Connie's sufferings as a mother in the patriarchal world give birth to her other. Seeing the many m/others in Mattapoisett at first increases Connie's self-contempt and she feels relieved at the thought of leaving her daughter in the hands of these strong, happy and fulfilled women (141). Then, however, she comes to realise that letting go is an essential function in this semiotic world. In her dream where she comothers with Sojourner and Jackrabbit, she witnesses the oaths that the m/others take: "I'll mother you, love you, and let you go" (251). This is an important ritual which recalls the feminist argument that in order to transcend the boundaries of the symbolic and reach the semiotic one has to give birth to one's other, love him/her and free him/her from the repressed state. Patriarchy has attempted to distance Connie from the semiotic and made her subject to the symbolic by

taking out her womb. However, through her consciousness raising travels to Mattapoissett, Connie learns that with or without a womb, female or male, she still has a potential for motherhood. This awakening brings her closer to the bisexual thinking of the semiotic space and encourages her to fight against the symbolic order.

Piercy thus breaks the mother myth of patriarchy which is used as a tool to control women's bodies and to confine them into the role of self-sacrificing mothers. Her portrayal of artificial reproduction results in the elimination of the family as a social unit and provides an appreciation of nature in terms of sexuality and thereby of life in general. In that sense Keulen believes that Piercy fulfills the demands that Shulamith Firestone deems necessary for humanity in *The Dialectic of Sex*⁶ (Keulen 70-71). Firestone and some other radical feminists believe that women should go for a biological revolution because reproduction technologies are in the hands of male scientists and this gives them an enormous power over women: "Firestone believed that when women and men stop playing substantially different roles in the reproductive drama, it will be possible to eliminate all sexual roles" (Tong 74). The contrast Piercy draws between Connie's abuse by the male doctors in the hospital and the lack of sexual or social classes she witnesses in Mattapoissett, reveals the subject-object positions that are present in Connie's patriarchal world. Piercy manages to deconstruct these positions by decentring not only the language and institutions but also the technology of Mattapoissett.

Throughout the novel the male scientists's control over Connie is emphasised. She becomes the subject of their experiments without her own will but with the permission of other males in her life. The doctors even refer to the patients as "subjects" when they are talking among themselves as Dr. Redding does: "This won't do. We need more. You've got to scan more records. We might even locate some subjects on the chronic wards" (94). As if shopping for

⁶ Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. New York: Bantam, 1970.

a sweater, the doctors hunt for suitable “subjects” for their dangerous and invasive experiments. Thus the patients become others to the doctors as women are others to men. The doctors are so powerful that they are even able to control the patients’ feelings. They invade Connie’s brain to make it give the *right* reactions which exclude anger:

Suddenly she thought that these men believed feeling itself a disease, something to be cut out like a rotten appendix. Cold, calculating, ambitious, believing themselves rational and superior, they chased the crouching female animal through the brain with a scalpel (282).

Just as they kill Skip’s integrated self and other by *normalising* him, they try to stop Connie’s awakening others in order to place her in the appropriate object position in the symbolic order: “She felt distanced from her own life...She could not resume her life. Therefore Connie was no more” (302). The invasion of her body by the doctors of patriarchy starts with her unrequested hysterectomy and ends thus with her gradual death of self. From the point of view of patriarchy her treatment is successful because she can no longer contact her others which means that she can no longer move out of the symbolic to reach the semiotic: “Since they had implanted the dialytrode, she had not been able to reach over on her own, not to the right future, the one she wanted” (326).

In Mattapoisett the absence of such technologies and the dismissal of human beings, male or female, from reproduction technology help emphasise patriarchy’s power over science. Since it has been shown by Carter that a female-controlled reproduction technology is equally oppressive, the people of Mattapoisett seem to have found the best solution in creating an artificial womb and thus leaving human body out of the business of birth. Becoming conscious of the possibility of such an alternative, Connie realises that her object position is not a must but might be altered. Thus, although she is at first offended by the brooder in Mattapoisett, after becoming aware of her forced position in the system she understands the importance of the brooder. Through the contrast between the two worlds, Connie comes to see the constructedness

of her self and when she manages to communicate with her others- the m/others of Mattapoisett- she realises her own plurality.

The concept of the other is thus handled in Piercy's novel with great thoroughness. Connie's interactions with her others begin with Luciente and then she meets all the female and male m/others in Mattapoisett. As she discovers their plurality, she discovers that her own one-dimensional role is not natural but learned. While unlearning patriarchy's impositions, she begins to know her own self as plural and independent. The issue of motherhood, which has been bothering her for a long time, takes on a whole different meaning when she realises that the definition of a good mother in patriarchal terms was a myth. She learns to dispossess and let go. Her inner journey takes her to her self as the m/other and only then does she become aware of her position as a subject in the symbolic law. Since her consciousness is raised by the m/others in Mattapoisett, she manages to fight back at least once before they kill her for good.

CHAPTER V

THE VOICE OF THE MOTHER

“song, the first music of the voice of love,
which every woman keeps alive.”
(Cixous 1986b: 93)

Derrida considers writing as mouthpiece to the divine voice of the soul. For the feminists it is more than the soul. First of all, since we are talking about bisexual minds, it is the voice of the bisexual mind which does not perceive everything as binaries; but on the contrary, appreciates unity. Then, it is the rhythms of the body: rhythms emerging from the movements of bodily fluids. Through these rhythms of the body a link is provided with the pre-symbolic and thus a connection is established with the body of the m/other. The voice, then, gets its owner in touch with the source: the chora. Chora is the place where the voice resides. It is the place where the mother gives and receives. Mother's voice is alive in every woman because “woman is never far from the ‘mother’” (Cixous 1986b: 94). This touch with the m/other also gives way to the voice of the others. Woman, who is plural both in terms of her sexuality and in terms of her self, embraces all the others together with the m/other. She lets her others speak through her without any repression. Her bisexual mind prevents hierarchy, listens to all the voices inside and speaks with those voices. These are all rhythms and ruptures in Kristevan terms. The voice is pre-symbolic; there are no words. It is the song of the body.

In *Passion*, there are several voices to be discussed in terms of *écriture féminine*. First there is the narrator's voice which stands for the voice of the bisexual mind. The second is the voice of Mother that Evelyn hears while waiting to be reborn in the symbolic womb. Throughout his/her transformation,

Eve/lyn hears women's voices, that is, the others' voices. These voices have a double purpose: both to raise Eve/lyn's consciousness as a woman in a man's world and also to introduce Eve/lyn to these others. Last but not least is the author's voice which is equally important since she is the composer and conductor of this orchestra of various voices.

In Piercy's *Woman*, the voices are first and foremost in Connie's head. She escapes from the autocratic place where she is silenced by scientists, brothers and husbands to the semiotic space, Mattapoissett, where she can listen to the voices of her others. These voices and their songs are significant in her journey towards self-realisation. They help Connie open up her eyes to the reality, as mothers trying to wake up their children. Furthermore, there are the voices of the other women in Connie's patriarchal world and they indicate the solidarity of women against their suppression and subjugation; while drawing a contrast with the equal, plural and free status of the women in Mattapoissett. At the end of this chapter it will be clear that the aim of these clashing voices is the same: to awaken Connie and show her the truth.

In *Left Hand*, it is the multiplicity and the variety of the narrative voices that first attracts the attention of the feminist reader. Le Guin uses different voices with different styles to take the reader through Genly Ai's experience. Listening to the various voices that tell different tales or myths, both Genly and the reader go through an experience in which they are educated about the true nature of Gethenian people. Therefore the voices of the novel have an equally significant effect on the reader and Genly in terms of getting them acquainted with a bisexual society while at the same time emphasising the inevitable plurality of the voices in such a society. These narrative shifts and other elements of the voice related both to Gethen and to Genly will be analysed in this part of the study.

4.1.1 Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*

Among the various voices in the novel, the narrator's voice is the most important because it is the voice of a person who has already been through the whole experience of manhood, womanhood and both at once. Eve/lyn is already a complete person with a bisexual mind at the point s/he starts telling the story. Whether or not Carter intended it to be that way, Eve/lyn's voice is a mouthpiece for the French feminists calling everyone to listen to the voices inside themselves and let these voices speak. After finishing the novel and realizing the twofold nature of Eve/lyn, one thinks of his/her voice and the way s/he speaks. After all it is not just an ego but a chorus of an anima, an animus, several others and a mother that is doing the talking. Eve/lyn is not one but many, therefore his/her voice is not of one but of many as well. That is why, on a second reading of the novel one may pay attention to the existence of these many voices in between Eve/lyn words. Sometimes it is Evelyn the man who is narrating the events, sometimes Eve, sometimes both, sometimes it is the mother inside Eve/lyn, sometimes it is the other(s). For instance, when Eve/lyn speaks about his experiences as a man with Leilah, his voice comes and goes between Evelyn and Eve. While narrating how he abused Leilah, s/he uses Evelyn's voice: "I was nothing but cock" (25). However, when s/he wants to relate events from Eve's point of view, she is more frank: "I was a perfect, sanctimonious hypocrite. Nothing was too low for me to stoop to if it meant I could get rid of her" (33). That way the narrator's voice oscillates between him and her, looking at what had happened from different angles, yet with a sense of wholeness.

Similarly, Eve/lyn narrates the events at the house of Zero with several voices: Eve's, Evelyn's and other women's. S/he speaks for all the wives of Zero and for all the women in similar situations. His/her voice thus turns into a mouthpiece for all exploited women. As s/he experiences becoming a woman, she begins to listen to the voices of his/her body and with his/her bisexual mind

s/he interprets these voices so as to understand human nature as it is, rather than as it has been imposed upon him previously. S/he listens to the voice of Mother and later on s/he discovers that s/he has the same mother voice inside him/herself when s/he lets it speak to the child commander of the crusaders. Thus Eve/lyn gets in touch with all the voices Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray talk about, and instead of repressing these voices, s/he embraces them, listens to them and lets them speak to the reader. From that point on it is up to the reader to discover those voices and feel them inside their own body and mind.

The loudspeakers in Beulah have an important part in Eve/lyn's becoming what s/he is. When he is first taken there, he hears female voices telling him what to do. However, it is not always a voice that he hears but sometimes it is a silence which is an important characteristic of *écriture féminine*: "The voice was followed by a silence so depthlessly profound, so implacable, I knew it was the inhuman silence of the inner earth and I was far from the light of the sun" (50). This is the beginning of Evelyn's encounter with his femininity. Since he is yet to learn that there is a she inside him, he considers that silence inhuman. Later on, after too much exposure to those voices, he not only learns how to listen but also how to speak that voice. The voices give him lectures as well -lectures aimed at tearing down the learned dogmas of patriarchy and replacing them with Mother's philosophy:

Man lives in historicity; his phallic projectory takes him onwards and upwards -but to where? Where to but to the barren sea of infertility, the craters of the moon! Journey back, journey backwards to the source! (53).

Thus the voice calls Evelyn from the symbolic boundaries of the Father to the source inside Mother: the Chora.

The scene of Evelyn's intercourse with Mother is quite significant in terms of the voice. Here Evelyn first hears the voice of Mother which is "like an orchestra composed entirely of cellos" (60). Then he hears "a prolonged chord of savage music followed by a chorus of women's voices uttering a stuttering, invocatory yowl: 'Ma-ma-ma-ma-ma-ma'" (60-61). This scene

recalls Kristeva's description of the semiotic as ruptures in poetic language. Kristeva explains that the semiotic appears as rhythms and intonations within the symbolic language. Evelyn witnesses the semiotic with all its rhythms, invocations and incantatory music. Right before the intercourse, there is an invocation to the moon, the queens, the goddesses and the mothers (61-62), the ritual continues as a dialogue between Mother and Sophia. Thus Evelyn's lectures continue even during the intercourse:

- To be a *man* is not a given condition but a continuous effort.
- Don't you know you're lost in the world?
- Mama lost you when you fell out of her belly. Mama lost you years and years ago, when you were tiny.
- Come to me, you frail little creature! Come back where you belong!(63)

Hearing these voices Evelyn turns back to the mother's body, reunites with her and remembers the source. After this, Mother continues to lecture Evelyn in order to get him ready for the sex-change operation. Since he is going to become a she, he has to begin thinking like a she. Hence Mother's warning: "And you've abused women, Evelyn, with this delicate instrument that should have been used for nothing but pleasure. You made a weapon of it!" (65-66). Evelyn already feels that his weapon is useless before the gigantic Mother. This is exactly what Mother wants him to think because she wants Evelyn to consent to his own castration. She wants Evelyn to willingly turn into a woman. Mother then announces her intention behind this operation. She intends to create a woman out of a man in order to prove that woman is not the other who lacks:

Hail, Evelyn, most fortunate of men! You're going to bring forth the Messiah of the Antithesis!...Woman has been the antithesis in the dialectic of creation quite long enough...I'm about to make a start on the feminisation of Father Time (67).

Thus Mother's voice attempts at awakening Evelyn to the patriarchal facts and to convert him to the matriarchal opposite. Even though Mother's ideology is as totalitarian as the Father's, her voice and what it says are significant because it is this voice that takes Evelyn back to the semiotic to make a fresh start.

After Evelyn is castrated and given a “fructifying female space” (68), a new voice comes forth: women’s voices. These voices stand for the voice of femininity in general or the voice of others. The function of these voices is to educate Eve in order to raise her consciousness for the feminine cause. To this end, women at Beulah make Eve watch movies which depict women of Hollywood as illusions designed only for the male gaze: “this is what you’ve made of women! And now you yourself become what you’ve made...Certainly the films that spun out a thread of illusory reality before my dazed eyes showed me all the pain of womanhood” (71). This is how Eve/lyn comments on his/her ironic condition. There are constant voices in Eve/lyn’s cell. S/he is never left in silence. The movies are followed by video-tape sequences which “consisted of reproductions of...every single Virgin and Child that had ever been painted in the entire history of Western European art...accompanied by a sound track composed of the gurgling of babies and the murmuring of contented mothers” (72). As Eve/lyn also realises, these sequences are intended to awaken her maternal instincts. Another sequence aims at familiarizing Eve/lyn with his/her brand new womb: “a variety of non-phallic imagery such as sea-anemones opening and closing; caves, with streams issuing from them; roses opening to admit a bee; the sea, the moon” (72). Although Carter’s obvious intention here is to satirise the patriarchal society and its exactly similar ways to brainwash women into becoming sacrificing mothers and to accept all the clichéd metaphors ascribed to them, yet the scene may also be read as an indication of how powerful and effective the voices can be. These voices together with the imagery can well be used to familiarise a woman with her own body since many women are estranged to their own bodies through the norms of patriarchal society. In that sense the teachings of the women of Beulah prove useful and can be exemplary.

Other than these visuals, Eve/lyn also listens to the voice of Sophia whose name is quite fit for the occasion:

She would read me accounts of barbarous customs such as female circumcision...and remind me of how fortunate I was that Mother, by a positive miracle of surgery, had been able to provide me with just such a magic button of my very own. She told me how the Ancient Chinese had crippled their women's feet; the Jews had chained the ankles of their women together; and the Indians ordered widows to immolate themselves on the pyres of their husbands (73).

Thus Eve/lyn not only learns about the horrible exploitation of women by men all over the world, but s/he also realises that women, let alone lack anything, have their own magic button –the clitoris. So the story of the fear of castration is turned upside down. The voice of a conscious mother, together with all the other voices in and out of her body, may teach her daughter that she is not castrated and does not lack anything, on the contrary, she has a wonderful gift of her own. That way, through the symbolic, the semiotic can be practised and the patriarchal myths can be deconstructed and reconstructed according to actual facts rather than lies disguised as facts.

Zero's seven wives are also significant in the way they represent others' voices. Obviously they are women under the rule of a phallogratic man and as such they stand for every other woman in a similar situation: suppressing their own sexuality, obeying men's rules, submitting to all kinds of degradation and exploitation. Although these seven wives are rivals of one another for the attention of Zero, when left to themselves they are more like sisters taking care of each other. That is why, even though Zero forbids human language to them, still they talk to each other through whispers. This recalls women's endeavour to communicate their own experience using men's language. Zero, being a representative of patriarchy, uses an animal-like language that does not make any sense to anyone, in order to keep his women under his rule:

So our first words every morning were spoken in a language we ourselves could not understand; but he could. Or so he claimed, and, because he ruled the roost and his word was law, it came to the same thing. So he regulated our understanding of him and also our understanding of ourselves in relation to him (96-97).

Although they outnumber Zero, they can never overrule him because they are constantly competing among themselves for his attention which results from

their misbelief that their health will deteriorate unless they make love to him. Yet this does not prevent them from loving one another either. In the absence of Zero, disguised by the darkness of the night, fears left aside, these women find no harm in caressing each other (106). Thus Eve/lyn learns a lot from these women through their whispered conversations as to the functioning of the patriarchal system and the place of women in it. Thus Eve/lyn's consciousness keeps being raised. Just as "the mediation of Zero" turns Eve/lyn into a "savage woman", "his wives, with their faces of ancient children, who so innocently consented to be less than human, filled me with an angry pity...My anger kept me alive" (107-108). Eve/lyn thus gets in touch with women's world, feeling the oppressions of patriarchy in every fibre of his/her being both as a man and as a woman.

When s/he and Tristessa fall into the hands of patriarchy one more time, Eve/lyn hears a familiar voice; the voice of the Father, that is, the Colonel. "I am the scourge of Christ" he announces (155) before one of his soldiers kills Tristessa. Despite his/her fears and the murder, Eve/lyn cannot help his/her maternal instincts and sees these soldiers for what they really are: as children. Through them Carter ironically reveals the racist, discriminating, bigoted, sexist, murderous nature of patriarchy no matter how innocent, religious, humanist, democratic it seems. Thus s/he learns how to distinguish between the two kinds of voices: the mother's voice and the father's voice. Although Mother's teachings have been as autocratic as the Father's, having escaped her prison and having been through all those experiences, Eve/lyn manages to find the middle way by combining the two voices in his/her mind and thereby creating a unison. It is then that s/he comes back to where he has started, back to the chaos of the city, back to the "beginning of the beginning" (166) which is in accordance with the circularity of femininity. Only then does s/he begin to see that chaotic world for what it really is with its facts and its illusions. S/he comes across Leilah one more time which is very fitting for a return to the beginning. S/he goes on another journey back to the womb to find Mother and

there in the cave before seeing her, s/he hears her sing. Thus the journey of life, which begins with the song of the mother, makes yet another beginning again with the song.

One final voice that requires attention is the voice of the author herself. Although most of the time Carter is ironic, satirising the myths, the psychoanalysts and also the feminists who criticise the psychoanalysts, still it is Carter's voice that gives the narrator his/her bisexual tone. Whether intentionally or unintentionally Carter gives her protagonist a bisexual mind which fits perfectly to the definitions of *écriture féminine*; and, even if Carter had not intended her novel to be a feminist one, still such a reading is possible.

4.1.2 Marge Piercy's *The Woman on the Edge of Time*

Whether or not she is a schizophrenic, Consuelo hears voices and these voices make up a significant part of the novel. Connie is a mother trying to make her own voice heard but most of the time she is silenced by people more powerful than her. Thus she turns inward and, distancing herself from the symbolic law, she finds a semiotic space where her suppressed voices can find an outlet. Only there is she able to give voice to the others in her consciousness. These others are first and foremost Luciente, and the (m)others in Mattapoisett. In that semiotic space Connie also hears many songs. Besides these voices stemming from Connie's consciousness and her chora, there are also the voices of women in the mental institution and these voices represent the sisterhood that is trying to be destroyed by patriarchy for fear of a rebellion.

The reader meets Consuelo while she is having doubts concerning the male voice she has been hearing. She is not certain whether it is a hallucination or not and throughout the novel Luciente contacts Connie first -and sometimes only- as a voice and then as a presence. Connie's first impression of Luciente as an effeminate man might be read as hearing the voice of the masculine self from the semiotic chora. Either because of her hysterectomy and her feelings of

unfemininity, or because of her need for a masculine self, Connie begins to hear Luciente's voice: "all of the month before she had been hallucinating with increasing sharpness a strange man. That she had dreamed and then waking-dreamed and finally seen on the streets that same smooth Indio face" (31). As she is cast out by the patriarchal system, she turns inward and manages to get in touch with her others. Luciente's voice guides her deep down into the semiotic and thus Connie becomes familiar with her self remembering the voices she has repressed long ago and forgot. During their preliminary contacts the narrator refers to Luciente as "the voice" using free indirect speech. Therefore it is Connie who thinks of Luciente as a voice: " 'What should I call you?' the voice had asked. High-pitched, almost effeminate voice, but pleasant and without any trace of accent" (36). Since people who step out of the symbolic order and emerge in the semiotic are considered mad by society, it is a legitimate assumption that Luciente is a voice trying to reach Connie from the long forgotten chora. Luciente says: "I'm *here*. I've been trying to reach you. But you get frightened, Connie" (40, writer's emphasis). Her fear is natural since human beings are taught to suppress any voice that would prevent them from playing their appropriate role in society. Elsewhere, yearning to be a part of the life going on outside the hospital, Connie begins to think of Luciente as a friend and right at that moment she gets a response with a voice in her mind. The voice then offers to take her into her space (97). At one point during her back and forth mind travels, Connie admits: "A voice in her ears, good-natured, chiding: Luciente as a fraction of her mind, as a voice of an alternate self, talking to her in the night" (252).

When Luciente takes Connie to Mattapoisett for the first time, there she hears many other voices and meets many m/others both male and female. However this non patriarchal world is too much to take in at once for Connie. Overwhelmed by the plurality of the semiotic "[t]he voices seemed to drift around her" (78) and she has to turn back to the world of the symbolic. Gradually, as she gets deeper into this world and becomes acquainted with the

ways of the semiotic, Connie begins to know her own self. Knowing the others in Mattapoissett brings her closer to her own femininity she thought she had lost long ago. The voices she hears there remind her that life is about choices: choosing to mother, choosing to learn, choosing to work, choosing to go down in the madhouse. Compared to this world of freewill, the life Connie is made to live has always been a prison. The voices inside her mind are aware of her confinement and try to help her free herself. It is Jackrabbit's voice that she hears when the drugs she is given force her to leave the semiotic:

We'd be stupid not to sense you're confined wrongly. That you hurt and sadden there and no one seems to want to help you heal. That you're fed drugs that wound your body. Enjoy us. Don't fade from old pain and return to present pain. Guest here awhile (127).

It is not only men's and women's voices instructing her about the true nature of human life. Music, songs, poems are part of the many voices Connie hears throughout her mind travel. Music in Mattapoissett takes different forms as the rhythm of the semiotic or songs of the mother. The most striking example of that is the brooder where "music was playing, strange to her ears but not unpleasant" (101). So the artificial womb they have built guests the embryos with music just as the chora nourishes a baby with rhythm and music. The babies listen to music, voices speaking and heartbeat. Thus Luciente leads Connie to this space of the chora where she can once again hear the music and remember where she came from. In another scene related to birth, Connie is out of the hospital, on the run, dreaming of the brooder in Mattapoissett. In her dream she hears songs sang by the babies inside: "The embryos in the brooder swam and sang to her, a fish song that did not bubble but vibrated directly into her body, into her midriff; they were bobbing and schooling and serenading her" (249). Thus the mother becomes the child listening to the song of the chora and the child becomes the mother singing the song of the female body. After Connie wakes up, Luciente appears as a voice singing in her ear and telling her that birth is no longer a gender-specific act.

Added to these songs of mothers are the songs different voices sing for love, for death, for life and for their people. Their rituals are always performed through rhythm and dance. For example on the death of Jackrabbit they express their grief for the loss of a friend through their voices and bodies. Diana begins to sing accompanied by a cello, a flute and a drum: “Her voice began softly, sobbing, wordless but musical, used like a fourth instrument higher than the cello but lower than the flute” (316). Then Erzulia dances as a part of the ritual yet “[s]he did not dance in trance but consciously, and she did not dance as herself. She danced Jackrabbit. Yes, she became him” (316). These are not the kinds of religious behaviours that would find themselves a place in the symbolic order. They are rather free expressions of the body and mind channeled through the semiotic. One cannot comprehend the expression of grief in these acts if one looks for a meaning in the symbolic sense. As Erzulia continues to dance in this way, she turns into Erzulia -Jackrabbit and the narrator describes her as a two-headed being then. When Bolivar joins the dance and his body becomes fluid, their dance feels like waters flowing elegantly and once again their plurality is emphasised. In the final part of the ritual everybody begins to sing a lullaby: “Nobody knows/How it flows/As it goes./Nobody goes/Where it rose/As it flows” (317). This is the song Connie remembers from the nursery. It is the lullaby the m/others sing to the babies. Therefore a dead person is farewelled by the same song that babies are welcomed. Thus birth and death are united by the mother’s song and another binary is broken. Through their songs and poems the m/others in Mattapoissett unite all nature in themselves as they unite male and female, birth and death, self and all others:

Only in us do the dead live. Water flows downhill through us. The sun cools in our bones. We are joined with all living in one singing web of energy. In us live the dead who made us. In us live the children unborn. Breathing each other’s air, drinking each other’s water, eating each other’s flesh, we grow like a tree from the earth (322-323).

Another song they sing upon Jackrabbit's death is an invocation to a baby floating in a stream, growing inside the brooder (321).

There are many other songs in the world of Mattapoisett, all of them about nature. For instance after finishing picking blackberries, a child and an old man sing together: "Thank you for fruit./We take what we need./Other animals will eat. /Thank you for fruit,/ carrying your seed./What you give is sweet./Live long and spread!" (279). Luciente then explains to Connie that this is a song they sing to every tree or bush whenever they pick their fruit. Similarly, even when they are at war, people of Mattapoisett express themselves through poetry as Otter does. She responds to Connie's surprise as follows: "We're close to death. Then it's natural to write poems, no? And we fall like leaves...." (330). All these songs and poems talk about nature and the body's close relation to it. That is why they are poems or songs about people carrying pebbles instead of words on their tongues (309); people who feel like grass "combed by the wind" (311); people with mouths which taste "sweet as ripe grapes" and which "bleed like ripe purple grapes" (320).

Another important scene related to the images and sounds of the semiotic is when Connie watches the holi Jackrabbit has prepared. Besides the content of the holi, Connie's reaction to it is also significant: "If she tried to think about what the images were supposed to mean, she felt miserable. But if she looked with her eyes open and let them happen to her, she could not help getting drawn in" (265). This explanation suggests that Connie is at a loss when she tries to define the holi in the symbolic order. However, when she lets everything flow through her, she too flows with the images. Therefore she learns opening herself to the semiotic and putting aside the symbolic. As for the content of the holi, it is filled with images of nature: "Boundaries dissolving. The sea rising, smashing into the land. Under a clear cold blue sky a sea lashed itself into foam and sprang at the shore. Waves with teeth that glistened...Wave breaking over wave..." (265). These images are very much like the images which are a part of Evelyn's consciousness raising programme in

Beulah. Waters and waves which are images related to the female body and its fluidity are thus common in these novels of *écriture féminine*.

Unlike the peaceful bisexual voices of Mattapoissett, it is a male voice that brings Connie to the reality of the hospital ward, telling the patients to get up (189). In contrast with the bisexual voices of the semiotic in Mattapoissett are the voices of women in the mental institution. These are women whom patriarchy tries to silence. To that end they are labeled *mad* and confined in such institutions. The voices of these women do not make any sense in the symbolic order and patriarchy considers them a threat to the system. They are a threat because any time women might establish a powerful sisterhood and their voices might take over society. Therefore any kind of solidarity between women should be prevented. Heterosexualism and the female-male binary serve this purpose by establishing a norm that keeps same-sex human beings apart. That is why Connie finds proximity to Luciente so uncomfortable when they first attempt a travel together: “Hardly ever did she embrace another woman along the full length of their bodies, and it was hard to ease her mind” (67). The same precautions are taken to silence women like Sybil who help their sisters. Sybil is thus labeled a witch and is cast out. She poses a threat to patriarchy because she is the kind of woman who stands up against injustice, who makes her voice heard and who fights not only for herself but also for other women:

Sybil *was* persecuted for being a practising witch, for telling women how to heal themselves and encouraging them to leave their husbands, for being lean and crazily elegant and five feet ten in her bare long high-arched feet, for having a loud, penetrating voice and back that would not stoop and a temper that stood up in her (84).

Connie likes this woman a lot because in her she sees the fighter she herself could never become. Communication with Sybil helps Connie see things more clearly. Sybil sets an example for Connie in becoming a fighter instead of finding faults with her own self and plunging into self-hatred. Sybil is wise and open-minded enough to see through the illusions of patriarchy: “I think we’re

taught we want sex when we feel unhappy or lacking something. But often what we want is something higher” (85).

Most of the time voices of female *patients* and voices of male doctors collide as when Joan’s consciousness begins to stream. The hospital staff call it “a word salad” because it is nonsense, however it is an eruption of her chora. Since she knows no other language than the symbolic she lets it flow through the symbolic without an effort to make sense to anyone:

They come and come and come again. Scrape it off the ceiling. Bad girl. Bad! Eat it for breakfast. Knock, knock, who’s there. Across it up and cross it off. A double cross. Come in and come out. All over, ugh, dirty. Dirty girl. Knock, knock. It’s a dirty bird. ... (86-87).

Another female *patient* who gets a hysterectomy instead of an abortion “had gone into withdrawal shock, which made her a quiet patient” (159). For the doctors quieting a patient is a success no matter what means are used. There is also Alice whose brain is violated by the insertion of a device that decides how she should feel. As a result “Alice seemed closer to being mad than she ever had” (261). Another woman who comes to Connie as a voice just like Luciente is Gildina. When Connie accidentally mind travels to that alternate future, Gildina’s voice guides her through the possible future for women if they kept fulfilling male desires and obeying patriarchy’s system. Thus women’s experiences are shared as various voices in the novel following Cixous’ suggestion of writing about the female experience. Strong women like Sybil as well as oppressed women like Connie or Alice; or reconstructed and imprisoned women like Gildina each reveal their own experiences in their own ways.

It is all these voices that wake Connie up to the truth and give her a motivation to struggle. Thanks to the struggling voices of women in the ward and the enlightening voices of the m/others in Mattapoissett, Connie manages to feel her true self for once. Although she is silenced just like her sisters in the end, she feels fulfilled because she has fought and even though she no longer is receptive, she thinks of Mattapoissett. Once the clouds are cleared and the sky is

seen, there is no illusion that can make her forget that reality. The voices in her head, the voices of her others residing in her chora introduce Connie to her real self which is plural and bisexual. The medical reports at the end of the novel portray the mistaken perceptions of the male doctors -such as their unreliable account of Connie's brother Luis- when they are compared with the other voices in the novel. Thus these reports contribute to the reliability of Connie's voice which "is always validated against the 'voice' of the state institutions through which she is transported and 'translated'" (Bartkowski 53). To sum up, all the voices Connie hears and her own voice which finds its way throughout her journey, lead Connie to her awakening. Like a mother waking up her child, these sometimes contrasting and sometimes harmonious voices draw a picture of reality for Connie and thus invite her to action.

4.1.3 Ursula LeGuin's *The Left Hand of Darkness*

The plurality of Le Guin's bisexual society is reflected in the plurality of the voices in the novel. There are constant shifts in the narration as a result of which the reader walks through Gethen following different voices, hence different points of view. Besides Genly Ai and the Investigator as outsiders and Estraven as an insider, there are also the myths, records and tales which contribute to this multiplicity while informing the reader about the ways of this exceptional nation. Furthermore, certain traditions and technologies of both Gethenians and Genly also fall under the category of the voice as well as the occasional eruptions of the semiotic.

Since the relationship between Genly and Estraven is significant in leading Genly toward his self-realisation, their narrative voices are equally significant. The narrative shifts between these two characters give the reader a double perspective just as in *Passion*, however this time it is two different characters instead of a bisexual one. Thus events can be evaluated from Genly's -hence the reader's- heterosexist and patriarchal point of view on the

one hand, while on the other hand they can be considered from Estraven's bisexual and decentred point of view. For example, the scene where Genly and Estraven journey back to Karhide after Estraven helps Genly escape from prison in Orgoreyn, Estraven's kemmer state and its effects on both characters are narrated first by Genly and then in a different chapter by Estraven. This not only provides a different angle but also makes sure that the positions shift and no one takes the lead. It is also an emphasis on the equality and sameness of Genly and Estraven. As Keulen agrees:

[d]ifferent narrators, using different dictions (journal, report, saga), provide several points of view and see the same event from different angles. LeGuin does not allow any one perspective to become absolute, since she sees truth as relative (41).

Keulen further argues that the complementary aspect of Genly and Estraven's narrations "reflects the basic theme of duality in unity, related to androgyny and the Yin Yang school" (41).

At the beginning of the novel Genly Ai declares that it is not a story of a single consciousness who might be considered the authority. On the contrary, the story has no owner and not one protagonist: "But it is all one, and if at moments the facts seem to alter with an altered voice, why then you can choose the fact you like best; yet none of them are false, and it is all one story" (2). At the beginning of his journey Genly has a discussion with an interior voice (27). This is before he understands the nature of Gethenians and consequently achieves self-realisation. That is why, the voice inside him –the voice of the biased man from the Ekumen- tells him: "The first news from the Ekumen on any world is spoken by one voice, one man present in the flesh, present and alone....One voice speaking truth is a greater force than fleets and armies" (27). Genly manages to outrule that voice by resorting to silence and throughout his journey manages to realise that this kind of authoritarian oneness is not compatible with the nature of beings. He realises the *écriture féminine* kind of oneness which stems from the unity of many. The fact that most of the time, at the beginning of a new chapter the identity of the narrator

is ambiguous unless an explanatory subtitle is given also adds to the idea that no matter who tells the story and in what manner, there is a unity and harmony. Thus Le Guin takes several voices and merges them in one story thereby conforming to Irigaray's call to multiplicity.

Besides their plurality, the narratives have variety as well. The myths and tales embedded in the narrative usually come as sound-recordings and bring in a different voice –the voice of the story-teller. For example, the story of the two brothers in the second chapter is a sound recording by an unknown narrator. According to Jeanne Murray Walker, the multiplicity of the narrators or the ambiguity of their identity “indicates that they have been distilled and shaped by an entire society” (64). This outlook suggests the unity of these various voices. It is not important who the narrator is as long as the story is told and helps the reader understand the events that have happened or the events yet to come. In that respect “The Place inside the Blizzard” is a foreshadowing of Estraven's history with his brother. Similarly, the story called “The Nineteenth Day” (43) also prepares the reader for Genly's encounter with the Foretellers. Another different voice in the novel is the Investigator's in the form of field notes (89-97). This voice is significant since the Investigator explains in detail the peculiar physiology of Gethenians. It is significant both for the reader's and Genly's better understanding of the nature of Gethenians because everything in their society is based on their sexual cycle. Estraven's narratives sometimes come in the form of journals that he keeps daily and brings another different voice to the novel. Two other quite distinguished voices are the sermon of the Yomesh (162) and the Orgota creation myth (237) which help explain the traditions, beliefs, attitudes and the physiology of Gethenians together with all the other tales and sagas (Keulen 34).

This weblike structuring of the various voices in the novel also creates a sense of circularity. The linear conception of time is thus deconstructed by obliging the reader's mind to move back and forth:

Linearity in the narrated time is juxtaposed to mythical time and also there is a circularity in the novel as it begins in the Karhidish capital, Erhenrang, with a key-stone ceremony which prefigures the joining of Gethen and the Ekumen in the end (Keulen 42).

However, the concept of voice does not consist only of the narratives, there are also content related aspects of the voice in *Left Hand*. These aspects can be considered semiotic eruptions. For instance, Genly's description of the ceremonial music combines rhythm and madness in a Kristevan manner:

The gossiwor, played only in the king's presence, produces a preposterous disconsolate bellow. Forty of them played together shake one's reason, shake the towers of Erhenrang, shake down a last spatter of rain from the windy clouds. If this is the Royal Music no wonder the kings of Karhide are all mad (3).

An important image that recalls semiotic eruptions Kristeva talks about, is the voice of the Foreteller's rising out of darkness and silence as of the chora. It is the darkness of the Handdara and "out of that silence inexplicably rises the Foreteller's voice" (60). The Foretellers consist of celibates, zanies who are schizophrenics, a pervert –pervert in the Gethenian sense- and a Weaver whose title is quite symbolic since he is the one that gives the answer. Thus the circle of the Foretellers represent, as the rest of the Gethenians do, the unity and plurality of this society by getting united in the voice of the Weaver. The Foretellers gather around in a ritualistic circle and engage in an activity that is incomprehensible to an outsider like Genly:

For a while I saw Faxe's profile rigid as pale stone in a diffuse dust of light. The diagonal of moonlight crept on and came to a balck hump, the kemmerer, head bowed on his knees, hands clenched on the floor, body shaken by a regular tremor repeated by the *slutter-pat-pat* of the Zany's hands on stone in darkness across the circle. They were all connected, all of them, as if they were the suspension-points of a spiderweb. I felt, whether I wished or not, the connection, the communication that ran, wordless, inarticulate, through Faxe, and which Faxe was trying to pattern and control, for he was the centre, the Weaver (65).

These people of different sexualities and different mental states, get connected in a womb-like darkness and they communicate paraverbally as a semiotic

space like this can only exist in the absence of the symbolic order. However, the answer should be conveyed to the owner of the question within a symbolic frame. Hence the Weaver as the centre. He acts as a bridge between the semiotic space of the Foretellers and the symbolic space of language. When Genly tries to set a barrier in his mind against the silence of the Foretellers that lure him into the darkness, he finds himself in a chaotic space. His description of this state of mind is quite similar to the semiotic chora as explained by Kristeva:

I was surrounded by great gaping pits with ragged lips, vaginas, wounds, hellmouths, I lost my balance, I was falling....If I could not shut out this chaos I would fall indeed, I would go mad, and there was no shutting it out. The emphatic and paraverbal forces at work, immensely powerful and confused, rising out of the perversion and frustration of sex, out of an insanity that distorts time, and out of an appalling discipline of total concentration and apprehension of immediate reality, were far beyond my restraint or control (*Left Hand* 65-66).

Thus Genly also sets an example for the unintelligibility of the semiotic to human beings whose minds are shaped according to the notions of the symbolic order. Yet again, these experiences draw the contrast between Genly's learned assumptions and the nature of Gethenians, and thereby pave the way for his self-realisation in the end.

In the bisexual society of Karhide voices are important and that is why news and literature always reach the audience as voices: "Karhidiers do not read much as a rule, and prefer their news and literature heard not seen; books and televising devices are less common than radios, and newspapers don't exist" (29). This rule might prevent the subjective interpretation of written language and thus might bring people closer to truth despite the deceptive nature of words. In that respect a Hainish and not a Gethen activity makes use of the voice in a way that eliminates any kind of deception and brings out only the truth: mindspeech. The verb for mindspeech is "bespeak" which draws a line between this special activity and language. It is different from simply speaking to someone since one cannot lie in mindspeech. From Genly's description of

mindspeech, it seems as if it is a semiotic language that one learns before entering the symbolic order:

they say –mothers mindspeak to their unborn babies. I don't know what the babies answer. But most of us have to be taught, as if it were a foreign language. Or rather as if it were our native language, but learned very late (250).

Therefore they remember, or relearn if you will, an original language that is long forgotten. As Genly tries to teach Estraven how to bespeak, he draws a parallel between mindspeech and the Handdara which again suggests the resemblance of this activity to the semiotic. Estraven has to open himself to the source of mindspeak and receive first in order to be able bespeak himself. Mindspeech, therefore, indicates the fact that both Genly and Estraven have something to learn from one another so as to become an integrated individual. Thus privileging of one protagonist over another is avoided while unity and plurality are emphasised. The fact that Estraven hears Genly's voice as his brother Arek's voice when they mindspeak is also significant in contributing to the merging of the voices into one. Furthermore, Estraven –thanks to his bisexual nature- is already open to mindspeech whereas it is Genly who has to accept that nature and open himself even more to the semiotic potentials to be able to bespeak to Estraven.

Thus Genly's journey towards self-realisation is complete. His encounters with different personages in Gethen, his relationship with Estraven and the stories he hears lead him to a full understanding of the human nature that Le Guin proposes to the reader. Le Guin's suggestion is that a similar realisation of this society by the reader might improve the world. Keulen suggests that:

[a]s long as Genly Ai was confined to his masculinity, women were alien and incomprehensible to him, but when he accepts the androgynous Estraven and, consequently, his own feminine aspects, he perceives the shared qualities of all human beings, the links between them (106).

It is this kind of realisation that Le Guin intends to provoke in the reader via the harmonious chorus of many voices in her novel. As mentioned earlier, Le

Guin's objective is to raise questions in the reader's mind and the various voices in the novel contribute to this objective as explained by Keulen:

The different narrative perspectives also keep the reader from accepting any single point of view too easily. This leads to a certain estrangement which prevents simple answers to questions raised by LeGuin in *The Left Hand of Darkness* (41).

Le Guin opens up her chora and lets the semiotic flow through the pages of her novel towards the reader and hopes for a change in society. Thus she does all that can be expected of an *écriture féminine* writer.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The theories presented at the beginning of this study are discussed in relation to the selection of novels under the headings of bisexuality, the other and the voice. The discussion leads to the conclusion that all four novelists were concerned about the status of woman both as an individual in society and as a writer. They share these concerns with the reader in various ways. Carter portrays the experiences –both physical and mental- of a protagonist who starts out as a man with patriarchal notions and then gets castrated by the female leader of a matriarchal community. These experiences teach Evelyn what it is like to be a woman in a man's world. Woolf engages in a similar story and makes her protagonist experience both sides of the coin in different periods. Just like Evelyn, Orlando learns a lesson about the nature of humanity and the games people are forced to play for the sake of patriarchy. Piercy takes a different course and lets her protagonist observe a psychologically bisexual society as a time-traveler. However, this different approach does not distinguish her novel from the previous two because Connie too becomes a new person with a new outlook on humanity in the end. In that sense Le Guin's approach is similar to Piercy's. Genly Ai, like Connie, is an outside observer of a people who have moved beyond the binary system of patriarchy thanks to their unique physiology.

Passion and *Orlando* portray two main characters who experience intellectual bisexuality themselves while in *Woman* and *Left Hand* communities consisting of such intellectually bisexual people are presented. Although Le Guin's conflicts with the symbolic order keep her from solving the problem of the other in Gethen, the remaining three novelists manage to make their protagonists combine their self and other in one bisexual mind. As

for the voice, it can be heard in each novel as discussed in the last chapter only with the exception of *Orlando*. Although there is no evident eruption of the semiotic in Woolf's work, still during the process of reading the novel one might have the feeling that the whole novel comes from the semiotic source of the writer herself.

The final outcome of each novel is the same: self-realisation not only on the part of the protagonists but also of the writer and the reader. What is meant by self-realisation is the realisation of the true nature of human beings which is not divided into twos. The protagonists, therefore, first achieve this realisation on the individual level and then they consider it on a wider scale. In that sense Evelyn is capable of going on with his life only after he accepts the co-existence of his male self and female self. The whole story is told retrospectively after this acceptance and that is why Eve/lyn has a bisexual mind and hence a bisexual perspective throughout the narrative. S/he projects this idea of intellectual bisexuality on the whole society and thus presents the stories of Tristessa, Zero and Mother in different lights with his/her double perspective. For Orlando it is not as hard as for Evelyn to accept his female self since he is a poet always in touch with his femininity. However, his real adventure takes place when he has to discover the clashes between his nature and society's norms. Again with a double perspective Orlando reveals to the reader the artificiality of culture and the suppression of real human nature, its replacement with constructed and divided selves. Connie has access to a whole society of intellectually bisexual people and thus she has the opportunity to compare and contrast the two worlds. She compares the status of the women confined in the mental institution dominated by patriarchal authorities that use and abuse them, to the equal and free status of every single individual in Mattapoisett. Her constant travels between the two extremes help her make up her own mind about her own nature. She realises that her own world is a cultural construct whereas the other world embraces human beings just as they are. In *Left Hand* it is not only the visitor Genly Ai that learns something about

himself, his nature and Gethenians but Estraven also learns about the shortcomings they still have. The two of them find the right path only when they bring their minds together and form a unity. They learn to reflect that unity to all the institutions and individuals. Genly Ai realises the sexism of his society and learns to see every human being as a whole individual neither male nor female. Estraven realises that there are still problems of dualities –mainly the self/other duality- to be solved in his society. Thus the union of the narratives of the two protagonists give the reader an idea of the possibility of a perfect world for humanity.

One of the most essential points to consider in all these novels is that the realisation takes place only outside the boundaries of reality. Carter's novel is full of fantastic elements such as the Mother and her matriarchal troops. Orlando falls asleep and magically wakes up a woman; not to mention his/her centuries long life span. Connie either time-travels or experiences Mattapoisett in her schizophrenic mind. Le Guin's novel is set in an altogether different planet in the future. The reason for this break with reality can be explained with the chasm between the symbolic and the semiotic spaces. In order to portray psychological bisexuality, the self-other unity and the voice of the chora, the writer has to let the semiotic speak. However, as mentioned several times in the study, the semiotic on its own does not make sense to human beings whose minds depend on the notions of the symbolic order. Therefore, the writers have to put their creations of the semiotic within a symbolic frame. Hence, the world depicted in each novel is similar to our own yet it is interrupted every now and then by the semiotic world of the writer's imagination. This is how *écriture féminine* functions in fiction.

The use of *écriture féminine* in literature can be explained by pointing out what these novelists have achieved with their novels. First and foremost the novels are a means of raising the reader's consciousness. Following the protagonists' moves, the reader experiences the same self-realisation if s/he opens up him/herself to the semiotic in the act of reading. Thus each individual

that the novels reach will be a potential for making a difference in the whole society in the long run. The novels display the injustice, sexism and exploitation that take place in patriarchal societies and offer alternatives. They let the reader know that there are other possibilities and that the present system is not a given. *Écriture féminine* is an attempt at bringing women's minds together to create a much needed female culture. In that sense the aim of this study is to draw the reader's attention to the already existing examples of such a culture. The novels discussed here are individual examples which should be brought forward altogether to make up a canon of their own. Binary oppositions should be discarded, yet following Irigaray's proposal different sexualities should be emphasised. Since men are very much preoccupied with the phallus, the task is women's. The writers mentioned in this study set examples as to the opening of one's chora, reaching the semiotic and letting it leak into the symbolic. All these writers have given birth to many others by pouring their semiotic onto the pages of their novels. From that point onwards it is up to the reader to take on the task.

In the novels of Carter, Woolf, Piercy and Le Guin there are no Author-Gods and thereby no fixed meanings. The meaning in each novel is originated by a threesome: the writer, the characters and the reader. With each reading one of these components –the reader- is changed and thus a different meaning emerges. In other words the novels are rewritten with each reading. As Barthes suggests, the author is dead and the reader is born. Since these are all texts of bliss, in Barthesian terms, the reader has to join in the play of producing the text. Therefore, the meaning a reader will reach upon reading one of these novels will depend on that person's capacity to conceive the eruptions of the semiotic. That capacity is determined by the reader's openness to the semiotic. The more a reader listens to the voices coming out of the chora, the more s/he opens him/herself to his/her own semiotic. Thus, reading these novels teaches the reader not only how to listen to the voices but also how to speak with those voices, which is an essential element of consciousness raising.

This plurality in the originators of meaning is also enhanced by other factors. For example, by the plurality of the narrators in *Left Hand*. Another factor is the characters's sexuality: three of the main characters are both man and woman, and in *Woman* the guide of the main character –Luciente- has an oscillating sexuality. The double perspective of every protagonist contributes to the plurality as well. The minor characters also add to the plurality by their similarities to the protagonists because thus they prevent the main character from taking the lead. For that purpose there is Tristessa in *Passion*, the Duke in *Orlando*, Luciente in *Woman* and Estraven in *Left Hand*. They all have the same potential for self-realisation like the protagonists. Another very important element of plurality is the setting in each novel. There are various settings which make the reader move back and forth together with the characters. For instance, in all novels there is a patriarchal background to set a contrast with the revolutionary ideas the writers expose. There is Mother's Beulah, Zero's cottage, the New York setting, the desert and the cave in *Passion*; different places from West to East in different centuries, ships, castles, streets, carriages, gardens in *Orlando*; Connie's house, the mental institution, Luis's house, Mattapoissett and Gildina's apartment in *Woman*; Erhenrang, Orgoreyn, Karhide, the prison, the deserted space between Orgoreyn and Karhide in *Left Hand*. Since these are decentred texts, their structures are thus non-linear and circular moving around all those different settings.

What the world needs is letting go off the binaries and getting united in one. This unity and the absence of hierarchies will do away with power relations and eventually bring harmony. If that is achieved, one day words such as war and rape might cease to exist as in Gethen. Literature has a wide audience and thereby a great influence on human beings. Therefore *écriture féminine* should be put to use by more and more writers so that the ideas that promote unity and wholeness reach a wider audience. It is up to women and some exceptional men, then, to answer Cixous's call and be a part of *écriture féminine*. Only then will the world be a better place. That is why this study

intends to introduce *écriture féminine* and its practice to the literary circles who might not have heard of it yet. The novels discussed here are all open-ended; each ends with a new beginning –the beginning of a new self. One can only hope that anyone who reads these novels comes to a similar beginning and passes on the word via writing or speech.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

- MA in METU English Literature, 2003.

Thesis subject: “Power Relations as the Consequence and Mimicry of British Imperialism in Vikram Seth’s A Suitable Boy”

- BA in Ankara University, Faculty of Letters English Language and Literature, 2000.

Thesis subject: “John Gower’ın Confessio Amantis Adlı Eserinde Yedi Ölümcül Günahın İşlenişi”

Certificates

- Spices (Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills) Training Course Certificate.
Matevi Language Centre, Sofia/Bulgaria, June 2007.
- CELTA (Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults)
Avo-3 School of English, Sofia/Bulgaria, July 2007.

Work Experience

2001-2007 METU FLE, Research Assistant

Publications

Pekşen, Seda. "Is the Idea of Resurrection into a Better, New Life in Lawrence's Last Poems an Attempt at Escapism by a Man Who is Close to Death?" D. H. Lawrence and His Work. Ed. Dr. Nurten Birlik. Ankara: British Novelists Series Metu, 2003.

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Conference Presentations

"Is the Idea of Resurrection into a Better, New Life in Lawrence's Last Poems an Attempt at Escapism by a Man Who is Close to Death?"
The 11th Metu British Novelists Seminar: D. H. Lawrence and His Work, 2003.

"Feminine Writing As An Alternative To Patriarchal Language"
Women's Studies Area of the 2006 SW/TX Popular Culture Conference, West Texas A & M University, Albuquerque/New Mexico.

APPENDIX B

TURKISH SUMMARY

ANGELA CARTER, VIRGINIA WOOLF, MARGE PIERCY VE URSULA LE GUIN ROMANLARINDA RUHSAL İKİCİNSLİLİK VE ÖTEKİ: BİR *KADIN BEDENİ* YAZINI ÇALIŞMASI

Giriş

Dilin ataerkil yapısı erkeğe kadının üzerinde güç sahibi olma imkânı verir. Dilin edinimiyle toplumun bir parçası hâline gelen kişi kendini ataerkil kültürün içinde bulur. Toplumun bütün kurumları bu kültürün etkisi altında olduğundan, kadının toplumdaki yeri hep alt sınıf olmuştur. Dilde *eksiklik* yahut *öteki* olarak tanımlanan kadın, yazından da uzak tutulmuştur böylece. Ancak kadınlar bilinçlendikçe, kendilerinin de tıpkı erkekler gibi yazabileceklerini fark etmişler ve bu yönde çalışmalara başlamışlardır. Daha ziyade erkek yazarların taklit edilmesiyle sonuçlanan ilk girişimlerin ardından nihayetinde kadınlar kendi bedenlerini, cinselliklerini, kadın deneyimlerini erkeklerin gözünden değil de aynen deneyimledikleri hâliyle yazmaları gerektiğini fark etmiş, ancak ataerkil dilin bu deneyimleri yansıtmak için çok da etkili bir araç olamayacağını da anlamışlardır. İşte bu noktada ataerkil dilin yapı bozuma uğratılıp yeni bir sistem yaratılmasıyla *kadın bedeni yazını* ortaya çıkmıştır.

Kadın bedeni yazını edebiyattaki fallus odaklı, cinsiyetçi ve hiyerarşik yapıyı bozmayı hedefler. Temel olarak kadının bedenini kullanarak, bedeniyle kendini ifade ederek yaratıcılığının kaynağını kendi bedeninde bulmasını esas alan bir sistemdir. Bunu başarabilmek için yazarın dilden önceki *semiyotik*

döneme geri dönmesi, dilin ve toplumsal sınıflandırmaların olmadığı o dönemde deneyimlediği bütünlüğü, ritimleri, sesleri, kendisini doğuran anneyi ve kendi içindeki potansiyel anneyi hatırlaması gereklidir. Kaynağını, dilden bağımsız olduğu için ben ve öteki ayrımının henüz gerçekleşmemiş olduğu, insan doğasındaki ikicinsliliğin sapkınlık değil bütünlük kabul edildiği semiyotik alandan alan *kadın bedeni yazını* tıpkı kadının bedeni gibi akışkan, açık uçlu, döngüsel ve zıt ikiliklerden arınmıştır. *Kadın bedeni yazını*'nın temeli post yapısalci dilbilime, Derrida'nın yapı bozumuna ve psikanalistlerin kuramlarına dayanır. *Kadın bedeni yazını*'nı oluşturan Fransız feministlerin teorileri bu temelden yola çıkarak üretilmiştir. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada Barthes, Derrida, Lacan, Freud ve Jung'un ilgili kuramlarının açıklanmasının ardından Cixous, Kristeva ve Irigaray'ın *kadın bedeni yazını*'nı oluşturan kuramları anlatılmaktadır. Çalışmanın diğer bölümlerinde ise bahsi geçen kuramların Angela Carter (*The Passion of New Eve*), Virginia Woolf (*Orlando*), Marge Piercy (*Woman on the Edge of Time*) ve Ursula Le Guin'in (*The Left Hand of Darkness*) romanlarında nasıl uygulandığı incelenmektedir. *Kadın bedeni yazını* oldukça kapsamlı bir konu olduğundan eserler üç ana başlık altında incelenmiştir: ikicinslilik, öteki ve ses.

Çalışmada ortaya çıkan sonuç birbirinden bağımsız ve farklı eserlerin aynı sesleri paylaşarak bir kadın bedeni orkestrası kurmuş oldukları gerçeğidir. Eserlerde ataerkil yapının kurumları, dili, yargıları ile yapı bozuma uğratılmalarının yanı sıra, insan doğasının ancak toplumsal kuralların yokluğunda ortaya çıkabilen gerçeği gözler önüne serilmektedir. Eserlerin ortak noktası her birinde ana karakterin yolculuğunun sonunda kendi içinde bir aydınlanma yaşaması ve bazı diğer karakterlerin de benzer yolculukların başında olmalarıdır. Karakterlerin yolculuğunu baştan sona takip eden okur da yazarın yazarken kendi bedenini açması gibi okurken kendi bedenini açtığı takdirde, benzer bir uyanışı kaçınılmaz olarak yaşayacaktır. Eserler, zıt ikiliklerin ve bunlardan kaynaklanan her türlü hiyerarşik ve cinsiyetçi oluşumun insanlığın tek seçeneği olmadığını, bu sistemin pekala

değiştirilebileceğini örneklerle göstermektedir. Bu anlamda romanlar okurlarına sistemin hatalarını, insan doğasına aykırılıklarını gösterip alternatif yaşam biçimleri sunarak feminizmin bilinç yükseltme çalışmalarına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Kuramsal Arka Plan

Çalışmanın bu bölümünde *kadın bedeni yazını*'nın ortaya çıkmasına vesile olan post yapısal kuramlar incelenmektedir. Cixous, Kristeva ve Irigaray, Derrida'nın yapı bozum yöntemini Lacan, Freud ve Jung'un kuramlarına uygulayarak kendi kuramlarını ortaya çıkarmışlardır. Dolayısıyla bu kısımda, bahsi geçen Fransız feministlerin makalelerinde bahsettikleri *kadın bedeni yazını* özelliklerinin Roland Barthes'ın kuramlarıyla paralelliklerinin incelenmesinin ardından, Derrida'nın yapı bozumu açıklanmaktadır. Daha sonra Lacan'ın insanın psikolojik gelişimi, çocuğun dile girişi, anneden ayrılışı ve öteki ile tanışması üzerine geliştirdiği kuramlar incelenmektedir. *Kadın bedeni yazını*, yazarlarına bu gelişimi tersine çevirerek dilin öncesine gitmelerini önermektedir. Freud ve Jung'un kuramları ikicinslilik konusunda devreye girer ancak feministlerin kuramına katkıları yalnızca insanların doğuştan ikicinsli olduklarının kabulüyle sınırlıdır.

Bu bağlamda öncelikle Roland Barthes'ın yazarın ölümü ile okurla birlikte oynanan bir oyun hâline gelen metnin okuru zevkin zirvesine nasıl taşıdığı üzerine görüşleri ve bu metnin *kadın bedeni yazını* metinleriyle benzerlikleri önemlidir. Barthes tıpkı Fransız feministler gibi yaratıcılığın kaynağını yazarın kendi bedeninde bulabileceğini söyler. Barthes'a göre ancak toplumsal kurallardan ve geleneklerden arınmış bir eser yazarın tanrı statüsünü alt üst edip okuru oyunun bir parçası hâline getirebilir. Böyle bir metinde hedeflenen belirgin tek bir anlam yoktur. Aksine, her okur kendi anlamına ulaşacaktır. Dolayısıyla Barthes'ın bahsettiği, kaynağını bedenden alan, metin tıpkı *kadın bedeni yazını* metinleri gibi açık uçlu, akışkan, merkezsiz ve

anlamsal açıdan çoğuldur. Post yapısal dilbilimin öngördüğü üzere anlam sürekli ertelendiğinden, metin de sürekli bir hareket içindedir. Barthes'ın tarifine göre okuru tatmin eden metin bunu kelimelerle değil, satır aralarında olup bitenlerle ve metnin kaynağı olan bedenin metine kattığı ritimle sağlar. Bu hâliyle metin okuru sarsacak, önyargılarını altüst edecek, kanıksamış olduğu değerleri sorgulamasına sebep olacaktır. Bu anlamda Barthes'ın tarifi *kadın bedeni yazını* metinlerine tamamen uymaktadır. Zira feministlerin metinlerinde amaç var olan değerleri bu değerlerin kendilerini kullanarak bozmak ve yeniden yapılandırmaktır. Bütün bu süreçte okur aktif olarak oyuna katılmak durumundadır. Aksi takdirde metin okura hiçbir şey ifade edemeyecektir. Dolayısıyla Barthes'ın ve feministlerin metinlerindeki bir diğer ortak nokta okurun edilgen nesne konumundan etken özne konumuna geçmiş olmasıdır. Böylelikle hiyerarşik düzeninden arındırılmış olan metin, yazarın da ölümüyle, merkezsizleştirilmiş ve nihai bir anlama ulaşma çabasından yoksun serbest bir oyun hâline gelmiştir. Bu noktada Derrida devreye girer.

Kadın bedeni yazını'nda esas olan ataerkil yapının bozulması olduğundan Derrida'nın yapı bozum kuramı bu yazının temelini oluşturur. Derrida'ya göre dil daima bir merkezin etrafında hareket eder ve sistemin devam edebilmesi için bu merkezin devridaimi gereklidir. İşte Barthes'ın bahsettiği nihai anlam da bu merkezdir. Metnin oyuna dönüştürülebilmesi için bu merkezin ortadan kaldırılması gereklidir. Feminist kurama göre merkez aynı zamanda ataerkil de olduğundan muhakkak yok edilmelidir. Feminist kuramda merkeze ataerkil özelliği nedeniyle *fallus* adı verilmiş ve merkezin yok edilmesi de fallusun yıkılması anlamına gelmiştir. Dolayısıyla *kadın bedeni yazını*'nda ortadan kaldırılacak olan merkez de fallustur. Dilden çıkarılması gereken bir diğer unsur ise zıt ikiliklerin varlığıdır zira bu ikilikler var olan her şeyi hiyerarşik bir sıraya koymaktadır. Bu anlamda en kritik ikilik kadın-erkek ikiliğidir. Freudyen jargonda bu ikilik penisi olan ve olmayan şeklinde açıklandığından kadını baştan hiyerarşinin alt basamağına indirir. Derrida her şeyin metin olduğunu ve dolayısıyla her şeyin bir başka şeye gönderme

olduğunu iddia ederken tek bir anlamın imkânsızlığını açıklamaktadır. Oyundan kaçış yoktur. Böylelikle, fallusun merkezdeki tahtından indirilmesine önayak olan Derrida, Fransız feministlerin metinlerindeki açık uçluluğa da katkıda bulunmuş olur.

Fallus Lacan'ın kuramlarında *baba'nın hükmü* olarak tanımlanır. İnsanın psikolojik gelişiminin her biri *kadın bedeni yazını* için eşit derecede önemli olan üç dönemin sonuncusunda ortaya çıkar. İlk dönem *gerçek* adı verilen, çocuğun anneyle bir bütün hâlinde, her ihtiyacı karşılanarak yaşadığı dönemdir. *Kadın bedeni yazını* için en önemli dönem budur zira yazar kaynağını bu dönemde bulacaktır. İkinci dönem, öteki konusu işlenirken daha ayrıntılı ele alınan, *hayal* dönemidir. Bu dönemde çocuk aynada kendini gördüğünde aynadaki imgeyi kendi benliği ile eşdeğer tutmak suretiyle bir yanılısma yaşar ve ilk defa öteki kavramıyla tanışır. Son dönem ise *sembolik* dönemdir ve bu dönemde ihtiyaç duyduğu şeylerin yokluğuyla tanışan çocuk bu yoklukla baş etmeye çabalarken dille tanışır. Dilde bir özne hâline gelmesiyle birlikte *baba'nın hükmü*'ne girmiş olur. Bu aşamada annenin *noksan* olduğunu öğrenen çocuk, iğdiş edilme korkusuyla, anneden kopar ve babayı örnek alarak ataerkil sistemin bir parçası hâline gelir. Anne artık öteki olmuştur. Bu noktadan sonra anneyi arzulaması baba tarafından yasaklanan çocuk, bu yasağı annenin arzu nesnesinin yerine geçerek telafi etmeye çalışır. Annenin arzu nesnesi, Freud'a göre, kendisinde olmayan fallus olduğundan, çocuk da fallus olmaya, yani sistemin merkezi olmaya çabalar. Dolayısıyla dil ötekiler üzerine kurulmuş bir sistemdir. Bir kelimenin anlamı onun öteki anlamlara gelmemesiyle açıklanır. Aynı şekilde kişinin kendini *ben* diye niteleyebilmesi için de bir *öteki* gereklidir. Böylece Derrida'nın kuramında merkez olan *öteki*, Lacan'ın *sembolik* döneminde de kişinin dildeki yerini belirler. Öyleyse ötekiler aracılığıyla kendine dilde bir yer edinmeye çalışan ve bu şekilde anneyle bütünleşmemesini, tekrar *gerçeğe* dönememesini telafi etmeye çalışan çocuk, dilin kurallarına ve dolayısıyla babanın kurallarına riayet eder. *Kadın bedeni yazını* açısından Lacan'ın kuramlarının önemi dilin ataerkil

ve hiyerarşik yapısını gözler önüne seriyor olmasıdır. Yazar bu bilinçle ataerkil dilden öncesine, annenin bedeniyle bütün olduğu, öteki kavramının olmadığı, henüz baba tarafından rahatsız edilmediği *gerçek* döneme geri dönmeli ve yaratıcılığının kaynağını burada aramalıdır.

Bütün bu bilgiler ışığında *kadın bedeni yazını*'nın amacı bu fallus merkezli hiyerarşik yapıyı bozmak ve yerine eşitlikçi, ikiliklerden arınmış, cinsiyetler yerine insan olma durumunu öne çıkaran yeni bir yapı kurmaktır. Bunun nasıl yapılacağını ise Hélène Cixous, Lucé Irigaray ve Julia Kristeva farklı şekillerde dile getirmişlerdir. Cixous çözümü kadının kendi bedenini yazmasında bulur. Edebiyattan uzak tutulmuş olan kadın erkek yazarı taklit etmek yerine kendi kadın dilini kullanmalıdır. Tüm ataerkil söylemlerin temelinde cinsellik yattığından kadın da bu söylemleri bozup kendi söylemini yaratırken cinselliğini temel almalıdır. Ancak kadınlar ataerkil sistem tarafından köleleştirilmeleri esnasında kendi bedenlerine yabancılaştırıldıklarından öncelikle kendilerini yeniden keşfetmeleri gereklidir. Kadınlar kendi bedenlerini daima erkek bakışı üzerinden tanımladıkları için eksik etek, yasak, mahrem, karanlık, pis olmaktan öteye gidememişlerdir. Dolayısıyla kadın kendi gerçek cinselliğini, bedeninin hakiki deneyimlerini yazarak bütün bu yanlış tanımlamalardan kurtulup bedenini erkekten geri almalıdır. Kadın ancak kendi bedenine sahip olduktan sonra sesini duyurabilir. Bu nedenle kadın, cinselliği ve bedeniyle ilgili her şeyi çekinmeden yazmalı, böylelikle ataerkil topluma kadının hiçbir şekilde eksik olmadığını göstermelidir. Cixous kadınlara yazmalarını ve böylece kendilerinin bir bütünün yarısı değil bütünün kendisi olduklarını anlamalarını öğütler. Tıpkı bedeni gibi kadının yazısı da açık uçlu, akışkan ve sürekli devinim hâlinde olacaktır. Bu bağlamda Cixous'un bahsettiği kadın yazını Barthes'ın metin tarifine uymaktadır. Cixous da tıpkı Barthes gibi kadınların bedeninden fişkırarak bu rahatsız edici, sarsıcı metinlerin okuru zevkin doruğuna taşıyacağını iddia eder. Kadın, bedenini toplum tarafından tanımlandığı şekliyle değil, kendisi

deneyimlediği gibi yazmalıdır. Ancak o zaman ataerkil yapıyı bozabilir, ikiliklerden, babanın hükmünden, hiyerarşiden arınmış bir dünya yaratabilir.

Bu dünyanın kaynağı Kristeva'nın *semiyotik* diye adlandırdığı, Lacan'ın *gerçek* dediği döneme denk düşen alandır. Kristeva da tıpkı Lacan gibi *semiyotik* dönemin dilden önce deneyimlendiğini öne sürer. Ancak *semiyotik* yine de dilin içine sızabilir. Dilin olmadığı bir alandan bahsettiğimiz için bu alanın insan zihninde anlam bulabilmesi için dille bir şekilde ilişkilendirilmesi gereklidir. Bu da metaforlar, ritimler, sessizlikler, sesler, belirsizlikler yardımıyla özellikle şiirsel dilde mümkün olur. Dolayısıyla *semiyotik*'in dile sızması dilin ataerkil sistem tarafından ortaya konmuş ve kanıksanmış kurallarının bozulmasıyla olur. Feminist yazarın ataerkil yapıyı bozması için öncelikle ataerkil dili bozması gerektiğine göre kadın yazar kendi bedenini ifade edebilmek için öncelikle *semiyotik* yardımıyla dilin kurallarını bozacaktır. Bunu yapabilmek için yazarın kendi bedenindeki *semiyotik* alana erişebilmesi gerekir. Kristeva bu alan için Eflatun'dan ödünç aldığı *kora* ismini kullanır. *Kora* ana rahmiyle özdeşleştirilen, her şeyi içine alan ve hep var olan bir yerdir. Her kadın potansiyel bir anne olduğundan her kadının bir *korası* vardır ve bu nedenle her kadının *semiyotik* döneme geri dönme imkânı vardır. Nasıl ki *kora* çocuğun doğduğu yer ise kadın yazarın çocuğu olan metin de oradan doğacaktır. Bu anlamda her kadın hem bir annenin çocuğu hem de bir çocuğun annesidir ve bundan dolayı kadınlar *semiyotik*'e erkeklerden daha yakındır. *Semiyotik* dönemde dil henüz yoktur ve Lacan'dan hatırlayacağımız üzere çocuk anneyle bir bütün hâindedir. Henüz baba araya girmemiştir. İşte *kadın bedeni yazını* kaynağını bu dönemden almalıdır. Bunun için yazacak olan kadın dilin öncesindeki bu dönemi hatırlayıp gün ışığına çıkarmak durumundadır. Dilin ve dolayısıyla toplumun tüm kurumlarının kurallarına ters düşen bu dönemi deneyimleyen ve farklı biçimlerde dilin içine sızdıran kişi yine bu kurumlar tarafından delilikle suçlanmayı göze almalıdır.

Irigaray da Cixous ve Kristeva gibi kadın bedenini kadın yazınının baş tacı yapar. Ancak bunu yaparken kadın ve erkek cinselliğinin farklılığı ile

kadının cinselliğindeki çoğulluğu vurgular. Irigaray dilin erkekler tarafından erkeği temel olarak oluşturulmuş olmasından son derece rahatsızdır ve bu nedenle kadınların önce kendi bedenlerini kendi gözleriyle tanıyıp ardından bunu dile dökmelerini, bu şekilde dildeki erkek özne-kadın nesne durumunu ortadan kaldırmalarını önerir. Kadın cinselliğinin erkek psikanalistler tarafından anlatılması ironiktir. Her ne kadar ataerkil toplum *semyotik* sesleri kullanan kadını delilikle suçlasa da Irigaray'a göre esas olarak toplumla uyum içinde yaşayan kadın, bedeninin içine hapsolmuş, susturulmuş ve bastırılmış hâliyle delirmiştir. Bu şekilde kendine yabancılaştırılan kadın bütün gücü erkeğe devretmiştir. İşte bu nedenle Irigaray yek olma fikrine karşıdır: erkek her an bu fikri kendi lehine çevirip üstünlüğünü ilan edebilir. Bunun için yeklik yerine farklılıkların vurgulanması gereklidir. Bu farklılıkların başta geleni kadının kendi kendine yetebilirliğidir. Kadının cinselliği tek bir organ etrafında şekillenmektense birçok organı kapsar. Cinsel doyum için muhakkak bir nesneye ihtiyaç duyan erkeğin aksine kadın cinsel organındaki iki dudak vasıtasıyla daima kendi kendine dokunmaktadır. Cinsellikleri bu kadar farklıyken kadın ve erkek kendilerini ifade etmek için aynı dili kullanamazlar. Kadının dili tıpkı bedeni gibi açık, akışkan ve çoğul olmalıdır. Kadın bu dili yalnızca kendini ifade etmek için değil, aynı zamanda erkeği de kadınlık hakkında bilgilendirmek için kullanılmalıdır. Dolayısıyla tek olan özne ortadan kaldırılmalı ve onun yerini çoğulluk almalı, böylece dilin dilbilgisel yapısı da bozulmalıdır. Böylelikle kadın-erkek ilişkilerini şekillendiren özne-nesne konumu da bozulacaktır. Sistemin merkezi olan fallus alaşağı edilecektir. Bundan sonraki adım ise bu dili kullanarak şimdiye dek var olamamış bir kadın kültürü yaratmaktır. İşte *kadın bedeni yazını*'nda da amaç böyle bir ortak kültür oluşturmaktır.

Kadın Bedeni Yazını Romanlarında İkicinslilik

Kadın bedeni yazını'nın öncelikli hedefi zıt ikilikleri –en başta kadın/erkek ikiliğini- ortadan kaldırmak olduğundan böyle bir yazın fikri kendiliğinden ikicinslilik kuramını da gündeme getirmiştir. Bu konuda en önemli katkıyı Cixous'nun görüşleri sağlar. Cixous'nun görüşleri ise Freud'un insanların doğuştan biseksüel oldukları kuramına dayanmaktadır. Freud her insanın doğduğunda hem erkek hem de kadın özelliklerini taşıdığını, ancak psikolojik gelişim sürecinde toplumun etkisiyle *normal* kişilerin biyolojik cinsiyetleriyle doğru orantılı cinsin özelliklerini benimseyerek diğer cinsin özelliklerini bastırdıklarını iddia etmektedir. Freud doğuştan gelen ikicinsliliğin bu şekilde bir bastırma mekanizmasıyla kontrol altına alınmasının normal, aksinin ise sapkınlık olduğunu vurgular. Fransız feministler ise bu tür bir bastırılmışlığın ataerkil ve heteroseksist toplumun baskılarından kaynaklandığını, bu nedenle insan doğasına bir müdahale olduğunu öne sürmektedirler. Bedeninden yola çıkarak ve kaynağını semiyotikten alarak yazacak olan kişi tüm bu bastırılmışlıklardan kurtulup gerçek doğasını bulmalı ve doğasının doğuştan bir parçası olan içindeki karşı cinsle barışmalıdır. Cixous yukarıda belirtilen ataerkil yapıyı bozma ve eşitlikçi bir biçimde yeniden yapılandırma amaçlarını hedefleyen yazarın, biyolojik cinsiyeti ne olursa olsun, zihninde bu doğuştan gelen çiftcinsliliği canlandırması gerektiğine inanır. Yazar metni yaratırken içindeki erkeğin de kadının da sesine kulak vermeli ve toplumsal önyargıların bu seslerden herhangi birini bastırmasını engellemelidir. Vurgulanması gereken bir diğer nokta bu cinslerden herhangi birinin diğerine üstün olmamasının yanı sıra bir bütünün iki yarısı da olmadıklarıdır. Kişinin içinde bütün bir kadın ve bütün bir erkek tüm özellikleriyle var olmaktadır. Sonuçta sadece kadın bedeniyle, kadın sesiyle ve kadın hakkında yazmanın da ataerkil sistemin cinsiyetçiliğinden bir farkı olmayacaktır. Dolayısıyla *kadın bedeni yazını*'nda esas olan insanı gerçek doğasıyla ikicinsli bir bütün olarak ele almaktır.

Çalışmada ele alınan her romanda ikicinslilik farklı biçimlerde işlenmiştir. Carter'ın romanında bu kavram ana karakterin her iki cinsi de deneyimlemesi yoluyla ele alınmıştır. Aynı zamanda romanın anlatıcısı da olan Evelyn, olayları geriye dönük anlattığından anlatım esnasında hâlihazırda hem erkek hem de kadın deneyimini yaşamıştır. Bu durum bakış açısının da ikicinsli olmasını sağlar. Çölde anaerkil bir topluluğun lideri olan Anne tarafından bir operasyonla erkekte kadına dönüştürülen Evelyn, bedeni artık kadın olduğu halde zihnindeki erkeği asla bastıramaz. Bir yandan kadın olarak ataerkil bir toplumda var olmaya çalışırken tecavüz, aşağılanma, erkek bakışının nesnesi konumuna indirgenmenin yanı sıra, bekaret, menstruasyon ve annelik gibi kadın deneyimlerini de yaşar. Tüm bu sarsıcı yolculuk süresince Evelyn yaşadıklarını hem erkek hem de kadın gözüyle analiz eder ve yolculuğunun sonunda aslında gerçek doğasının da bu ikicinslilik olduğunun ayırımına varır. Evelyn'in ataerkil bir toplumda erkek olarak, anaerkil bir toplumda erkek olarak ve nihayet ataerkil bir toplumda kadın olarak yaşadıkları ona ikiliklerin, hiyerarşinin, fallustan ibaret bir merkezin gereksizliğini ve tüm bunların doğayla çelişmesini öğretir. Hem okur hem de Evelyn, Evelyn'in farklı toplumlarda farklı cinsel kimliklerle ve bu kimliklere atfedilmiş rollerle yaşadığı deneyimleri karşılaştırma imkânı bulur. Örneğin başlangıçta ataerkil toplumun kadınları ezen bir erkek üyesi olan Evelyn, daha sonra aynı topluma erkek bakışının nesnesi hâline getirilmiş bir kadın olarak dönecektir. Tıpkı kendisi gibi bir ikicinsliliği deneyimlemekte olan Tristessa ile karşılaşması da Evelyn'in farkındalığının artmasında önemli rol oynar. Âdeta baba hükmünün simgesi olan Zero, fallusu merkez alan, fallus olmaya uğraşan, kadınları cinsellikleri ve bedenleri üzerinden egemenliği altına almaya çalışan bir erkek olarak Tristessa ve Evelyn'in ikicinsliliğini asla kabul etmediği gibi onları evlendirerek ataerkil sistemin zıt ikiliğini de onlara empoze etmeye uğraşır. Zero'nun bir tarafı bastırılmış olan zihni onları ancak böyle bir ikiliğin içinde anlamlandırabilir. Böylelikle Carter ataerkil sistemin kurumlarını yapı bozuma uğrattırırken, cinselliğin ve dolayısıyla cinsiyetlerin iç içe geçmişliğini,

belirsizliğini ve doğa karşısında bunları kategorize etmeye uğraşmanın beyhudeliğini gözler önüne serer. Evelyn zıt ikiliklerin tek bir bedende birleşebileceklerinin ve bu zıtlıkların birer bütün hâlinde aynı yerde var olabileceklerinin örneğidir. Tristessa da Evelyn'in benzeri bir farkındalık yolculuğunun ortasında olmasına rağmen ataerkil düzen tarafından yok edilir. Bu durum böyle bir bütünlüğün ataerkil sistem içinde kabul görmesinin imkânsızlığını ortaya koymaktadır. Bu da *kadın bedeni yazını*'nın sistemi bozup yeniden yapılandırma hedefini haklı çıkarmaktadır.

Woolf'un romanı da konuyu benzer bir şekilde ele alır. Tıpkı Evelyn gibi Orlando da yaşamının bir bölümünü erkek, bir bölümünü ise kadın olarak deneyimler ve sonuçta o da aynı anda iki farklı bakış açısına sahip olmuş olur. Woolf'un ataerkil değerleri yapı bozuma uğratma niyeti daha en baştan, Vita Sackville-West adında bir kadına ithaf ettiği romanının ana karakterini bir erkek yapmasından ve romana bu erkeğin ismini vermesinden bellidir. Roman boyunca da bu değerleri çeşitli şekillerde bozup yeniden yapılandırmaya devam eder. Tıpkı Carter'ın romanında olduğu gibi burada da romanın başında Orlando'nun erkekliği vurgulanır. Ancak Evelyn'den farklı olarak Orlando baştan itibaren içindeki kadının varlığını dışarı yansıtan bir karakterdir zira o bir şairdir. Şair olması Orlando'yu doğaya, dolayısıyla kendi doğasına yaklaştırmaktadır. Ayrıca Orlando'nun şairliği romanın çeşitli yerlerinde semiyotik taşkınlıklar olarak da kendini gösterir ve bu yönüyle de roman *kadın bedeni yazını* için güzel bir örnek teşkil eder. Carter ikicinsliliği cinsellik üzerinden ele alırken, Woolf cinsiyetin belirsizliğini kıyafet imgesini kullanarak vurgular. Bu yüzden roman boyunca çeşitli karakterler karşı cins kılığında bir diğer karakteri etkilemeye çalışırken ve âşık olduğu kişiyle aynı cinsten olduğuna hayıflanırken ironik durumlara düşerler. Böylelikle Woolf heteroseksizmi hicveder ve insan ruhunun, insanın hislerinin toplumsal kategoriler karşısındaki önemini ortaya koyar. Tıpkı Evelyn gibi Orlando da kadına dönüştükten sonra ataerkil düzenin mekanizmalarının farkına varır ve sahip olduğu çift bakış açısıyla en basit olayları bile farklı değerlendirmeye

başlar. Bu değerlendirmeler neticesinde kadın ve erkeğin ataerkil toplumdaki öğrenilmiş rolleri üzerine pek çok uyanış yaşar. Orlando aynı zamanda yazar olması sebebiyle de *kadın bedeni yazını* açısından önemlidir zira Cixous'un öngördüğü ikicinsli zihne sahip bir yazardır. İşte bu nedenle Orlando en önemli eserini ancak kadına dönüşüp ikicinsli bir ruha sahip olduktan ve kadın bedeniyle bir çocuk doğurduktan sonra ortaya çıkarabilir. Gerçek doğumu bir anlamda yazarın eserini *kora*'dan doğuruşunu simgelemektedir. Böylelikle kendini tamamlanmış hisseden Orlando kendini bulma yolculuğu esnasında farklı cinsiyetleri ve farklı dönemleri yaşasa da o hep Orlando'dur. Yolculuğun sonunda değişen tek şey Orlando'nun gerçekte kim olduğunu kendisinin anlamış olması ve toplumun ona dayattığı rollerden sıyrılabilmesidir.

Piercy ikicinslilik konusunu ana karakterinin yolculuk edeceği alternatif bir dünya yaratıp bu dünyanın insanlarını toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinden soyutlayarak işler. Ataerkil sistem tarafından akıl hastanesine hapsedilmiş olan Connie, Luciente'nin rehberliğinde geleceğe yolculuk yapar ve böylece içinde yaşadığı sistemin tek yol olmadığını, alternatifler olabileceğini fark eder. Connie'nin yaşadığı zamandaki ataerkil sistemin tüm yapıları Luciente'nin geleceğinde bozulmuştur. Piercy bu kontrast sayesinde ataerkil sistemin kurumlarını eleştirirken aynı zamanda çözüm önerileri de sunmuş olur. Hayatındaki erkekler ve sistem tarafından Amerika'da yaşayan Meksikalı, fakir bir kadın olarak sürekli dışlanan Connie, ister kendi zihninde olsun ister gerçek bir zaman yolculuğu olsun, bir biçimde alternatif bir sistem ile temasa geçer. Bu sistemdeki insanlar Connie'nin yaşadığı dünyanın tam tersi koşullarda yaşamaktadırlar. Luciente'nin toplumu Connie'ye kendi dünyasında yaşadığı kötü hayatın toplumun kurumlarının dayatması olduğunu, bunun insanın doğal koşullarıyla ilgisi olmadığını ve değiştirilebileceğini gösterir. Böylece Connie *doğal* kabul ettiği değerlerin aslında öğrenilmiş toplumsal kurallar olduğunu fark eder. O yüzden başlangıçta erkek sandığı Luciente'nin aslında bir kadın olduğunu kabullenmek Connie için kolay olmaz. Mattapoisett'e yaptığı ziyaretlerde Connie bu önyargılarından arınmayı, insanları ikilikler ışığında

değerlendirmemeyi, hiç kimseyi ve hiçbir şeyi sınıflandırmamak gerektiğini, doğadaki çoğulluğu öğrenir. Kendi ataerkil toplumunda tüm kimliği kadınlığı ve dolayısıyla anneliği olan, bu nedenle rahmi alındıktan sonra kendini daha az kadın hissedenden Connie, Mattapoissett’de doğumun beden dışında gerçekleştiği ve annelik görevinin de hem kadın hem erkek bireyler tarafından üçerli gruplar hâlinde eşit biçimde paylaşıldığını görür. Mattapoissett’de kesin olarak belirlenmiş cinsiyet tercihleri, heteroseksüel evlilik, çekirdek aile ve en önemlisi de baba yoktur. Herkes kendi alanında tek başına yaşar. Sadece anneler vardır ve hepsi eşit söz hakkına sahiptir. Ancak hiçbir anne çocuğun sahibi değildir. Connie, insanların cinsiyetlerine göre sınıflandırılmadığı ve rollerinin de buna göre belirlenmediği böyle bir dünyayı gördükten sonra aslında kendi toplumunda akıl hastanesinden kurtulsa bile hiçbir zaman gerçek anlamda özgür olamayacağını anlar. Böylelikle Piercy, iki toplum arasında tam bir zıtlık oluşturarak ataerkil sistemin yapısını alt üst eder. Hem okura hem de Connie’ye bir bilinç yükseltme deneyimi yaşatır ve bunun sonucunda Connie içinde bulunduğu kısıtlayıcı koşullara rağmen mücadele etmek üzere harekete geçer.

Le Guin’in romanında da benzer bir alternatif toplum bulunmaktadır ve ikicinslilik bu toplumun farklı fizyolojik yapısı vasıtasıyla ele alınır. Diğer romanlarda olduğu gibi burada da kendini bulmak üzere yolculuk eden bir karakter söz konusudur. Genly Ai’ye bu yolculukta Estraven eşlik eder. Yine kendi heteroseksüelliği ile karşılaştırarak bu toplumun cinsiyetsizliğini anlamaya uğraşan bir kişidir ana karakter. Yolculuğu sona erdiğinde ise artık o da başka biridir ve kendi toplumunun ikiye ayrılmış insanlarını tanımakta güçlük çeker. Kış gezegenindeki cinsiyetsiz insanlar kadının aylık döngüsüne benzer biçimde ayda bir kez rasgele bir cinsiyete bürünürler. Dolayısıyla herkesin hem kadın hem erkek potansiyeli mevcuttur ve bir insan yaşamı boyunca hem anne hem de baba olabilir. Bu da Kış gezegeninde yaşayan her insanın potansiyel bir anne olduğunun göstergesidir ki Cixous’nun kuramlarıyla örtüşür. Tıpkı Mattapoissett’de olduğu gibi burada da evlilik,

çekirdek aile, sahiplik gibi kavramlar mevcut değildir. İnsanlar cinsiyetsiz olunca merkezde bir fallus olmadığından babanın hükmü de yoktur. Genly Ai Estraven’le yaptığı uzun yolculuk neticesinde zor da olsa kendi doğasının da bundan farklı olmadığını anlar. Le Guin karakterlerinin cinsiyetsizliğinin yanı sıra dille de oynayarak ataerkil sistemin ikiliklerini alt üst etmeye çabalar. Örneğin Kış gezegeninde yaşayan cinsiyetsiz bir karakteri hem kadın hem de erkek özellikleriyle tasvir eder ya da “kral hamileydi” gibi bir cümle kurar. Böylelikle ataerkil dilin kendisini kullanarak bu dilin gramerini bozar ve Barthes’ın da bahsettiği rahatsız edici, sarsıcı metni ortaya çıkarır.

Benliğin İçindeki Öteki

Kadın bedeni yazını’nda temel amaç ikiliklerden kurtulmaktır. Bu uğurda ilk adım kişinin doğuştan gelen ikicinsliliğini kabullenmesi ve içinde var olan kadınla erkeği dışarı yansıtabilmesidir. Bu durumda kişiyi tamamlayacak bir *öteki*’nin varlığından bahsetmek mümkün değildir zira öteki zaten kişinin içindedir. Lacan’a göre öteki kavramı çocuğun aynaya baktığında kendini anneden ayrı bir bütün olarak görmesiyle başlayıp annenin fallustan yoksun olduğunu fark edip onu ötekileştirmesiyle devam eden süreçte dilin edinişiyle ortaya çıkar. Dolayısıyla, Lacan’a göre öteki, annenin ve annenin arzu nesnesinin yerini alır. Yani öteki asla ulaşılamayacak olan fallustur. Cixous ve Irigaray bu kuramı alt üst ederler. Öncelikle *kadın bedeni yazını*’nda fallus alaşağı edilmiştir. Anne yoksun değildir, öteki hiç değildir. Aksine kişi yeniden anneye bütünleşmeye yönlendirilir. Zıt ikilikler ortadan kaldırıldığından ben-öteki ikiliği de ben’in tek başına bir bütün olduğunun ilanı ile yok edilmiştir. Öteki artık bir yokluk değil, tam tersi kişinin tam da içinde var olan bir bütündür. Bu noktada Fransız feministler kişinin çoğulluğunu vurgularlar. Irigaray bunu kadının çoğul cinselliği üzerinden yaparken, Cixous ikicinsliliği referans alır. Dolayısıyla bu yazın türünü

kullanarak yazan kişi kendi içindeki öteki'leri doğurmuş olacaktır. Bu çoğulluk özne-nesne hiyerarşisini de bozacaktır zira artık ben ve tüm ötekiler öznedir.

Carter'ın Evelyn'i de yolculuğunun sonunda kendine nesne arayan bir özne olmaktan çıkıp içindeki yeni özneleri keşfeder. Carter tam bir yapı bozum örneği sergileyerek iğdiş edilmiş bir erkekten arzu nesnesi bir kadın yaratır. Dolayısıyla artık Freudyen bir iğdiş edilme korkusu söz konusu değildir. Evelyn hem kadınları nesneleştiren erkek özne hem de aynı tacize maruz kalan kadın nesne konumundadır. Bu hâliyle Evelyn hem ben hem de öteki'dir. Arzu nesnesi de kendisi olunca artık Evelyn için dışarıda ulaşılmaz bir merkez kalmamıştır. Bu durum aslında Evelyn'i böylesi bir beyhude arayıştan kurtarıp özgürleştirmekte, kendi kendine yetebilirliğini göstermektedir. Çoktan iğdiş edilmiş ve öteki olarak Anne'den yeniden doğmuş biri olarak Evelyn artık babanın hükmünden kurtulmuş durumdadır. Evelyn aynı zamanda kadının çoğulluğunu da gerek kendi bedeninde gerekse Zero'nun haremde deneyimler. Artık bir rahmi de olan Evelyn içindeki potansiyel anneyle de bütünleşince gerçek benliğine ulaşmasının önünde engel kalmamış olur.

Orlando da öteki'yi kendi içinde keşfeder. Önce, geçirdiği cinsiyet değişimi ile ve daha sonra, annelik deneyimi vasıtasıyla öteki ile bütünleşir. Orlando değişimden önceki erkek benliği ile değişimden sonraki kadın benliği arasında kurulan diyalog sayesinde öteki ile ilgili farkındalığını geliştirir. Bu farkındalık Orlando'nun kendini tanıması kadar, ilişkilerindeki özne-nesne konumunu farklılaştırması bakımından da önemlidir. Kendini ve içindeki karşı cinsi tanıdıkça ilişki içinde olduğu tüm diğer insanları da daha iyi anlamaya ve onlarla gerçek anlamda iletişim kurmaya başlar. Gün ışığına çıkan öteki daha sonra annelik duygusunu da yaşayarak hem Orlando'yu semiyotik alana iyice yaklaştırır hem de bu sayede içindeki ötekilerin bir sanat eseri olarak doğumuna olanak sağlar. Ayrıca Orlando'nun kadına dönüştükten sonra ataerkil toplum tarafından ötekileştirilmesi de Orlando'nun uyanışında önemli rol oynar. Çifte bakış açısıyla toplumun yalanlarının ve insan doğasının

gerçeklerinin farkına varan Orlando, kendi çoğulluğunun bilincinde özgür bir bireydir artık.

Öteki kavramı Piercy'nin romanında farklı biçimlerde işlenmektedir. Öncelikle Connie'nin Mattapoisett'teki, bir diğer deyişle kendi zihnindeki, ötekilerle ilişkisi; bununla bağlantılı olarak benliğin çoğulluğu; Connie'nin bir anne/öteki olarak varlığı ve son olarak da Connie'nin yaşadığı ataerkil toplumda doktorlarla arasındaki özne-nesne ilişkisi hep öteki başlığı altında incelenmesi gereken konulardır. Bütün bu konular çalışmada tıpkı ikicinslilik bölümünde olduğu gibi iki toplumun karşılaştırılması şeklinde ele alınmıştır. Zira öteki kavramı Connie'nin ataerkil toplumuyla, Luciente'nin eşitlikçi toplumunda farklı anlamlar kazanmaktadır. Bu karşılaştırma bir anlamda da Lacan'ın savunduğu öteki tanımı ile Fransız feministlerin savunduğu öteki(ler) tanımının karşılaştırmasıdır. Kendi toplumunda zayıf, yetersiz ve eksik bir kadın olarak ötekileştirilen Connie bu hâliyle bir birey olarak sesini duyuramaz. Bu nedenle onu duyan ve ona cevap veren içindeki ötekilere döner. En önemlisi de bütün bu ötekilerin Connie'nin bilincinde yer almalarıdır. Bu da Connie'nin çoğulluğunun, tek yahut yarım olmadığının göstergesidir. Ayrıca ikili ilişkilerin ve anne-baba ikiliğinin yerini çoğulluğun alması Connie'nin kendi çoğulluğunun bilincine varmasını sağlamanın yanı sıra, kendi toplumunda farklı bir anlam yüklediği annelik ile ilgili olarak da bir uyanış yaşamasını sağlar. Rahimsiz kalmış ve toplum tarafından *kötü anne* ilan edilmiş olmasına rağmen içindeki anne potansiyelinin daima var olduğunu ve anneliğin en önemli yanlarından birinin de çocuğuna sahip olmayıp onun özgür bir birey olarak gitmesine izin vermek olduğunu anlar. Bu bilinçle donanan Connie nesne konumundan sıyrılıp hayatının öznesi olabilmek için son bir hamle yapar.

Anne'nin Sesi

Zihnindeki ve ruhundaki ikicinsliliği ortaya çıkarıp kendi çoğulluğuyla ve bedenindeki annelik potansiyeli ile semiyotik alana yaklaşan kişi, kendini ifade etmek için bu alanı kaynak alacağından kullanacağı ses semiyotikten, yani bedenin içinden gelen ritimlerdir. Dolayısıyla bahsedilen ses *kora*'dan gelen anne sesidir. Bu ses aynı zamanda kişinin içindeki ötekilerin sesleridir. Ataerkil sistemin kurduğu baskıdan kurtulan kişi bütün bu ötekileri serbest bırakacağından onların sesleri de açığa çıkacaktır. Bu ses dilden önceki sestir: çocuğun ana rahminde dinlediği ses, yani annenin bedeninin şarkısıdır.

Ses kavramı Carter'ın romanında üç şekilde ele alınmıştır. Öncelikle geriye dönük anlatımında ikicinsliliği nedeniyle çifte bir bakış açısına sahip olan anlatıcının sesi vardır. Evelyn yukarıda bahsedilen ötekilerle birleşme ve semiyotik alana geri dönme deneyimini yaşamış olduğundan sesin de farkındadır ve bunu anlatımı esnasında kullanır. Zira artık kendini sadece ataerkil dil vasıtasıyla ifade etmesi olası değildir. İkinci olarak Evelyn'in Beulah'ta yeniden doğumunu beklerken işittiği anne sesi vardır. Bu ses bir yandan çocuğun ana rahminde duyduğu anne sesini simgelerken bir yandan da annelik mitini bozmak ve psikanaliz kuramlarını alt üst etmek niyetiyle anneye "babanı öldür, annenle yat" gibi şeyler söyleterek kullanılmıştır. Bunların haricinde bir de Evelyn'nin gerek Beulah'taki dönüşümü sırasında gerekse kaçtıktan sonraki içsel yolculuğu süresince duyduğu çeşitli kadın sesleri vardır ki bunlar da ötekilerin sesleridir. Bu sesler Evelyn'i ötekilerle tanıştıran bir yandan da onu ataerkil toplumun kadın bir üyesi olma konusunda eğitirler ve bu sayede Evelyn'nin gelişimine katkıda bulunurlar.

Piercy'nin romanında zaten ötekiler Connie'nin zihnindeki sesler olarak ortaya çıkmaktadırlar. Connie'yi bilinçlendiren bu seslerin yanında bir de bunların tam zıttı koşullardaki New York kadınlarının sesleri vardır romanda. Diğer kavramlarda olduğu gibi ses kavramı da bu zıtlıktan yola çıkarak sunulur hem okura hem de Connie'ye. İlk defa sadece bir ses olarak karşılaştığı

Luciente tarafından kendi içindeki semiyotik alana götürülen Connie, burada öteki annelerle karşılaşır ve onların şarkılarını dinler. Bir yandan da hastanede tıpkı kendisi gibi erkek egemenliği altında ezilen, yargılanan, dışlanan ve suçlanan kadınların seslerini işitmektedir. Mattapoisett deneyiminde *kora*'nın sesleriyle tanışan Connie, bu sesleri hastanedekilerle karşılaştırdığında gerçekler daha açık bir hal alır zihninde. Seslerin bu zıtlığı böylece onun uyanışına vesile olur.

Le Guin'in romanında ses kavramı açısından en önemli unsur anlatıcı seslerin çeşitliliğidir. Bu çeşitlilik daha önce bahsettiğimiz çoğulluğun bir göstergesidir. Sadece anlatan ses değil anlatım şekli de çeşitlidir: Genly Ai ve Estraven haricinde romanda mitler, öyküler, bilimsel raporlar ve dini metinler de bulunmaktadır. Genly ve Estraven'in dönüşümlü olarak anlatıcı rolünü üstlenmesi hem Carter'ın romanındaki gibi bir çifte bakış açısı yaratırken hem de Genly'nin heteroseksist ve ataerkil bakış açısının yanında Estraven'in ikicinsli ve merkezsiz bakışını sunarak Piercy'nin romanındaki gibi bir zıtlık oluşturur. Ayrıca okur en azından birkaç satır okumadan o bölümün kim tarafından anlatıldığını da anlayamamaktadır. Böylelikle yaratılan belirsizlik Kış gezegeni insanların da belirsizliğinin, kimliksizliğinin ve çoğulluğunun göstergesidir. Bu çoğulluk sayesinde de hiçbir anlatıcı öyküde üstünlük kazanmaz. Bütün sesler tek bir bütünlük oluşturur. Anlatımın çeşitliliği zaman kavramını da düz bir çizgi olmaktan çıkarıp okuru ileri-geri döngüsel bir hareketin içine alır ve bu şekilde bedeninin semiyotik ritmini okura da hissettirir. Ayrıca kâhinlerin kehanet sırasındaki deneyimlerinde olduğu gibi bazı semiyotik taşkınlıklar da romanda yansıtılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla dinlediği öyküler ve karşılaştığı kişilerle yaşadığı çeşitli deneyimler Genly'nin kişisel gelişimini ve farkındalığının yükselmesini sağlarken okur da farklı anlatıcılardan edindiği bilgiler ışığında Genly'ninkine benzer bir aydınlanma yaşar.

Sonuç

Yukarıda kısa bir özeti sunulan bu çalışmada varılan sonuç şudur: çalışmada romanları incelenen dört yazardan her biri içinde yaşadıkları toplumun bireyleri olarak ve birer kadın olarak duydukları rahatsızlığı romanları vasıtasıyla dile getirmişlerdir. Önemli olan nokta ise farklı dönemlerde ve farklı ülkelerde kaleme alınmış bu farklı çalışmaların her birinin *kadın bedeni yazını* kuramları dahilinde bir ortak paydada toplanabilir oluşlarıdır. Bu şekliyle romanlar daha önce bahsettiğimiz ortak bir kadın kültürü oluşturma ihtiyacını karşılamaktadırlar. Bu noktada yapılması gereken ise, bu çalışmada yapıldığı üzere, bu tür metinleri bir araya getirerek böylesi bir ortak kültürün varlığını gözler önüne sermek olmalıdır. Romanların her birinde her karakter içsel bir yolculuğa çıkar ve yolculuğunun sonunda aydınlanmış, kendi çoğulluğunun, ikicinsliliğinden kaynaklanan bütünlüğünün ve özgürlüğünün bilincine varmış birer birey hâline gelirler. *Kadın bedeni yazını*'nda esas amaç bu deneyimi okura da yaşatmaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı ise bu deneyimi ve sonuçlarını daha geniş kitlelere duyurmak ve dolayısıyla ataerkil toplumun eşitlikçi yönde değişimine katkıda bulunmaktır. Bugünkü hâliyle dünya özellikle kadınlar için yeterince adil bir sistemle yönetilmemektedir. Bu nedenle *kadın bedeni yazını* romanları bu sistemin alternatiflerinin mümkün olabilirdiğini okura göstermeleri açısından önemlidirler. İnsanlar ikiliklerden vazgeçmeli ve önce kendi içlerinde sonra da tüm toplumla bir bütün olmalıdırlar. Dünyayı daha güzel bir yer yapacak bu anlayışın yaygınlaşabilmesinde edebiyatın rolü oldukça büyüktür.