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Gençliğe Hitabe

Ey Türk gençliği! Birinci vazifen; Türk istiklalini, Türk cumhuriyetini, ilelebet muhafaza ve müdafaa etmektir.

Mevcudiyetinin ve istikbalinin yegâne temeli budur. Bu temel, senin en kıymetli hazinendir. İstikbalde dahi seni bu hazineden mahrum etmek isteyecek dâhilî ve haricî bedhahların olacaktır. Bir gün, istiklal ve cumhuriyeti müdafaa mecburiyetine düşersen, vazifeye atılmak için içinde bulunacağın vaziyetin imkân ve şeraitini düşünmeyeceksin. Bu imkân ve şerait, çok namüsait bir mahiyette tezahür edebilir. İstiklal ve cumhuriyetine kastedecek düşmanlar, bütün dünyada emsali görülmemiş bir galibiyetin mümessili olabilirler. Cebren ve hile ile aziz vatanın bütün kaleleri zapt edilmiş, bütün tersanelerine girilmiş, bütün orduları dağıtılmış ve memleketin her köşesi bilfiil işgal edilmiş olabilir. Bütün bu şeraitten daha elim ve daha vahim olmak üzere, memleketin dâhilinde iktidara sahip olanlar, gaflet ve dalalet ve hatta hıyanet içinde bulunabilirler. Hatta bu iktidar sahipleri, şahsi menfaatlerini müstevlilerin siyasi emelleriyle tevhit edebilirler. Millet, fakruzaruret içinde harap ve bitap düşmüş olabilir.

Ey Türk istikbalinin evladı! İşte, bu ahval ve şerait içinde dahi vazifen, Türk istiklal ve cumhuriyetini kurtarmaktır. Muhtaç olduğun kudret, damarlarındaki asil kanda mevcuttur.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

20 Ekim 1927

Women Wielding their Medusa Gaze in Literature, or My Medusa Gaze Adventure with the Look, in The Medusa Gaze in Contemporary Women's Fiction: Petrifying, Maternal and Redemptive, 2017

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With an expedition to discover Medusa in Kibyra

"Medusa women may be monstrous and should be taken seriously!"

Starting from women's novels I enjoy, like Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*, A. S. Byatt's *The Game*, or Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and having read about women regarded as the object of the male gaze, I determined to investigate the power of the female gaze. Are women subject to the gaze of others, or do they exert their own powerful gaze? In my book, *The Medusa Gaze*, I assert that literature shows women exerting their own forceful gaze, starting from Toni Morrison's Beloved and the incorrigible, indefatigable slave mother Sethe in her desperate attempt to keep her children safe. When the escape plan of the slaves of "Sweet Home" fails, after Sethe's back has been whipped into a bloody pulp looking like a tree, and her milk is forcibly stolen by school teacher's nephews, against all the odds, she walks to freedom, heavily pregnant, her feet as screaming swollen masses, giving birth *en route*. But her owners do not want to let her go, and on the apocalyptic morning, the four horsemen come to forcibly return her to slavery, as a breeder owning four children. Sethe is driven to kill her daughter and injure the others in order to assert her refusal to return to the cruel horrors of slavery.

Sethe outfaces schoolteacher with her petrifying, powerful Medusa stare. Collecting all that is precious, fine and beautiful, she drags her children through the veil where no one could hurt them, where they would be 'safe.' "Sethe faced [schoolteacher], looked him dead in the eye, stopping him in his tracks" (Morrison 193) with her look, leaving him neither able to see her eyes nor face her, as she directs her dread gaze against her oppressors. This striking example counters Laura Mulvey's claim from cinematic examples that a woman is objectified under the power of the male gaze; I rather show women's aggressive gaze exerted against their Others. Sethe stares down the two white men who come to re-possess her, leaving them helpless and unable even to move, until she releases them from her powerful gaze, as they determine that there is nothing here to repossess; she has gone beyond any normal status as a slave, and she is taken off to prison. Refuting Mulvey, I stake my claim on the female, Medusa gaze.

Virginia Woolf presents her mirror or looking-glass theory, with the reflected, magnifying 'look' of women thus: "Women enable men to look into their own ego mirrors and see themselves magnified there larger than life, while showing women diminished; Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (Woolf 37). She recommends that women reclaim their own look, asserting their own image instead of magnifying men, claiming their own room, their own look. Jacques Lacan also shows mirror gazing, writing during the 1936 Olympic Games, as he experienced positive mirroring and reinforcement, as well as negative 'othering' while looking at the gathered Aryans in the stadium: "One's own beauty is reflected in the mirror, defending one against the threat of fragmentation by the ideal ego of the other, as we create our inner world from the outer world, while the Other (alien, woman, homosexual or Jew), shatters one's mirror, as the "specular I" that we see turns "into the social, interactive I" (77). He thus presents a double mirror gaze, as we create and

affirm ourselves through the external gaze, while attempting to protect ourself from the negative gaze of the other.

Susan Bowers in "Medusa and the Female Gaze" applies this to the Medusa myth, suggesting it is an "electrifying force representing the dynamic power of the female gaze," inspiring women's power. We understand each other better looking through the eyes of another; we also become entangled in twisted perceptions returning from the gaze of the Other, or double, which destroy the psyche. Such mirroring, two-way gazes both shape and threaten the subject's integrity, as "gazed and gazed-upon are locked in a dialectic of mutual reflection" (Lacan in Garber & Vickers 6). Thus "even without a material object as mirror, it is the other who functions as a mirror—the mirror stage is a paradigm, with the birth of the ego" (30). The mirror thus offers a metaphor for the child's perceptions reflected back in both their own mirror and in Others, while creating their identity. Jean-Paul Sartre identifies the look or 'le regard' literally as Medusa, suggesting that we either transcendthe other, or they transcend us, through this dialectic of the petrifying Medusa gaze (429): "for Sartre, Medusa is the look [...] the look is the revelation of the existence of the Other" (Barnes 125). But what exactly is the connection with Medusa?

Medusa the Gorgon is raped by Poseidon in the temple of Athena, as the rape victim is punished by Athena for this sacrilege, giving her snakes for hair, as well as a petrifying look. Perseus beheads her with the help of Athena and the other gods, as shown on the Palermo temple metope, holding up a shield in order not to be petrified by her powerful gaze, looking at her reflection while beheading her, as the inspiring muse Pegasus emerges from her neck. She can be killed because she is mortal, yet she retains her power in the common unconscious to this day. Medusa's petrifying gaze operates as Athena's alter-ego, Medusa as Athena's rival in beauty, awarding or punishing her with snakes for hair (the snake is an empowering life force, both poisoning and providing the antidote through healing); the two remain twinned henceforward. After this rape, the unheroic Perseus beheads her with the help of the gods, as reported in Hesiod, Homer and Ovid, and shown in Cellini's statue of Perseus and Medusa in Florence. Once mortal victim, Medusa becomes a terrifying femme fatale to the Romantic imagination, in Mario Praz's The Romantic Agony, her head retaining its power through the force of her gaze. Cellini's statue is reversed in the DarkAngelWarlord of Luciao Garbarti, 2008, showing the female Medusa beheading Perseus.The monstrous Medusa, "the ruling one" in Dexter, becomes a protective, apotropaic and redemptive, evil eye force. Just as a child wears an evil eye charm to protect them from the negative gaze of others, so Medusa's gaze turns back the opposing force, deflecting its power, in an apotropaic force. Medusa's life-giving and death-yielding power in her snakes and blood is both healing and poisonous, protective and petrifying. She retains her power in death; the evil eye of her powerful gaze petrifying those she gazes on, reverting their stare back onto them. This apotropaic force of Medusa is shown on the Temple of Artemis in Corfu, turning negative forces away from the temple, operating as an evil eye to turn away the hostility, in an apotropaic act of warding off the threatening evils as a protective force.

Jean-Pierre Vernant in "Death in the Eyes," shows the mythic Medusa, the Gorgon, as a monstrous power of terror with "unbearable radiation from head and eyes" (118), exerting fascination as a doubling force, wrenching the onlooker or gazer away from self, as, robbed of their own gaze, they are invested or invaded by the figure facing them, who seizes and possesses them through the terror its eye and its features inspire" (137). Vernant regards Medusa as a horrific reflection of Otherness, "representing in its grimace the terrifying horror of a radical otherness with which you yourself will be identified as you are turned to stone" (121). "The face of Medusa or Gorgo is the Other, your double, the Strange, responding to your face like an image in the mirror […] an image that is both less and more than yourself" (Vernant 138). The Medusa gaze thus occurs in power interactions in a doubling dialectic, as the agency of the female look resists objectification, countering the gaze, as one is disempowered by the other. The child creates their own ego through outside forces, reflecting themselves (narcissistically) and Others (hostilely) in their own mirrors, in doubling, transitive relationships, as Lacan states.

My research shows literary women in stressful relationships exerting this 'Medusa function.' "The Other objectifies us with their look, subjecting the spontaneity of our own personality, our being for-itself, to the petrification in in-itself by the Other's look, [which] is the profound meaning of the myth of Medusa," (Sartre 430). For Sartre, Medusa is the look: "The Look is the revelation of the existence of the Other." "I am stared at; therefore [I realize] you exist," as Barnes reflects: "The gazer and gazed-upon are locked in a dialectic of mutual reflection." In Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea, when the Creole Antoinette, daughter of slave owners, and the Black Tia, whose family were slaves, fight over status, Tia taunts Antoinette with her family's poverty and her own prowess, taking her friend's dress and pennies and deserting her.But when the Blacks set fire to Antoinette's home, it is Tia to whom Antoinette runs, her friend and enemy, even as Tia throws a stone at her. Blood courses down Antoinette's face, while tears run down Tia's cheeks, as "They stare at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass" (38). At this climactic moment a symbiotic doubling occurs between these friends who present each other with their own mirror image. The Medusa gaze is apotropaic, or defensive for the one who uses it, while aggressive when used against the enemy, as in the shield of Achilles, or when Athena wsears it on her aegis or breastplate. The destructive Medusa thus becomes a protective evil eye or talisman, deflecting the power of another's gaze. This apotropaic force in ancient times is seen as

Medusa's head is placed on tombs, shields, doorways, ovens, temples, tiles, the floor of the Odeon theatre at Kibyra, or in Christina Balit's illustrations of Medusa as an apotropaic force defending the Greeks and Athena against the Trojans in the war, resulting in a Greek victory.

What does Freud's "The Head of Medusa" have to say about this phenomenon? He reports that the sight of the Medusa's head, which he sees as the mother's genitals, makes the spectator stiff with terror, turns him to stone, as this sexual view of the mother appears castrating, yet also stimulating to men; the ambiguous power of seeing the woman as castrated affords a man's ultimate wish fulfilment (Creed 111). Kristeva suggests that men fear women not because they are castrated, but because they are not castrated; woman is physically whole and not mutilated (as a man might be if he were castrated). This brings us to the female genitals seen as the vagina dentata, as one who might castrate the male in orgasm. "This display [of] the genitals can be an apotropaic device [evoking] the fear of the enemy" (Dexter 33).Cixous writes: "Men need femininity to be associated with death; it's the jitters that gives them a hard on! Look at the trembling Perseuses moving backward toward us, clad in apotropes" (885); "You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her.And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing;" "we are black and we are beautiful [...] we're not afraid of lacking," Let them tremble as we show them our 'sexts.'

In Kibyra, Burdur, we observed the two-thousand-year-old Roman opus sectile Medusa mosaic, restored and opened in July 2018. I went to New York in 2018 to talk on Dangerous Beauty: Medusa in Classical Art exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum, reported by Hyperallergic: "The Beauty and Horror of Medusa, an Enduring Symbol of Women's Power." How does Angela Carter present this iconic gaze? In "The Tiger's Bride" she shows a reciprocal gaze. Placed under an ultimate objectification by her father, who loses his daughter to the beast in a card game, the protagonist refuses any compromise with clockwork or artificial beauty or adornment, preferring to meet the tiger's "dread symmetry." When the beast strips himself of his humanity, she feels ripped apart as she meets the "annihilating vehemence of his eyes" and strips off all the layers of societal masks to the core, thereby enabling them to embrace on an equally authentic level with a reciprocal, transformative gaze. As for "The Bloody Chamber," the naïve virgin of the

arpeggios marries the Bluebeard marquis, who strips her like an artichoke and deflowers her before a dozen mirrors, but even before she discovers the embalmed bodies of his three previous wives, she weeps while reporting the evil-eye blue eyes of the dolphin taps to her mother, who thereby intuits her danger and gallops to the rescue. Imprinting the blood from the key onto his wife's forehead, the marquis determines she will be decapitated, yet as the girl's mother gallops up—empathetically for her, destructively for the marquis, he can only stand helpless before her gaze, transfixed, utterly dazed and at a loss as she shoots him. "My husband stood stock-still, as if she had been Medusa, the sword raised over his head like a bluebeard in the fair. The protagonist reports: My head did not roll, the beast wavered in his stroke, The marquis stands transfixed, utterly dazed, at a loss" (40), petrified by the apotropaic, destructive and protective, Medusa force of the girl's mother.

In Sylvia Plath's "Medusa" poem, we may wonder if she shows the mother as a maternal monster, or as affording her daughter protection with her love?

Medusa
Did I escape, I wonder?
I didn't call you.
I didn't call you at all.
Nevertheless, nevertheless
You steamed to me over the sea,
Fat and red, a placenta …
Paralysing the kicking lovers.
Squeezing the breath from the blood bells
Of the fuchsia.
I could draw no breath,
Dead and moneyless,
Overexposed like an X-ray.
Who do you think you are?

A Communion wafer? Blubbery Mary?
I shall take no bite of your body,
Bottle in which I live,
Off, off, eely tentacle!
There is nothing between us.

This poem ambiguously works as an exorcism of the maternal gaze, casting off the mother, named Aurelia or jelly-fish, as she proffers her suffocating Medusa love, which the poetic persona can only experience as encroaching, overbearing, devouring, unable to appreciate its nurturing and enabling

force. If we consider Plath's semi-fictional account in The Bell Jar of her emotional internship, we see Esther looking in her mirror, but only seeing a sick Indian (119). When the girls' photos are taken, a weeping Esther looks at her image in her compact mirror, seeing someone "peering from the grating of a prison cell after prolonged beating" (108).Esther becomes distraught while facing her negative self-perceptions in the mirror and under the gaze of others. Empathising with the electrocuted Rosenbergs and imagining being burned like them, she later undergoes a similarly torturous electro-shock treatment herself.After her suicide attempt, her mirror reflects a colourful, strange man or woman, the face shading from purple to green, brown mouth with rose-coloured sores at the corners, a "supernatural conglomeration of bright colours" with chicken-feather tufts of hair sticking up (183), which she only recognises as her own reflection when it smiles.Sadly, Esther appears defeated by the hostile gazes she reflects or feels imposed on her.

Hence we see the Medusa gaze as destructive in Plath's The Bell Jar, when Esther becomes unstable, going mad between her Others, and commits suicide. In Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea, Antoinette is caught in an exchange of gazes with Tia, maddened under disempowering gazes, later committing suicide. Philippe Julien suggests: "Either the other kills me, or I kill the other." The Medusa gaze is either empowering or disempowering, as well as redemptive, as in Carter's "The Bloody Chamber," where the mother petrifies the marquis, asserting her gaze and saving her daughter's life. In Plath's "Medusa" poem, the mother's knowledge of her daughter's marital situation, however empathetic, feels threatening to the poet, and in Morrison's Beloved, Sethe asserts her powerful Medusa gaze against those who want to own her and her family as chattle. It is key to own and wield your own Medusa gaze, rather than being crushed under the gaze of others. A mutually embracing gaze is also possible between loving individuals.

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Session 1: Rewriting Womanhood

Beyond the locked door: Examination female characters in Virginia Woolf's A room of one's own , To the Lighthouse and Mrs. Dalloway

Lana Suna

How Virginia Woolf explores and critiques gender roles in A Room of One's Own , To the Lighthouse and Mrs. Dalloway:

The modern era, though marked by progress, was still deeply shaped by the social and cultural legacies of the Victorian period. During this time, traditional gender roles and stereotypical perceptions of women persisted, significantly influencing women's access to education, creativity, and intellectual expression. The rise of feminist thought in the early 20th century began to challenge these entrenched ideologies, prompting a reevaluation of gender identity and the social structures that upheld inequality.

Virginia Woolf was at the forefront of this intellectual shift. In A Room of One's Own, she critically examines the historical and systemic exclusion of women from literature, education, and public life. This presentation will focus on how Woolf exposes the influence of male-dominated institutions. Woolf illuminates the barriers women faced in asserting their creativity in the modern age.

Mary Beton, the narrator, serves as a symbolic figure for all women caught between the values of the Victorian past and the transformative aspirations of the modern era. Through her, Virginia Woolf illustrates the internal conflict of women whose intellectual and creative potential has been stifled by social taboos and rigid gender constraints.

In her work, Woolf presents a scene that sharply critiques institutionalized sexism and the denial of women's basic rights to education and independence:

"Thus I found myself walking with excessive speed across a grassy field. Suddenly, a male figure appeared and blocked my path. Dressed in a frock coat and a matching shirt, this strange-looking creature gestured wildly in my direction, though I did not at first realize that I was the object of his agitation. His face bore an expression of horror and rage. Instinct, rather than reason, came to my aid: he was a university beadle — and I was a woman" (Woolf, 1929, p.11).

This quote underscores how patriarchal authority not only imposes physical boundaries but also symbolizes a broader cultural exclusion. The presence of the university beadle reflects the institutional gatekeeping that barred women from spaces of intellectual pursuit, reinforcing their exclusion from the academic and literary spheres. Woolf criticizes the rationalist justifications often used to legitimize this exclusion, revealing how male-dominated systems actively sought to preserve their superiority by denying women access to knowledge and expression.

Similarly, Mary Beton experiences a profound sense of subaltern identity in the novel. Through her, Virginia Woolf unveils the persistent institutionalized misogyny embedded within patriarchal structures—misogyny sustained by a male-centric gaze that repeatedly positions women as inferior or threatening. This systemic exclusion is rooted in the desire of patriarchal authority to protect its collective ego and maintain male dominance, particularly in intellectual and professional domains.

Woolf exemplifies these barriers through a significant moment in the text:

"I must have opened the door, for at that very moment — not white wings,

but the flutter of a black cloak blocked the path, like a guardian angel — a gentleman appeared, clear-voiced, kind yet condescending. With a gentle motion of his hand, he signaled me to step back, and in a low tone, regretfully informed me that women were only allowed into the library accompanied by a college fellow or with a letter of introduction" (Woolf, 1929, p.14).

This passage captures the symbolic and literal exclusion of women from intellectual spaces. The "gentleman," though polite in manner, reinforces a gatekeeping role that reflects broader patriarchal norms. His "kind yet condescending" tone is indicative of the systemic discouragement women face in their pursuit of knowledge and freedom.

Within this context, Woolf reveals how women were perceived not as equals but as potential disruptors. The exclusion from the library is emblematic of a deeper issue: the denial of women's intellectual agency and the suppression of their voices in public discourse.

Another significant character in A Room of One's Own is Judith Shakespeare. Virginia Woolf represents the countless gifted women throughout history whose talents were stifled by patriarchal society by her. Judith is portrayed as highly intelligent and self-aware, possessing the same literary inclination and imaginative genius as her brother, William Shakespeare. However, unlike her brother, she is systematically denied the opportunity to develop her potential due to rigid social norms and gender-based discrimination.

Although Judith shares her brother's passion for the theatre and creative expression, her ambition is met not with encouragement, but with ridicule and rejection. As Woolf describes:

"She had the same gift as her brother, a vivid imagination especially attuned

to the rhythm of words. Like him, she was passionate about the theatre. She stood at the stage door and declared her desire to become an actress. The men laughed in her face. The manager — a fat, coarse man — burst into loud laughter" (Woolf, 1929, p.69).

This passage starkly illustrates the deep-seated prejudice against women pursuing intellectual or artistic careers. Despite her talent, Judith is perceived as unworthy and is excluded from the educational and professional avenues available to men. She is labeled as illiterate and incapable—not because of her lack of ability, but due to society's refusal to acknowledge women as capable creators.

The third key perspective explored in the novel is the significance of middle-class female writers and their contributions to literary creativity. Virginia Woolf emphasizes how women, particularly those from the middle class, began to challenge traditional roles and assert their voices through literature. Writers such as the Brontë sisters, Jane Austen, and George Eliot are highlighted as pioneers who not only created lasting literary works but also inspired future generations of women to express themselves despite social constraints.

Woolf reflects on the limited opportunities historically available to women, particularly in relation to their economic and intellectual freedom. Despite their talent, these women faced substantial obstacles due to restrictive gender norms. She critiques the systemic exclusion of women from literary recognition and exposes the double standard inherent in cultural expectations. As she writes:

"For how could it be that while every man seems able to write a song or a poem, not a single woman has written a word in this extraordinary field? It remains a persistent mystery" (Woolf, 1929 , p.60).

One another valuable masterpiece is To the Lighthouse. Virginia Woolf highlighted condition of women characters in the patriarchal society as marginalized, isolated , alienated both themselves and the society. Woolf represents psychological background of totalitarianism against women's self place self esteem and self worth. In To the lighthouse , it reflects the periodical and generational differences between free woman and pressed woman. Their relationship exposes transhistorical context of their interior conflict. Virginia Woolf handles important characters such as Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscole.

Mrs. Ramsay, who symbolizes traditional femininity , portrayed as the ideal "housewife" model in her period. For her, the single duty for women is to marry, care about children and emotionally support their husbands. Mrs. Ramsay maintains social harmony and bond between herself and family's precedences. However, this stereotypical approach creates hard conflict between her holistic approach and society's ossified ideologies. Virginia Woolf illuminates complications on Mrs. Ramsay state as :

"There was nobody she reverenced more. But she could not discuss with him... she could not speak to him of the loneliness of the soul." (Woolf, ..., p. 63)

"And indeed, she had the whole of the other sex under her protection; for reasons she could not explain, for their chivalry and valour, for the fact that they negotiated treaties, ruled India, controlled finance; finally, for an attitude towards herself which no woman could fail to feel or to find agreeable, something trustful, childlike, reverential." (Woolf, .., p. 31)

In these quotes , Virginia Woolf represent how women subjugated to being marginalized and exploited by norms of society. Her emotions is being a secret in her complex mind. She respects Mr. Ramsay's intellect, yet she feels deeply isolated — unable to truly connect or share her existential loneliness.

This "unspoken" female character is the voice of all alone women throughout the history. The entire social system makes true dialogue between men and women almost impossible and this proves how relationships became superficial. Women's interiority — their thoughts, fears, doubts — must remain hidden, even from their husbands. And of course, it shows the power of patriarchal society and dominated women's existentialism. So, it is clearly that fhe despotism cannot have devolution in the strict patriarchal system.

The other character is Lily Briscoe, who portrayed strong independent woman, challenges the patriarchal structure and fiercely defends her authority and autonomy against taboos . In the patriarchal society, she was marginalized by men because of her passion of creativity, addicted to her strength position, stability of her "self-centered" attitudes. Lily briscoe's rejection about marriage symbolizes a "failure" in society; however , she chose her path. Virginia Woolf drew attention to differences between both characteristic traits and stands out how women were underrated by male figures in the modern era as :

"Women can't paint, women can't write." (Woolf,...,p.48)

These words are spoken by Charles Tansley to Lily Briscoe. Mockingly, he repeats what society tells women: that they are incapable of producing intellectual or artistic work. But Lily does not internalize this. She continues to paint. This is a form of passive resistance — asserting her existence despite the dominance of male voices. Through this moment, Woolf shows how society silences women by convincing them that they are "not enough." So , this proves in psychological background of male figure that they have fragile masculinity against equality in both gender. Virginia Woolf explores psychological underpinnings of male superiority and critiques how this sense of dominance manifests in the whole of society.

The third and last significant masterpiece is Mrs. Dalloway. In the novel , we witnessed the psychological breakdowns after war, strong but introspective women types and the theme of loneliness in characters of Clarissa Dalloway and Lucrezia Warren Smith.

Clarrisa Dalloway, our protagonist, represents a London housewife who is a part of high society. She was elegant , kind on the outside ; yet deeply introspective and questioning on the inside. Even though she seemed as a "ideal woman" , in the reality she was full of loneliness, suppressed feelings and desires, and sense of existential emptiness. Virginia Woolf juxtaposes Clarissa Dalloway's internal conflicts about social oppression and marginalization and she states our main character as :

"She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown..."
(Woolf,...,p.10)

Here, Woolf criticized even upper class social mobility affected the woman as being silenced and subdued by social norms. She illustrates corruption of inevitable consequences of psychological poverty and loneliness.

The last character is Lucrezia Warren Smith. She is a young Italian woman who moved to London for her husband. Lucreziaforced to cope with Septimus's postwar traumas. She creates a perspective of trapped woman in the role of a wife. Her own desires, fears, and needs are pushed into the background. The expectation that "a woman must carry the burden of the man" is heavily imposed here. In London, she is "the other." Her cultural difference and language barrier further isolate her. No one truly listens to her. She is only seen as a "grieving wife." Woolf refers this character in Mrs. Dalloway as :

"She was alone; exposed; tortured." (Woolf,...,p.90)

Here, Virginia Woolf examines Rezia is not just alone — she is psychologically stripped bare. Her husband's pain has become embedded in her body and mind as well. Society's refusal to listen to immigrant women, especially those who are fragile and unable to express their inner world.

To conclude, in A Room of One's Own, To the Lighthouse, and Mrs. Dalloway, Virginia Woolf vividly illustrates the various challenges women have faced throughout history, the ways in which they have resisted and overcome these struggles, and how society has persistently attempted to confine them within restrictive roles. With each passing day, we grow more aware of the importance and value of these female characters — and we take great pride in their strength and legacy.
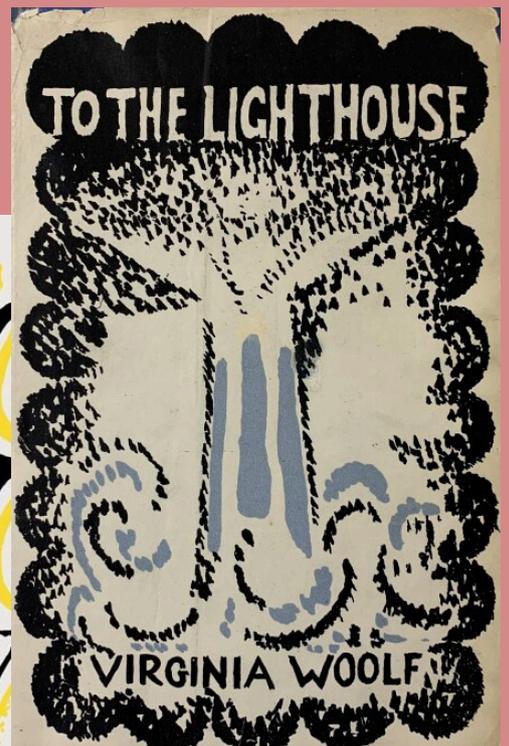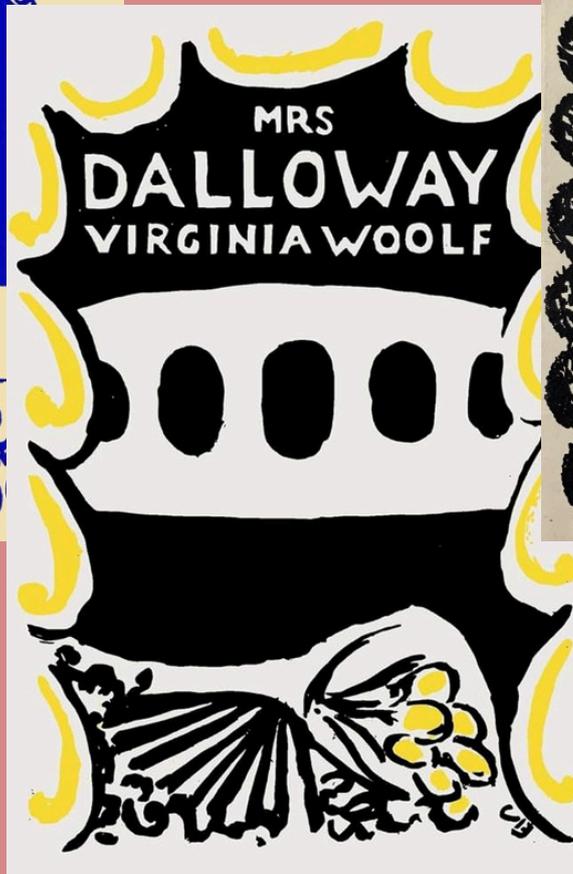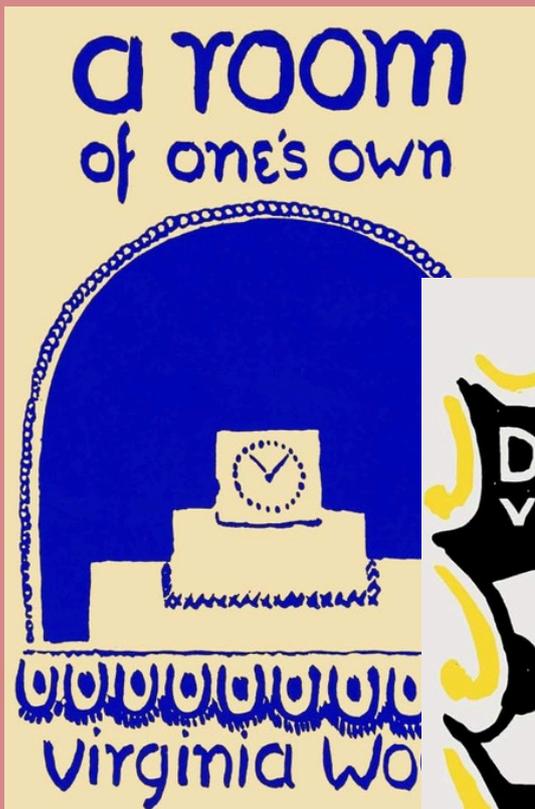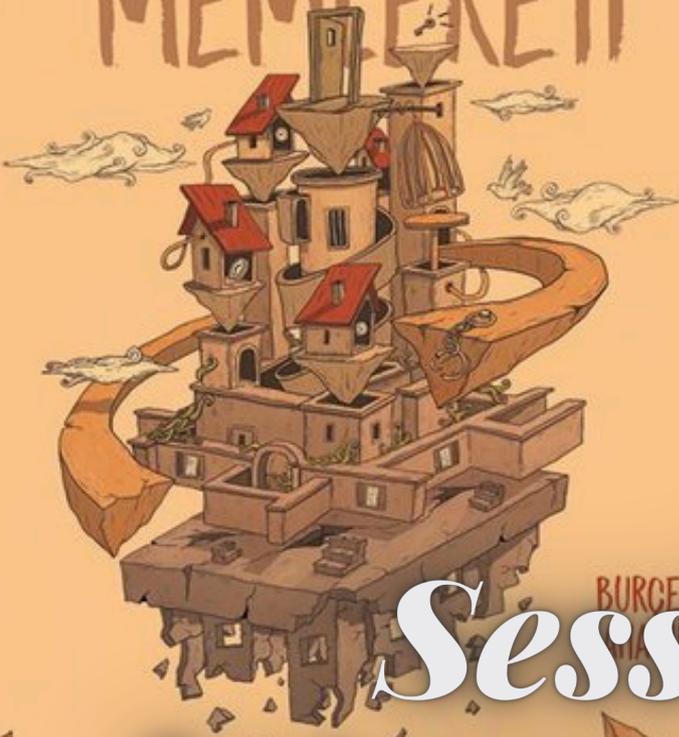
Session 2:
Intersectionality
and Power
Structures

Literature and Gender Equality: An Analysis of "The Land of Dead Woman"

Şevval Nur Demirci

 Literature is not only a form of artistic expression, but also a tool that reflects the realities of society, helps us remember important events, and creates emotional bonds between the reader and the lives being represented. My main focus will be on the novel The Land of Dead Women by Burçe Bahadır, a powerful work that tells the stories of women who were killed by men in Turkey. These women, speaking from beyond the grave, share their untold stories and invite the reader to listen carefully to their experiences. .

Being a Woman in Turkey: Between Struggle and Silence

Atatürk's Reforms: A Historical Milestone for Women's Rights in Turkey:
Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, played a crucial role in advancing women's rights in the early 20th century. He introduced sweeping reforms to ensure women's equal participation in public, educational, and professional life.

Atatürk regarded women as "half of the nation" and believed that true progress could not be achieved without gender equality. His reforms supported women's right to education, work, and social participation. By eliminating restrictions on women's clothing, behavior, and lifestyle, Atatürk set the stage for a modern, secular, and progressive Turkey.
These reforms played a crucial role in shaping the foundations of the republic and empowering women in political, social, and cultural spheres. However, over time, social norms and cultural barriers have undermined these rights, and the struggle for equality persists today.

Contemporary Realities: Struggling Against Patriarchy and Violence

Being a woman in Turkey means navigating a society where gender roles are deeply influenced by patriarchal values, conservative traditions, and systemic inequality. Although the country has made significant legal strides toward gender equality—such as granting women the right to vote in 1934 and signing international conventions to protect women's rights—these legal protections often fail to translate into everyday reality.

Violence against women remains a pressing issue. Femicide rates are alarmingly high, and perpetrators frequently go unpunished or receive reduced sentences under the guise of "unjust provocation." This systemic failure not only endangers women's lives but also reinforces a culture in which male dominance is normalized and female suffering is overlooked.

Women in Turkey encounter barriers that silence their voices and restrict their agency. Societal expectations continue to confine women to roles as mothers, wives, or caretakers, while women who seek autonomy or challenge traditional norms are often met with hostility or stigmatization. The media frequently objectifies women or blames victims in cases of harassment and assault.

Resistance and Reclamation Through Literature

Yet, despite these challenges, Turkish women have continuously resisted silencing. Activists, writers, artists, and ordinary women have created powerful movements to speak up against injustice. The women's rights movement in Turkey is vibrant and resilient, giving voice to those who have been historically marginalized.

Literature, in particular, has become a vital space for women to reclaim their stories, express their realities, and demand change. Writers like Elif Şafak, Latife Tekin have explored the complexities of being a woman in a patriarchal society, breaking taboos and challenging cultural norms.

Thus, being a woman in Turkey is not only a condition of struggle but also one of strength, creativity, and defiance. This lived reality is essential for understanding how literature functions not merely as reflection, but as resistance.

Women in Literature: Silenced Myths and Patriarchal Narratives

From ancient myths to modern novels, women have often been portrayed as voiceless, passive, or dangerous beings whose stories are told not by themselves, but by men. This phenomenon is rooted deeply in mythology, where female figures such as Pandora, Medusa and Circe are constructed within narratives that deny them agency. Pandora, created as a punishment to mankind, is blamed for the release of evil into the world simply because she opens a jar—an act tied to curiosity, which in itself becomes a punishable trait in women. Medusa, after being raped by Poseidon, is transformed into a monstrous figure whose gaze turns men to stone—her trauma erased, her voice silenced. Circe, although initially depicted as powerful and autonomous, is ultimately subdued and repurposed to support the male hero's journey. These stories reflect a pattern in which female power, curiosity, and individuality are systematically punished or controlled, reinforcing the patriarchal structures that shape both literature and society.

This silencing continues in literature authored by men. Female characters in works are often portrayed as emotional, irrational, and tragic. Their attempts to seek freedom, love, or identity end in destruction—suicide, exile, or madness. Importantly, these narratives are filtered through male narrators or omniscient male perspectives, which control how these women are seen, interpreted, and remembered. As a result, women in these stories become objects of desire, pity, or condemnation, rather than full, complex human beings.

Power of Literature

In societies where injustice and violence are often hidden or ignored, literature helps to bring forgotten stories to light and preserve them alive for future generations. Literature, particularly in the context of gender based violence and femicide, plays an important role in remembering victims as human with ambitions, dreams and lives rather than as numbers. **In Turkey, where many women face violence and femicide, literature plays an even more essential role. Burçe Bahadır's work The Land of Dead Women serves as a stunning example of this. In the novel, the murdered women speak their own stories, even after they have died. This literary style enables victims to restore their identities and dignity, which were taken away by violence. Their voices, which society attempted to quiet, come to life within the pages of the book. Through the book, Bahadır not only honors the memories of these women but also challenges readers to see femicide as a systemic issue, rather than individual cases.** Literature like The Land of Dead Women also helps create empathy. When readers hear the personal stories of people like Suna, who was forced to marry as a child, or Didem , who was murdered in the name of "honor," they are expected to feel the agony, fear, and injustice that these women experienced.

In this way, literature does not allow society to forget. It connects personal suffering and collective memory. Furthermore, literature turns silence into action. It empowers victims to speak up when society refuses to listen. Each page serves as a kind of protest, a reminder that silence can be broken and justice can be demanded.

Literature as Hope and Change

Despite the serious subjects it deals with, The Land of Dead Women is also a book of hope. It demonstrates that even in death, women can resist. Their stories live on, encouraging readers to care, speak up, and take action. Literature, by preserving these stories, contributes to a collective memory. The novel concludes with a message of unity and voice: *"You thought my story was over. But we are just beginning to speak."* It shows us that while violence may end a life, it cannot silence a voice that is carried through words, books, and readers who choose to listen.

Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism focuses on how literature portrays gender roles, female identity, power relations, and the lived experiences of women. Historically, women's voices in literature were often silenced, simplified, or misrepresented by male authors. Feminist criticism aims to reverse this trend by highlighting the voices of women and exploring texts that give them space to speak authentically and fully.

BurçeBahadır's The Land of Dead Women is a striking example of feminist literary engagement.In this novel, women who have been murdered speak for themselves—after death. Each chapter is written in the first person, allowing the reader to hear directly from women who were silenced by male violence. These women reclaim their narratives and tell the truths that were ignored during their lifetimes.

The novel powerfully confronts the patriarchal systems that made their deaths possible, while also offering them posthumous dignity and remembrance. It aligns with the well-known feminist motto: "the personal is political."

Through its form and content, the novel becomes a literary space of resistance. Each woman is no longer just a statistic or news headline; she becomes a person with a voice, a story, and a place in collective memory.Bahadır's work transforms passive victimhood into active storytelling.

"They thought they buried me with silence. But my story stayed in the air, in the eyes of my sister, in the tears of my mother, in the whispers of others like me."

This quotation expresses the idea that even when women are killed, their stories do not disappear. Their voices linger, through memory, pain, and literature. Feminist literature like this keeps the memory of women alive and turns storytelling into a form of protest. It is not just about mourning the dead —it is about naming the problem, demanding justice, and ensuring that these women are never forgotten.

About the Book

Burçe Bahadır's novel, The Land of Dead Women, combines social reality with fiction. The novel focuses on women who were killed by men, and what makes it especially powerful is that these women communicate with the reader from the hereafter. Every character shares her own story, revealing the pain, terror, and unfair treatment they faced. Their stories are personal, touching, and truly human. However, they also have a political function, reminding the reader that these catastrophes are not individual tragedies but rather signs of a more extensive, broken system. Each character in The Land of Dead Women represents a different aspect of the violence women face in Turkey.

Stories

Suna:

From the beginning of her life, Suna is exposed to a deeply abusive environment that shapes her into a woman who is caught in a cycle of trauma. As a child, she is subjected to the emotional and physical abuse of her brother. She is given away in marriage while still a little girl, thrust into a world of adult responsibilities and expectations far beyond her years. This forced marriage highlights the extreme consequences of a patriarchal society that views women as property to be controlled and traded.

Her marriage is not one of love or mutual respect, but a continuation of the exploitation and control that started with her brother. The violence she endures at the hands of those who are supposed to protect her is a manifestation of the systemic abuse that many women, especially in deeply patriarchal societies, face.

The trauma of being a child bride and the abuse she suffers at the hands of her brother become defining elements of Suna's story, showcasing how deeply gendered violence can scar a person for life.

Nigar:

Nigar's story in The Land of Dead Women is one of pain, struggle, and the harsh realities of being a woman in a deeply patriarchal society. Nigar, like many women in the novel, faces a life marked by oppression and suffering, but her experiences also reflect the resilience and determination to survive despite the odds stacked against her.

Nigar is a child whose life begins in Germany, marked by constant physical and emotional abuse from both her mother and father. She continues to act with sadistic pleasure toward Nigar; bruises, signs, and beatings become routine parts of her childhood.

One day, her mother designs a disgusting plan to ensure Nigar doesn't remain a virgin. She sends her into the bathroom and orders her to insert her own finger "inside," while standing guard at the door. In fear, disgust, and helplessness, Nigar obeys—but there is no blood, and the wolves of her nightmares do not die. Her mother's goal is simple: for Nigar's marriage to fail and for her husband to beat her and send her back.

Nigar is married off to Mehmet, a man from Giresun. While Mehmet is kind and cheerful when alone, in his father's presence, he becomes tense and indifferent. His father instills a culture of violence, telling him, "A real man makes a woman run for cover when he enters the house." No one saves Nigar.

Though Mehmet does not repeat what his father did to his own mother, he subjects Nigar to sexual violence for 2,652 nights. Eventually, Nigar tells him, "Let's divorce." Mehmet's father agrees, saying, "Let the whore go, but she's leaving the kids behind." Nigar plans to return to Germany However, when her father threatens her—"Don't come back or I'll kill you"—she is forced to return.

To Mehmet, Nigar is nothing but a "whore." He believes he can do anything he wants to her. Influenced by his father and community, he sees obedience as a woman's only duty. Mehmet normalizes his abuse and even engages in perverse behavior, including sexual acts with a donkey. Nigar can no longer bear it and pleads with her lover Seyfi, "Come get me. Save me." Their plan is to scare Mehmet, take Nigar and the children, and escape. But that night,

when they break into the house, things go wrong—Mehmet is smothered with a pillow. He dies. Seyfi flees. Nigar is left at the scene of the crime.

In the morning, Nigar's daughter finds her mother tied up with duct tape and her father's bruised, lifeless body. In a life where she has always been the victim, Nigar is now accused of being a murderer. The wolves she feared as a child—her mother, Mehmet, and the suffocating weight of society—have always existed both inside and around her. Life never gives her a chance to prove her innocence. ***Nigar becomes both the victim and the accused in a bloody tragedy from which she could never escape.***

In the end, it's always the dead who are blamed:

In The Land of Dead Women by Burçe Bahadır, Hamit appears as a man convicted of murdering his wife. He is a character who has deeply internalized the patriarchal notions of "honor" and "manhood." Hamit reveals his deep-rooted hatred toward women—especially independent or "disobedient" ones. He claims he killed his wife because he perceived her behavior as a stain on his honor. Hamit constantly monitored his wife, subjected her to physical and psychological violence, and used beating, intimidation, and torture not only as tools of control but also as sources of sadistic pleasure.

Hamit sees himself as entirely justified in committing the murder. After killing his wife, he expresses no remorse; on the contrary, he tells Bahadır, "If I had the chance, I'd kill her again," making his sense of entitlement and righteousness very clear. In his mind, a woman must obey her husband; otherwise, she deserves any punishment.

The societal saying, "Kill her, do a few years, and get out," emboldens men like Hamit. His story exposes the patriarchal mindset behind femicide,

the tendency of men to see themselves as eternally justified and how gender inequality normalizes murder.

The stories of Didem, Hanife, and Hayriye share common themes that reflect the central messages of The Land of Dead Women. These themes include the oppressive roles women are forced into, the emotional and physical abuse they face, and the societal pressures that seek to silence them. Each woman's story reveals the deep scars left by years of suffering and the different ways they cope with their circumstances. Whether through emotional neglect, physical violence, or an inner determination to resist, Didem, Hanife, and Hayriye's stories each highlight the complexity of surviving in a world where women's voices and experiences are often marginalized.

Not just fiction but reflection of real life:

Each woman in the book represents thousands of real women in Turkey whose lives were taken by male violence. Their suffering, silencing, and stories mirror what we see in the news almost every day.

Suna's story in The Land of Dead Women closely mirrors that of Çilem Doğan, a real woman from Turkey who endured years of abuse before defending herself against her violent partner. Both women were trapped in long-term, abusive relationships—Suna as a child bride at 15, and Çilem in a marriage marked by constant physical and emotional torment. They suffered public humiliation, were denied autonomy, and were repeatedly violated by their husbands. One of the most harrowing aspects of their experiences is the forced prostitution imposed by their abusers. Suna's husband not only abused her for 15 years but also forced her to sell her body, often shouting degrading insults like "bitch" from the window to shame her publicly. Similarly, Çilem revealed that her husband tried to force her into prostitution, adding exploitation to the long list of abuses she suffered.

In both cases, the years of unending torment pushed them to a breaking point: Suna stabbed her husband 17 times, while Çilem shot hers in self-defense. Their stories, though tragic, reflect a harsh reality many women face in patriarchal systems—where protection fails, and desperate acts become their only path to survival and justice.

Didem's story in The Land of Dead Women also closely resembles the story of **Pınar Gültekin**, a university student in Turkey who was brutally murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 2020. Both Didem and Pınar were young, educated women with bright futures ahead of them, yet they became victims of *femicide at the hands of men who could not accept rejection or loss of control.*

Other examples, Şule Çet, a university student, was sexually assaulted and thrown out of a high-rise building, and her character assassination in court showed how women are often blamed even in death. Pınar Gültekin was brutally murdered by her ex-boyfriend, burned, and hidden in a barrel—yet her killer received a reduced sentence for "good behavior." Münevver Karabulut, killed and dismembered by her boyfriend, became a symbol of how the justice system and media can turn a tragedy into spectacle. Şeyma Yıldız, only 17, was murdered by her father for having male friends—her death justified by "honor." Kader Erten, forced into marriage at just 12, was later found dead and declared a "suicide," despite the abuse she faced. Ikbal Uzuner, Hatice Usalan, Ayşenur Halil, and Nazlı Doğan—all victims of male violence—remind us that many women die quietly, their names barely known.

Conclusion

The Land of Dead Women does not invent pain; it records and amplifies it. The book turns statistics into voices, silence into memory. It reminds us that femicide in Turkey is not just a social issue—it is a human crisis. By giving voice to the murdered women, Bahadır shows that fiction can speak truth, and that literature can preserve the stories society tries to erase. In doing so, literature becomes a form of resistance—a means of remembrance, of justice, and of hope.

However, despite the awareness literature can raise, it cannot replace the urgent need for structural change. Feminist criticism reminds us that the root of gender-based violence lies in patriarchal systems that normalize control, silence, and impunity. Legal measures and literary representation must go hand in hand with education, cultural transformation, and political will. Without challenging the gendered power structures embedded in both public and private life, any response to femicide remains incomplete. Thus, while The Land of Dead Women powerfully commemorates the victims, it also implicitly challenges the society that allowed their stories to end in tragedy.

Romanticized Captivity: How Abduction Shapes Identity in *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Tiger's Bride*, and *The Ancient Magus' Bride*

Mert Başkadem

The theme of women being kidnapped, abducted or forcibly drawn into relationships has been repeatedly explored in both literary texts and popular culture products for centuries. These themes are often presented in a romanticised framework, especially in narratives in which supernatural or powerful male figures dominate female characters. However, this form of 'romanticised captivity' opens up for discussion not only the power of love, but also coercion, power relations and the transformation of identity. *Beauty and the Beast*, Angela Carter's feminist short story *The Tiger's Bride*, and the Japanese anime *The Ancient Magus' Bride* explore the transformation, resistance or submission of the female subject through different aesthetic forms. (Walz, 271; Weinert, 3)

In this study, these three works will be analysed in terms of how they deconstruct or reproduce the romanticised narrative of bondage. In addition, the transformation processes experienced by the literary characters will be evaluated in the light of the concepts of consent and obedience in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *On The Social Contract* (Rousseau, 77), the marginalised position of women in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir, 813 - 24), and the surveillance-discipline mechanisms analysed by Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 195). Thus, it will be questioned whether the transformation of captivity into a 'love narrative' leads to freedom or a deeper domination.

In this context, the article focuses on three main questions: How do romanticised forms of bondage transform the subject? How is the female character's identity reconfigured within this bondage relationship? And finally, is this transformation liberating or does it produce a more subtle form of subjugation?

Beauty and the Beast: Romanticising Submittance

Beauty and the Beast begins when Belle, a young woman, agrees to live with a frightening beast in order to save her father. In time, it is revealed that the Beast is actually a mild-mannered man, and Belle falls in love with him. This love transforms the Beast back into a prince. The tale is often seen as a narrative that praises the ability to look beyond appearances and the love that comes with compassion., (Weinert, 4)

However, when we analyse this story from the perspective of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *On the Social Contract*, a different interpretation emerges. Rousseau argues that individuals enter into the social contract by giving up some of their freedoms in order to gain security and order. According to him, *"Giving up one's freedom means giving up one's humanity, one's human rights, and moreover, one's duties"* (Rousseau, 84). In this context, Belle's initial captivity is not voluntary, but in time she becomes accustomed to the situation, finds peace and even thrives under the Beast's rule. This transformation corresponds to Rousseau's idea that true freedom can be gained through voluntary submission to a benevolent authority.

In Rousseau's theory of the social contract, individuals give up their natural freedom and move to civil freedom. This civil freedom is realised through the individual's compliance with the general will (volonté générale). Rousseau states that society limits the freedom of the individual by saying Men are born free, but everywhere they are in chains (Rousseau, 54-6).

Belle's submission to the Beast can be interpreted as a metaphor for this transition to civil freedom. Although Belle seems to have lost her freedom at the beginning, in time she gains a place in the Beast's world and finds her own identity in this new order. (Banks, 2-7)

However, this perspective also raises ethical questions: If harmony and love can only be achieved through submission, how do we distinguish between coercion and true consent? Does Belle really love the Beast, or does she rationalise her lack of freedom as an emotional transformation? Rousseau blurs the boundary between autonomy and submission, and this tension is at the very centre of the romanticised theme of bondage.

Rousseau's concept of 'forced emancipation' is also important in this context. Rousseau argues that individuals are obliged to obey the general will and in this way they can achieve true freedom. This idea can also be seen in Belle's submission to the Beast. (de Villeneuve, 274-8)Although Belle initially opposes this situation, in time she accepts the Beast's world and finds her place in this new order. This process parallels Rousseau's idea of the individual's attainment of freedom within society.

When the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* is analysed in the light of Rousseau's social contract theory, it reveals the complex relationships between the individual's freedom, consent and submission. Belle's submission to the Beast, although it seems like a bondage at the beginning, transforms into a process of finding freedom and identity in time.

Angela Carter's *The Tiger's Bride*: Deciphering Patriarchal Myths

Angela Carter's *The Tiger's Bride* presents a powerful feminist narrative that turns patriarchal fairy tales on their head. In particular, her radical rewriting of the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* is in direct dialogue with the ideas expressed by Simone de Beauvoir in her work *The Second Sex* (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, 1949). Carter questions the traditional narrative in which the female character is positioned as the 'other' and deconstructs the process of female subjectivation and the identity roles imposed by the patriarchal system. In this context, The Tiger's Bride is a literary staging of Beauvoir's proposition that 'one is not born a woman, one becomes a woman' (Beauvoir, 817).

At the beginning of the story, the female character is sold by her father to a creature in a gambling game. This scene shows that the woman is positioned as a commodity, not a subject. Beauvoir states that women throughout history have been beings 'defined according to men' and that they are not an essence in their own right (Beauvoir, 818). In Carter's narrative, the woman is initially in this passive position; she is a figure who is "sacrificed" to pay her father's debts. However, this sacrifice is replaced by a conscious transformation process throughout the story.

The 'monster' in the story demands the woman's nakedness and wants to possess her. However, the woman questions this demand and does not accept it. At this point, Beauvoir's criticism of the woman as "the object of man's desire" comes into play. The woman demands to be the subject of her own body by establishing a control over her own nudity. This scene is parallel to Beauvoir's criticism that the woman's body is naturalised to serve the man (Beauvoir, 822-23). This opposition of the woman reveals that she is not only an object but also a subject who desires and decides.

The most striking moment of transformation occurs at the end of the story: The woman peels off her own skin and transforms into a tiger, that is, into an animalistic and inferior being. This metamorphosis is not a process of domestication as we are accustomed to seeing in traditional fairy tales; on the contrary, it is the woman's emancipation from patriarchal definitions and adoption of a new form of identity. Beauvoir states that women's emancipation is only possible when they go beyond patriarchal structures and establish their own subjectivity (Beauvoir, 826). Carter's heroine does exactly this: "I had my own fur coat", she declares her self-ownership (Carter, 70). This coincides with Beauvoir's idea that "women should own their own bodies and desires".

The female character created by Carter rejects the romantic compromise offered to her. In traditional fairy tales, the 'monster' male hero is transformed by the power of love; the woman's reward is this tamed man. In *The Tiger's Bride,* however, the transformation belongs to the woman; she transforms herself not through love, but through resistance and awareness. Beauvoir finds it dangerous for women to see love as a form of salvation, because it means that the woman ties her existence to the existence of the man (Beauvoir, 1949: 652). Carter, on the other hand, advocates that women create their own existence and establish an identity outside the system by identifying with the animalistic.

In the story, the "animal", namely the image of the tiger, becomes the representation of nature against culture, instinct against reason, and femininity against man. The identification of woman with this image is a rebellion against the inferior position of the feminine against civilisation/masculinity.(Walz, 4-6) Beauvoir also criticises the image of woman identified with nature and says that this identification legitimises the historical oppression of women (Beauvoir, 838-41). However, Carter's character does not reject this identification with nature; she transforms it. By taking on the animalistic, the woman embraces a free form of existence outside the patriarchy.

The Tiger's Bride is a feminist text in which Angela Carter not only rewrites a fairy tale but also disrupts the basic narrative structures of patriarchy. It strongly resonates with Simone de Beauvoir's ideas that *"womanhood is a social construction"* and that *"women's emancipation is possible only through the construction of their own subjectivity"* (Hsieh,6 ; Carter, 76-7). Carter's female character ceases to be the 'other' and becomes the 'sole' owner of her own existence. In this respect, the story should be read not only as a narrative of transformation but also as a literary representation of feminist thought.

Panoptic Aesthetics of Discipline: Body, Soul and Subjectification in *The Ancient Magus' Bride*

The Ancient Magus' Bride (*Mahō Tsukai no Yome*) begins with a young girl, Chise Hatori, being sold at auction and purchased by a supernatural being, Elias Ainsworth, as both his student and his future wife (Naganuma and Kazuaki). Although the story bears the traces of gothic romance at first glance, when read in depth, it offers a structure open to a Foucauldian analysis of trauma, subjectification and the effects of discipline on the body and soul. Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* offers a highly functional theoretical framework for analysing this narrative. According to Foucault, modern forms of power discipline the body and mould the soul; power is not only oppressive but also productive (Foucault, 29).

At the beginning of the narrative, Chise is a fragile, devalued figure shaped by the traumas of the past. She is ready to be bound to any authority that can attribute meaning to her. In Foucault's terms, this is the formation of the "obedient body", since the purpose of discipline is to make the body both obedient and efficient (Foucault, 137). Elias's appropriation of her initiates a kind of modern master-slave dialectic. Chise, who is placed in Elias' house, is isolated from the outside world, undergoes strict training in the process of learning magic and is under constant surveillance. This structure resembles

Foucault's panopticon model: *"the prisoner controls his behaviour by assuming himself to be under constant observation"* (Foucault, 201). Chise's behaviour is shaped not only by Elias' direct supervision, but also by this constant sense of visibility.

Elias's disciplinary structure operates not only at the spatial but also at the emotional level. His protective but authoritarian love for Chise corresponds to Foucault's concept of "soft power". This works through the process of producing the individual's consent; Chise internalises Elias's expectations over

time and begins to construct her own desires within his boundaries. This is what Foucault calls the "micro-physics of power"; that is, the infiltration of power into the most intimate areas of the individual (Foucault, 26).

However, Chise's transformation intersects with Foucault's argument that power is not only repressive but also productive. Although the disciplinary structure tames her, it also gives her the capacity to recognise and violate her own limits. Through Elias's teaching, Chise learns to perform magic, build relationships and make decisions. Initially positioning himself as an object, Chise gradually establishes his subjectivity; in other words, the "individual who is the product of discipline" begins to look for ways to go beyond discipline (Foucault, 194).

This transformation is especially evident in the moments when Chise is able to stand against Elias and defend his own will. At this point, Foucault's thesis that "power produces resistance" becomes operational. Chise first questions the boundaries set by Elias, then realises the emotional manipulations and finally develops alternative relationships. The bonds she establishes with characters such as Ruth, Stella and Cartaphilus show her that she can create meanings outside of Elias. Thus, Chise experiences what Foucault calls the process of subjectification: from being a being shaped according to external norms, she becomes a being who establishes her own norms (Foucault, 174).

Foucault emphasises that discipline in modern society is not limited to prisons, but also operates in everyday spaces such as schools, hospitals, barracks and homes (Foucault, 141). In this context, Elias's house is a place of surveillance and regulation as much as it is a refuge. Chise's emancipation process proceeds in parallel with the transformation of the functioning of this space. Elias is also forced to change in this process; Chise's subjectivity destabilises his position of power and forces him to renegotiate it.

The Ancient Magus' Bride presents a narrative that deeply explores Foucault's theories of power, discipline and subjectivation within an anime aesthetic. Chise's journey is not only a recovery from an individual trauma, but also a process of negotiation and transformation against disciplinary power structures. Instead of preventing Chise from discovering herself, Elias' surveillance, isolation and control become a structure that triggers this discovery. In Foucault's words, "power is everywhere, because power works in every relationship" (Foucault, 212). In this context, Chise's story represents the complex process of being both a victim and a transformer of modern power.

Conclusion

Three different narratives-Beauty and the Beast, Angela Carter's The Tiger's Bride, and the anime series The Ancient Magus' Bride-present different forms of romanticised violence as they explore the transformation of female characters through bondage. These works offer profound representations that question notions of love, power and identity.

Beauty and the Beast begins with Belle travelling to the Beast's castle to save her father. In time, Belle falls in love with the Beast and this love transforms the Beast back into a prince. This narrative is seen as a story that praises the ability to look beyond appearances and the love that comes with compassion. However, from the perspective of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract, a different interpretation emerges. Rousseau argues that individuals enter into the social contract by giving up some of their freedoms in order to gain security and order. According to him, "To give up one's freedom is to give up one's humanity, one's human rights, and moreover, one's duties" (Rousseau, 38). Belle's initial captivity is not voluntary, but in time she becomes accustomed to the situation, finds peace and even thrives under the Beast's rule. This transformation corresponds to Rousseau's idea that true freedom can be gained through voluntary submission to a benevolent authority.

Angela Carter's The Tiger's Bride is a feminist rewriting of the classic tale of Beauty and the Beast. In this story, the female character is not passive; on the contrary, she is a defiant woman pushed into a commercial deal. The beast wants to see her nakedness, to own her; she resists. Carter leaves aside the fairy-tale illusions and reveals the power relations at the core of the work. This story connects strongly with Simone de Beauvoir's ideas in The Second Sex. De Beauvoir argues that women have historically been defined according to men and constructed as the "Other" to fulfil their desires. According to her, "One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman"(Beauvoir, 811-14). The journey of the female character in The Tiger's Bride is not to find love through submission, but to discover her own power through transformation.

The Ancient Magus' Bride begins when a young girl named Chise is sold at an auction and bought by a supernatural magician named Elias to be both his disciple and his wife. While the narrative deals with themes such as healing, trauma and friendship, it also raises important questions about subjectivation, discipline and identity. Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish provides a useful framework for understanding this relationship.

Foucault analyses how modern institutions enable the internalisation of power by disciplining the body and shaping the soul. According to him, "Discipline produces individuals; individuals are the product of discipline" (Foucault, 184). In The Ancient Magus' Bride, Chise is subjected to many forms of discipline: magical rituals, educational methods, emotional manipulation and surveillance.

 The relationships in these three stories are marked by a kind of violence - sometimes emotional, sometimes symbolic, sometimes physical. And often this violence masquerades as "love". This forces us to confront the following questions: Can a forced change be truly authentic? Is true love possible when there is an imbalance of power?

Ultimately, these narratives make us question: Is transformation through captivity really a liberation, or is it an implicit form of a deeper submission? Through the philosophical perspectives of Rousseau, de Beauvoir and Foucault, we see that romanticised abduction is not only a narrative cliché, but also a cultural mirror - a mirror that reflects our beliefs about love, power and identity.

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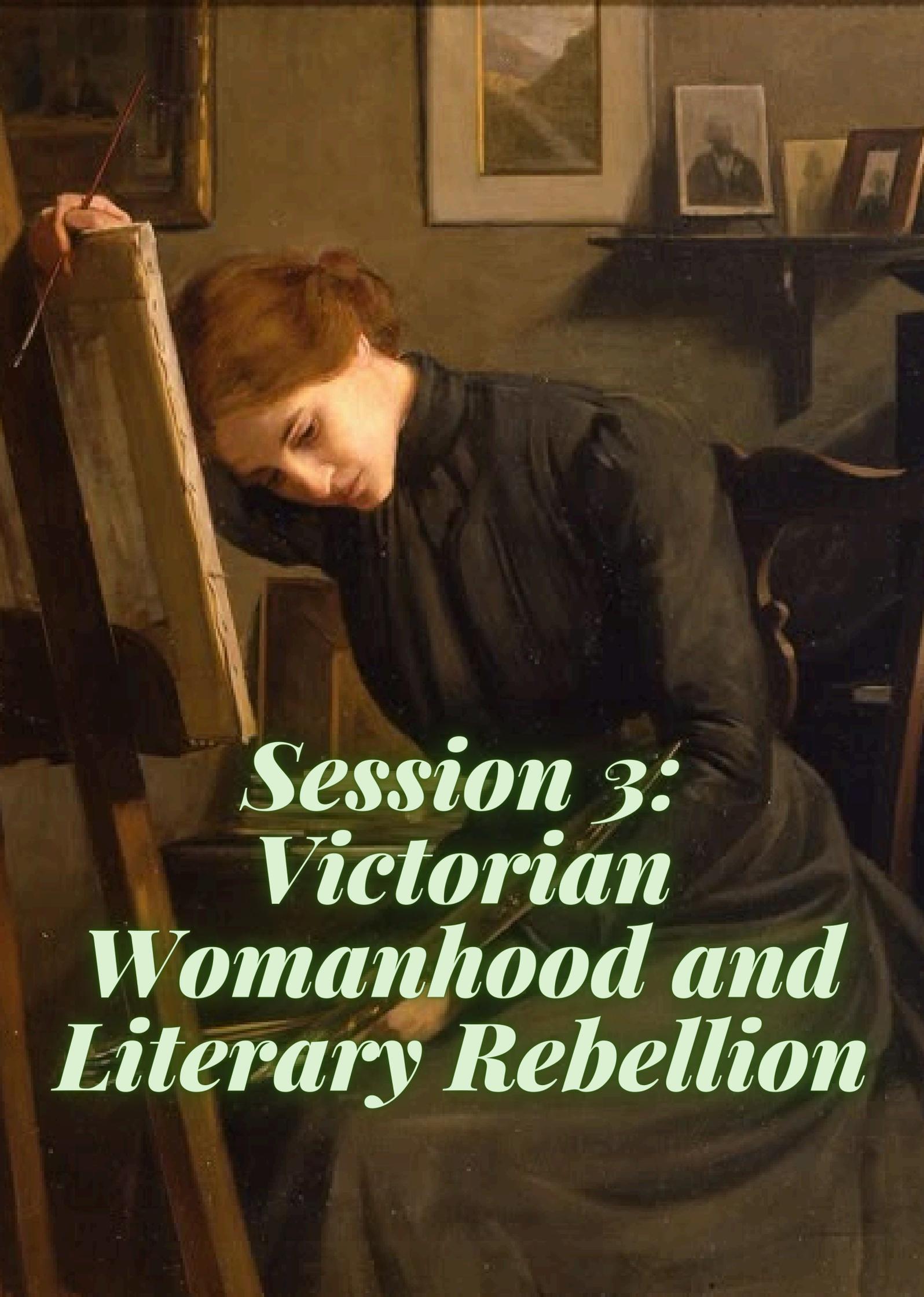
Session 3:
# Victorian Womanhood and Literary Rebellion

Womanhood in Oscar Wilde's A Woman of No Importance

Habibe Çakır

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine how Oscar Wilde's play A Woman of No Importance demonstrates various representations of women existing in the Victorian period through concentrating on some prominent characters specifically. It is explicit that there are different types of women in the play. Whereas Mrs. Rachel Arbuthnot can be considered as the fallen woman, Hester Worsley symbolizes the new woman. Moreover, Lady Caroline Pontefract is the dominant side in her marriage, which is not the expectation during the Victorian era. Wilde emphasizes the fact that women can be strong even during the Victorian era when women were expected to be obedient, submissive and pure. Furthermore, Wilde seems to express his own ideas about womanhood thanks to the presence of Hester due to the fact that she is a person, who defends gender equality. Furthermore, Wilde can be seen as a transitional figure between Victorian period and Modern period although he is beyond Victorianism.

Keywords: womanhood, Victorian era, Oscar Wilde, play
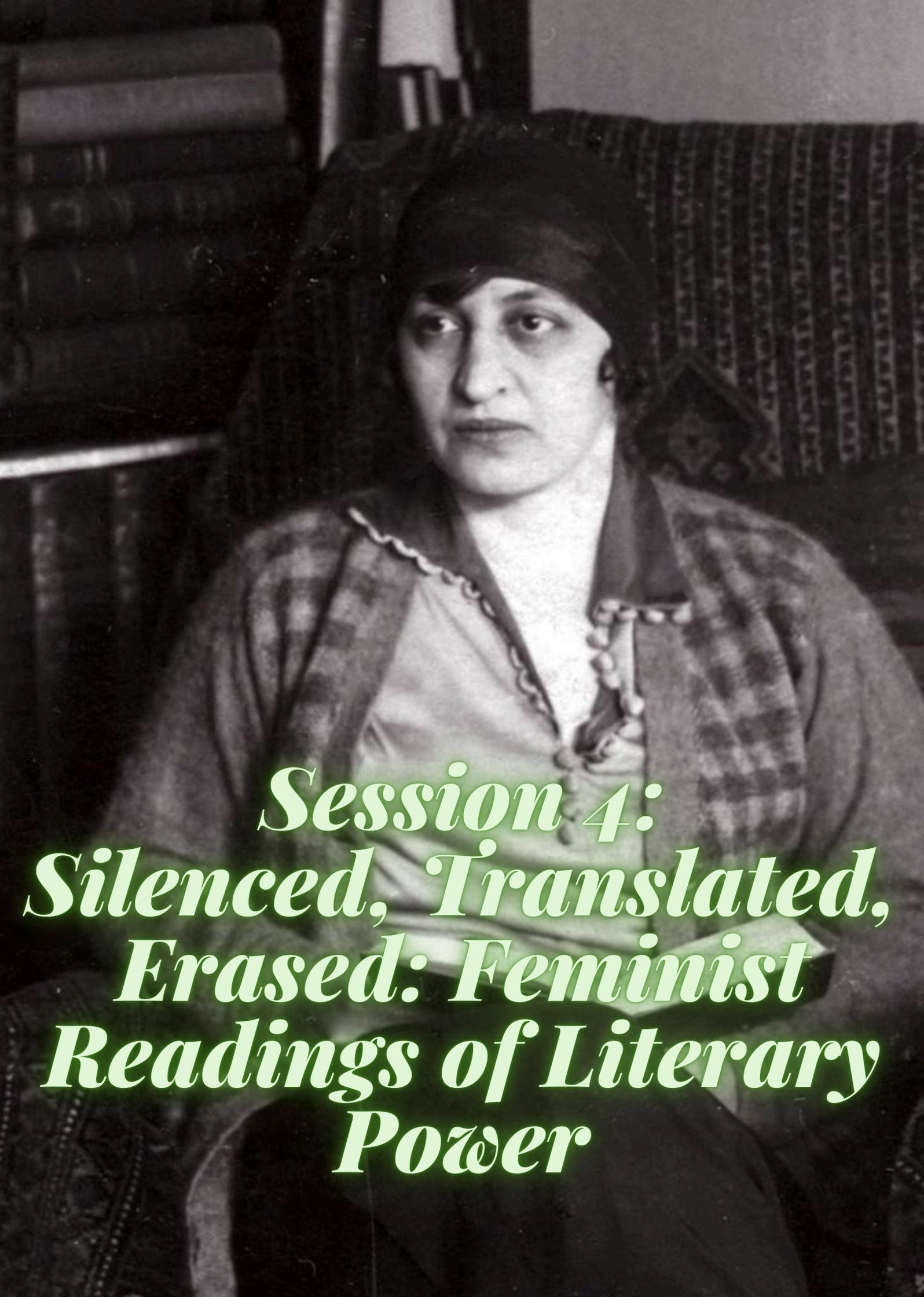
Session 4:
Silenced, Translated, Erased: Feminist Readings of Literary Power

Gender in Halide Edip Adıvar's Translation of John Milton's Satan

Zeynep Elmas

John Milton's (1608-1674) Paradise Lost (1667) is an important work for the literary canon and there has been much research on its poetic and political significance. Most of the studies concentrate on Milton's Satan who has been an influential anti-hero in literary history. Apart from its literary influence on subsequent Anglophone literature, Paradise Lost has been translated into various languages. Yet, there has been minimal research on Turkish translations. One of these translations is that of Halide Edip Adıvar (1884-1964), who partially translated the work in 1949. Compared to other Turkish translations, Adıvar's translation stands out because as a female translator, her remediation of Milton's Satan into Turkish bears resonances with her own gender identity. Therefore, the aim of this presentation is to show how the gender of Halide Edip Adıvar as a female translator is reflected in her translation of the character of Satan in Milton's Paradise Lost.

John Milton who is one of the three major and most popular poets in English literature was born in London on December 9, 1608 in a rich family. Though his father came from a Catholic family, he was a Puritan himself. Milton's religion, therefore, was an outgrowth of family life and not something he chose at a later period in his maturity (cliff notes) . In 1625, Milton matriculated at Christ's College, Cambridge, intending to become a minister. Instead, Milton's facility with language and his abilities as a poet soon made the ministry a secondary consideration (cliff notes) . In March of 1629, Milton received his BA and three years later, in July 1632, completed work on his MA. In completing these degrees, Milton, who started his poetic career at twenty three, had already become an accomplished poet. He was a very

prolific writer, and his works can be divided into three periods in accordance with the changes in his life,style and works. In his first poems such as L'Allogre and Arcades he was like imitating Renaissance poetic themes, genres. He was heavily influenced by classical literature, the Bible, and Renaissance humanism. His writing reflects a love of beauty, music, and morality, with a strong foundation in religious thought. After this first period, he took short trips to Italy, and he came just before the Civil War. He found himself in the middle of politics. Almost twenty years he wrote nothing but essays, most of which were religious pamphlets like The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates. After Civil War, there was Restoration Period but this period was a period of unrest for Milton. He wrote all his major works in this period like Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained.

Paradise Lost which is one of the most important and popular Milton's works is an example of secondary epic. Milton inroduces his subject: "man's first disobedience" against God and its sorrowful consequences. In the first line Milton refers to the consequences as the "fruit" of disobedience, punning on the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge, which Adam and Eve will eat against God's commandment. This single act will bring death and suffering into the world, until "one greater man" will come to restore humanity to purity and paradise. Milton asks the Muse to describe what first led to Adam and Eve's disobedience. He answers himself that they were deceived into "foul revolt" by the "infernal Serpent," who is Satan. Satan was an angel who aspired to overthrow God, and started a civil war in Heaven. God defeated Satan and his rebel angels and threw them out of Heaven. They fell through an abyss for nine days and then landed in Hell, where they lay stunned for nine more days. Milton describes the terrible size and appearance of Satan's body, which is like a whale or a Greek Titan floating on the waves. This work focuses on the plans of Satan to feed the forbidden fruit to the first men, and is translated into various languages. Halide Edip Adıvar's translation is important in terms of Turkish translations of the work.

Halide Edip Adıvar, who was born in 1882 in Istanbul, lived in the harsh conditions in her childhood because of the period of the collapse of the Ottoman empire. She lived with her grandparents because of death of her mother and marriages of her father (Anadolu Ajansı). She began to write under the pseudonym Halide Salih for the Tanin newspaper, founded by poet Tevfik Fikret, who was also a foundational name in modern Turkish poetry, and continued to write for other publications. At the instruction of the then-education minister, she started teaching at schools for girls and served as an inspector for private schools.(typelish) In this period, her observations in the Istanbul suburbs inspired her to write the novel Sinekli Bakkal, later published in London under the title The Clown and His Daughter. As the Balkan Wars raged in 1912-1913, she established the first women's association in a bid to boost female participation in social life and education. She was a feminist writer and wrote her works in the feminist perspective. She tried to find 'the new women identity'. Adıvar, the rebellious daughter of the Republic, read her works, especially her memoirs, to criticize the said modernization from a feminist perspective. She is not only a writer but also an important translator. She translated military and other documents during the Balkan War, the Great War and the Turkish War of Independence. During her lifetime, Adıvar also translated George Orwell's Animal Farm and Shakespeare's Hamlet into Turkish. Her partial translation of John Milton's Paradise Lost is one the most important works of hers.

Adıvar translated Paradise Lost as Kaybolan Cennet into Turkish in 1949. Adıvar, in her preface, expresses her general opinion about poetry translation and the strategy she adopted in her translation of Milton as follows:

"... our translations are made according to very different concepts not only in terms of language but also in terms of method. Since the classical ways generally followed in translation are mentioned in the book, I see it unnecessary to dwell on them here, briefly, the two clear and useful ways can be expressed in translation as follows: First, the technique of poetry in a

work in a language with a strictness that can be called a mask, translating it into another language in terms of its words, and secondly, to rewrite a work in another language as if it were a work of his own, without being bound by any record. Of course, there are some middle ways between these. And the Milton translation has taken a path of its own.” (türkiyeden-sesler/halide-edibin-unutulmuş-paradise-lost-çevirisi)

The dichotomy mentioned here by Adıvar is a dichotomy that appears under many different names in translation studies and is briefly defined as source-oriented faithfulness and target-oriented equivalence(academia.edu). Halide Edip Adıvar, as a translator, reveals that she is aware of these discussions about translation, and says that she has chosen a middle way as a translation strategy, which does not lean too much towards either end in her own translation.Then, she mentions three points that she applied or took care to apply in the translation of 'Paradise Lost'. As she says, *“Firstly, Milton's poetic technique and meter are not completely taken (Milton wrote this poem in iambic pentameter and rhyme-free.) It is quite difficult to preserve this meter, which is suitable for English, in Turkish, and it may limit the translation of the work into Turkish. Secondly, Milton frequently uses the technique called "enjambment" in poetry. In this technique, a sentence continues throughout more than one line. It is important that the lines are fluently connected to each other in a single sentence when necessary. Care was taken to preserve this situation in the translation. Lastly, Milton uses words which come from classical languages like Latin and Greek but Adıvar suggests Arabic and Persian words in Turkish as a counterpart to classical language words in English.”* (türkiyeden-sesler/halide-edibin-unutulmuş-paradise-lost-çevirisi)

Thus by translating Paradise Lost, she offers a distinct interpretive angle on the portrayal of gender across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Adıvar presents feminist perspective in her translation of Paradise Lost. She aims to create a more equal society by encouraging Turkish women to rebel against patriarchal standards and speak up for themselves through her writings and translations. (Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Çeviri Topluluğu). In the part that originally read "Of Man's First Disobedience", "man" is a word that can also represent humanity, while Adıvar emphasizes Adam, who is a man. She accuses Adam in the argument part of her translation. By translating in this way, she shows as if Adam was the one who disobeyed, Eve obeys, and only Adam was expelled from the Paradise, not Eve. She tries to show Adam as guilty. On the contrary in Milton's story, both of them are excluded from the Paradise, and guilty is Eve, not Adam. Adıvar translates "Mov'd our grand Parents" as "ilk ebeveyenimiz". Adıvar does not translate this term as plural form, on the contrary she uses singular form (Adıvar, page 41). By using this form, she tries to move away from the idea that only the woman was at fault. In many old religious texts, Eve is often blamed for humanity's fall. However, by mentioning both Adam and Eve together, Adıvar points to shared responsibility. This helps her question traditional gender roles and encourages a more equal view of men and women in these stories. She translates *"Th'infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile, Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd The mother of mankind"* as *"Cehennemî yılan; haset ve întikam saikile hile düzerek insaniyetin anasını baştan çıkardı."* (Adıvar, page 42). In this translation she represents that the serpent is the one who takes action and causes the trouble. The serpent which is the symbol of evil highligths man. She translates "He call'd so loud that all the hollow deep Of Hell resounded: *"Princes, Potentates, Warriors! the Flower of Heav'n once yours, now lost"* as *"Derin boşluğu çınladı: Prensler, hükümdarlar, Askerler, vaktile sahip olduğunuz fakat şimdi Kaybettiğiniz Cennetin çiçekleri"* (Adıvar, page 48). The terms of "princes, rulers and soldiers" represent traditional male roles who think that they are own of authority and have rights to control everything, even women and Heaven itself in the past but at the present time they lost something which they have previously possesed.

This translation shows how women's voices, wisdom, and power were often silenced or ignored in male-dominated worlds. Now, with that old power gone, the echo in the void could be seen as a space for new voices, feminine voices,to rise. It becomes a moment of reflection, and a call for an equal, balanced world for male and female. Finally, Adıvar translates *"Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians call'd Astarte, queen of heav'n, with cresent horns; To whose bright image nightly by the moon Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs"* as *"Semā Kraliçesi Astarte namı verilen Hilal boynuzlu Astoreth geldi, onun parlak tasvirine Sidon bakireleri aylı gecelerde adak adar İlâhî söylerdi."* (Adıvar, page 51). This translation gives information about Astarte, the Queen of Heaven, as a powerful female deity worshipped by women under the moonlight. From a feminist perspective, Adıvar tries to show that women connect with the divine on their own terms, gathering under moonlight to honor a goddess. Their rituals and songs represent a holy tradition which is controlled by women, not governed by male authority. The act of virgin women worshipping Astarte suggests an ancient spiritual power rooted in the feminine—one that has been forgotten or deliberately erased by later patriarchal religions. Adıvar's translation of Satan is also important. Adıvar sees Milton's pantheist approach in Satan's infamouswords 'Cehennem ben kendimim' [myself am Hell] as a representation of the omnipresence of Allah. Adıvar comments extensively on Milton's Satan in her introductions and summaries to instruct her readers about the deceptiveness and destructiveness of evil and to associate it with contemporary social issues. Satan's pride is instrumental to create a matchless psychological reflection about relatable evil and about poetic and divine justice. For Adıvar, there al tragedy is that of Satan and his minions who have lost 'hakiki Cennet' [genuine Paradise], that is Heaven, for eternity while humans can return to, at least, a part of Paradise. (Öğütcü, Milton Lost and Regained in Turkey Milton Regained in Turkish Higher Education)
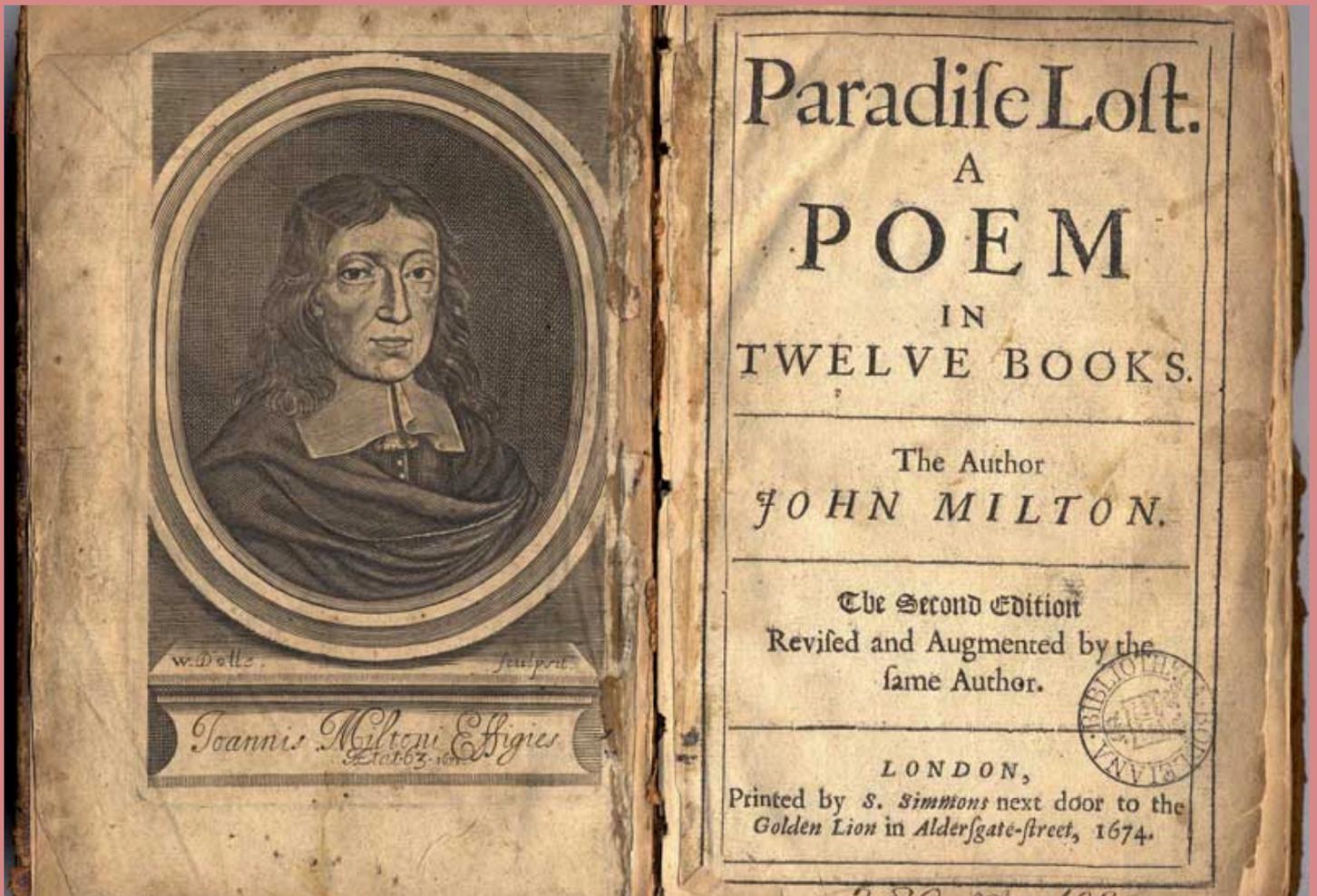
To conclude, John Milton's Paradise Lost is a foundational work in English literature, known for its depiction of Satan as a tragic anti-hero. Halide Edip Adıvar's 1949 Turkish translation stands out for its feminist perspective. Adıvar, a prominent Turkish writer and feminist, reinterprets Milton's characters, particularly Eve and Satan, through a lens of gender equality. Adıvar emphasizes Eve's agency and moral reasoning, presenting her as an independent character with her own thoughts and decisions, rather than a subordinate figure to Adam. She reworks Eve's decision to eat the forbidden fruit, portraying it as a complex choice driven by curiosity and a desire for knowledge. Adıvar also reinterprets Satan's character, focusing on his internal struggles and regret, softening his rebellious traits to depict him as a more tragic, morally conflicted figure. Her translation balances between "free" and "word-for-word" approaches, adapting Milton's style to Turkish while maintaining the essence of the original work.Through her translation, Adıvar challenges patriarchal views and offers a more humanized portrayal of both Eve and Satan, aligning with her feminist ideals.

"What Does It Matter Who Is Speaking?": Authorship as a Form of Domination and Woman as a Hole in Narrative in J. M. Coetzee's Foe

Ayşegül Meydan

"In philosophy woman is always on the side of passivity. Every time the question comes up; when we examine kinship structures; whenever a family model is brought into play; in fact as soon ... as you ask yourself what is meant by the question 'What is it'; as soon as there is a will to say something. A will: desire, authority, you examine that, and you are led right back – to the father. ... And if you examine literary history, it's the same story. It all refers back to man, to his torment, his desire to be (at) the origin. Back to the father. There is an intrinsic bond between the philosophical and the literary ... and phallocentrism." (Cixous , Sorties, 1975).

Hélène Cixous is an Algerian-born French writer, literary critic, and philosopher. She points out that throughout literary history, characters and narratives have predominantly centred around men. Cixous is best known for her concept of Écriture feminine, that is women's writing. She asserts that woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies. Écriture féminine foregrounds the importance of language in the psychic understanding of the self and how people understand their social roles. For her, writing becomes a tool of liberation from patriarchal systems, it's a form of resistance. But in what way is writing the female body or experience seen as a form of resistance? This paper explores two main questions: How does patriarchal literary discourse suppress female agency and silence their potential to produce meaning? And what happens when the colonial author erases the voices of subaltern identities?

According to post-structuralism, language is the key to our understanding of ourselves and the world. From Derrida's perspective, language does not provide direct access to reality; it is not a transparent window on the world. Accordingly, the meaning of a text, as Michel Foucault states, is determined not only by its content but also by the nature of the language. Texts use language to construct centres that stabilise meaning. The existence of a centre inevitably implies the existence of marginal ones. At this point, we can say that literary works establish a hierarchy between concepts or individuals in an explicit or implicit way through the language they use. In this way, author, even unconsciously or unwittingly, produces knowledge for the reader. According to Foucault, knowledge functions as a tool for identifying, categorising, and ultimately controlling others. Rather than liberating us from ignorance, it becomes a mechanism of surveillance and discipline.

What is more important is that knowledge is produced by discourses. In social contexts, discourse theory is concerned with issues of power and domination. According to Foucault (1977), we are created through discourses. Concepts such as truth, morality, and meaning are constructed within discursive frameworks.

Another point is that, Jacques Lacan, who reinterprets Freud's theories through linguistic foundations, claims that when we grow up, when we subordinate ourselves to language, our identity becomes a linguistic construct. Identity does not originate from ourselves, we need the reaction and recognition of the "other" to achieve it. We become ourselves under the gaze of the 'other'. The 'other' is not a concrete individual; it represents a wider social order. According to Lacan's concept of "Name of the Father", father' represents authority, law, and social order. So the 'other' is mostly related with 'father'.

Now remember Hélène Cixous' words: "It all refers back to man, to his torment, his desire to be (at) the origin. Back to the father." The authors who

produce knowledge that led individuals to control and discipline themselves were mostly men. In addition, it was mostly men who established the central structures of texts through male-centered narratives and reinforced hierarchies using the binary oppositions they created. Our identity, is formed through language, discourses, ideologies, and interactions with others is shaped by the 'male gaze'.

Let us now turn to Robinson Crusoe, a canonical novel authored by Daniel Defoe in 1719. Crusoe is an intelligent and hard-working hero, stranded on a deserted island, struggling for survival. It's a novel by a male author, centered on a male character—what Cixous calls 'the father'. But John Maxwell Coetzee, with his 1986 novel Foe, identifies the missing gender in Defoe's novel and inverts the embedded binary oppositions, giving the reader a new perspective on 'what actually happened'. Foe's most provocative move is placing Susan Barton—a female castaway absent in Robinson Crusoe—at the center of the narrative, with the story now told from her perspective, while the colonial figure Cruso is pushed to the margins.

 In the novel, Susan Barton, who is searching for her daughter, boards a trading ship sailing to Lisbon and eventually ends up on that island where Crusoe and Friday are. In the first chapter, we get to know Robinson Crusoe through Susan's eyes. Unlike Defoe's Crusoe, who exerts control over the earth and animals, exploits them without limits, uses even the planks from the ship that brought him to the island, and records every detail of his daily life, the Cruso Susan tells us about, is someone who can only retrieve a knife from the ship. He never keeps any records, nor does he mark a notch to indicate the passage of the years in exile. And yet, for all his passivity, he makes Susan feel like the second of his subjects after Friday. He tells Susan; "As long as you live under my roof, you will do as I say." He is dissatisfied with all of her efforts and treats her harshly, to the point where Susan decides to hold her tongue, saying, "Patience has made me a prisoner." Coetzee's text, rich with depth and subtleties, progresses while lighting up fireflies in the reader's mind. Susan

says: "There are times when I use words as the shortest way to get him to do what I want. At such times I understand why Cruso didn't want to break Friday's silence. I mean, I understand why a man would prefer to own a slave." Through this remark, Coetzee highlights why subalterns must first be deprived of a voice in the process of being objectified. Silence is the most powerful weapon of power.

At the end of the first chapter, while travelling on a trading ship heading towards Bristol after leaving the island, Crusoe dies. Later, Susan, determined to share her story with the reader, but aware that she is inexperienced as a narrator, turns to the help of an experienced writer, namely Foe. When Susan reflects on her story, she might think of Cruso as the real body, and herself as a ghost beside him. However, she is not a migratory bird. "But I am, as much as Cruso, a body," she says. She has eaten, drunk, slept, woken up, and longed. She tells Foe, "Although my story gives the truth, it does not give the essence of the truth." Then she asks Foe to return the essence she has lost, by telling her story. Susan's statement that: "Whatever he is for himself... what he is for the world is what I understand of him." Through this remark, Susan acknowledges the limits of her understanding; Friday's true self remains unknowable to her, as his silence prevents any access to his inner world. What she sees and interprets is merely a reflection of how the world defines him, rather than who he truly is." Susan, by asking Foe to tell her story, also asks him to give her a voice, to ensure that her body and experiences are not ignored and to be defined as her true self. As Hélène Cixous states, it is only in this way that she can achieve liberation. Her demand reflects how crucial it is to have a text centered on women's experiences and subjectivity for the acquisition of female identity and the production of discourse about women.

However, Foe wants to write a story in which the adventures on the island are only a part of a larger narrative that includes Susan's search for her daughter, their reunion, and her confrontation with cannibals. Susan, on the other hand, wants a story that centers on the woman's experience on the island. She wants

to be a woman who asserts her freedom by telling her story on her own terms and resisting appropriation through language. This appropriation occurs when someone narrates, and controls another's story, identity, or experience from their own perspective. In this sense, it becomes not just a matter of storytelling, but a form of domination—such as Foe's domination over Susan's voice, experience, and identity.

Moreover, Derrida introduces the concept of the "textualisation of all experience," which suggests that all human experiences, meanings, and realities are shaped through language and text. In this view, if Susan's experiences are not translated into text, they cannot be fully understood or acknowledged by society—and she remains unheard. Therefore, Susan refuses to be represented in patriarchal discourse. Her voice and experience should not be lost in patriarchal literary creation. Here, the male author figure Foe intends to carry out a colonisation activity by appropriating the story of Susan. The silencing of women' experiences does not only mean the loss of a story; it also means the denial of women' existence, identity and rights.

This erasure of women's voices and realities connects closely with what Hélène Cixous explores in her essay "Castration or Decapitation?" There, she argues that 'decapitation' symbolises the silencing of women and the erasure of their social identity. A woman who is unable to express herself becomes 'automatised'—a passive figure shaped by social norms and pressures. Patriarchal discourse eliminates women's right to speak and think, ultimately rendering them invisible in the eyes of society.

Silencing women is a broader ideological act tied to power and representation. Representation operates ideologically in shaping the production of meaning. In other words, it does matter who is speaking, because writing is a political act—one that disrupts and transforms existing structures. Authors create discourses, and discourses shape what is accepted as truth and morality. Only through this act of reclaiming narrative can women liberate their identities

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from dependence on the recognition of the 'father.' Women's agency is acknowledged, and they gain the freedom to create their own narratives and discourses. Écriture féminine challenges dominant perceptions of the female self and redefines women's social roles, thus becoming an instrument in their struggle against the patriarchal order. Silence can be pierced when the hole in the narrative is filled with women's voices.
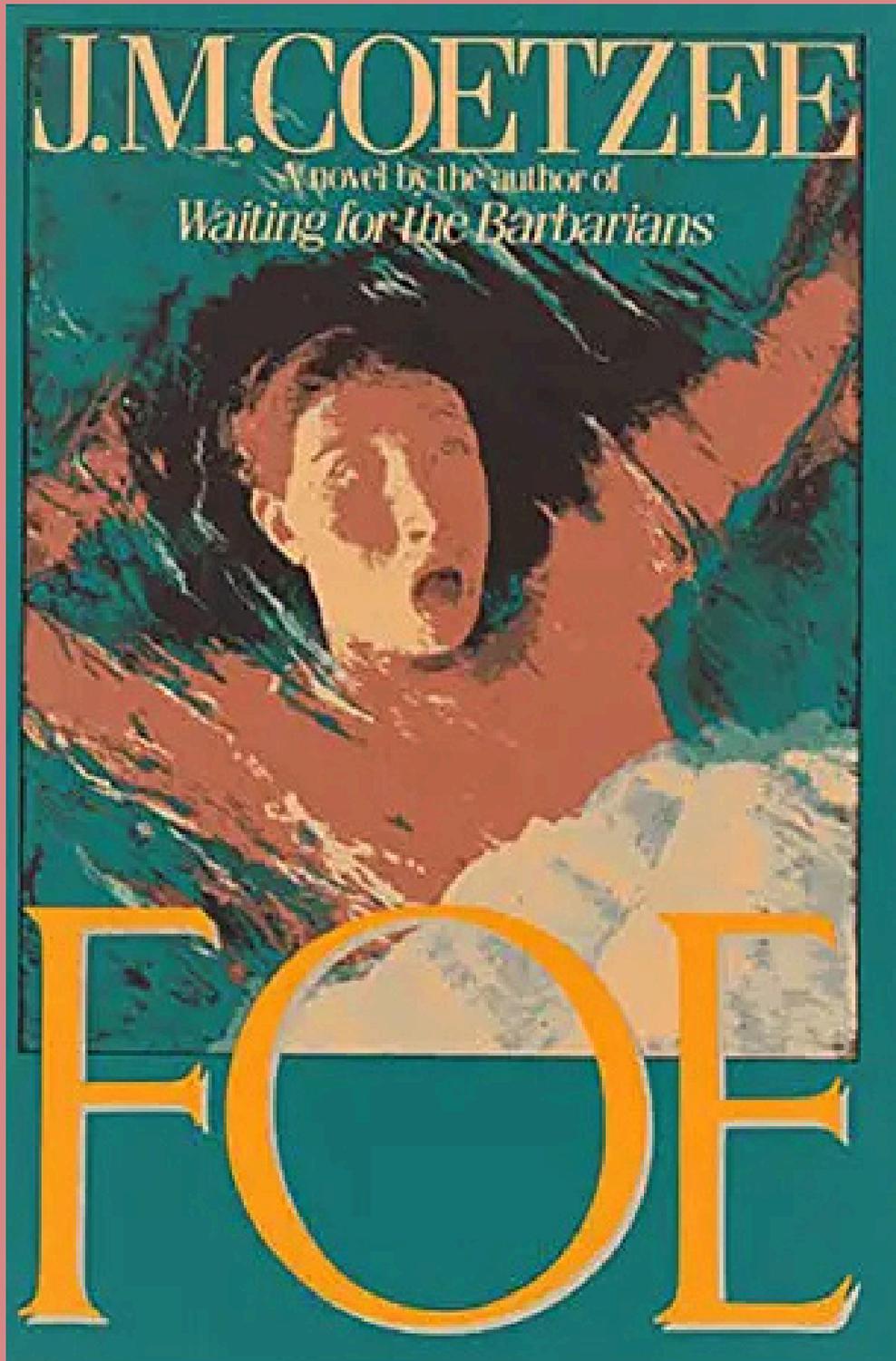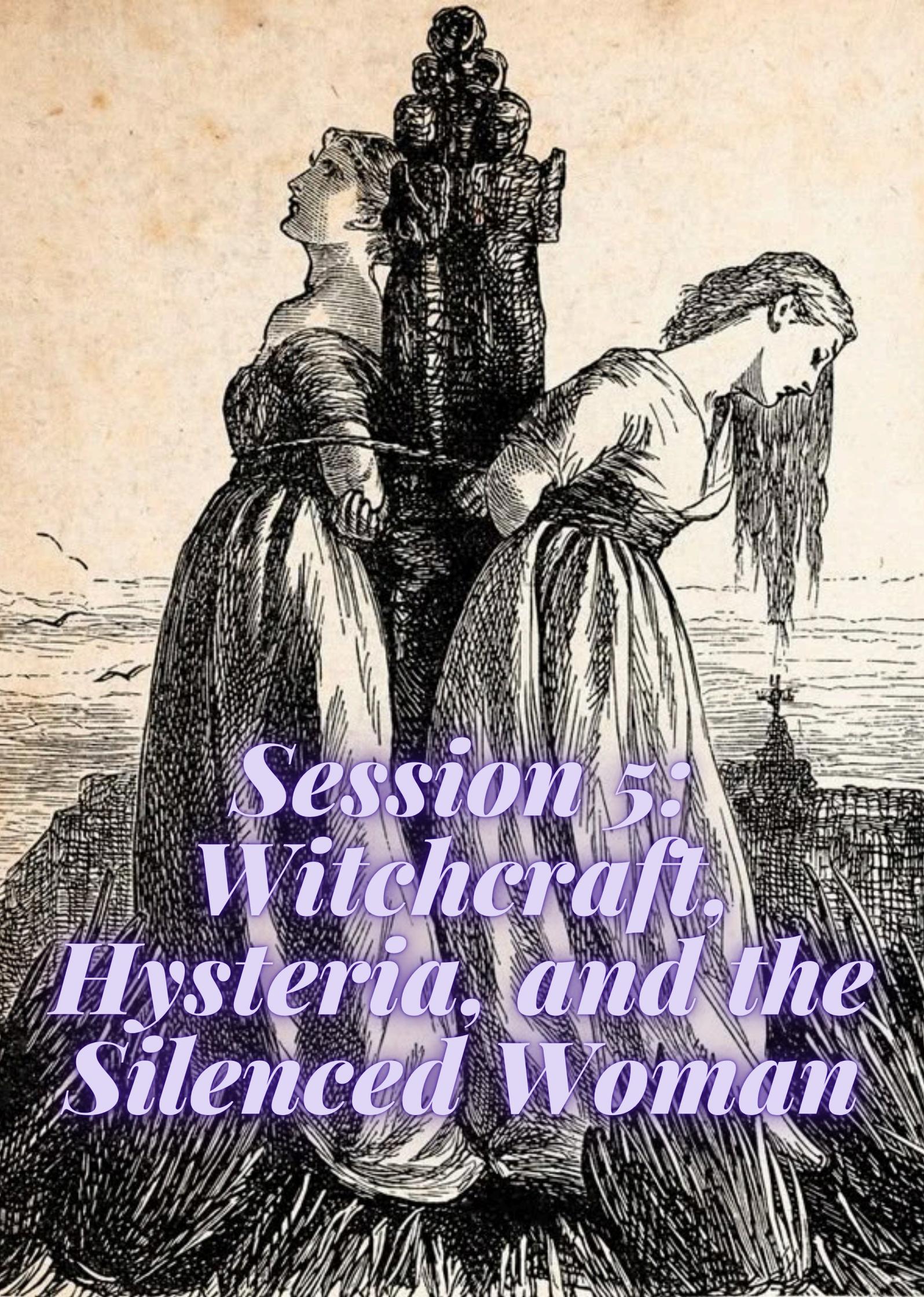
Session 5: Witchcraft, Hysteria, and the Silenced Woman

WITCHERY AND HYSTERIA

Furkan Durgun

Both witches and hysteric women are, unfortunately, common people throughout history, whether this be actual people, or these people appearing as characters in literature. Being a witch, and being a hysteric are both roles mostly assigned by the patriarchal society of the time, and this society's disdain for women they thought of as outside the presumed roles of womanhood. One major difference between witchery and hysteria is their basis, witchery was seen as being possessed by the Devil, while hysteria was a psychological disorder, and these differences led to them being treated, by the society they were a part of, in different ways. However, these "roles" were, still, very similar, assigned to similar people with similar "behaviours", and the way these roles are explored in texts, such as The Crucible by Arthur Miller, a very well-known play when it comes to literature relating to witchery, I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem by Maryse Conde, a novel creating a fictional narrative based on the historic figure of Tituba, and Wide Sargasso Sea, a novel which adapts Bertha from Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre into a postcolonial narrative, showcase the roles similarities and dissimilarities in a 20th century lens.

Before delving into specifics about the texts, it is important to establish the "roles" witches and hysterics. We tend to see witches with their supernatural abilities, with their "power to defy the laws of nature" (Bovenshcen). However, while it is true that the witches were considered people with supernatural powers, the basis of this assumption was, of course, not because of their unreal supernatural powers, but rather a misunderstanding of their actual abilities. A very common type of women who were deemed witches were

women who worked as healers, who utilised herbal medicine. And while we, when look at the medicine they crafted in a modern lens, can make sense of what they were doing to heal people, the people of the Medieval era did not have the necessary medicinal context to differ between aiding people with herbal medicine and using magic to heal people. Therefore, they were seen as people, mostly women, of supernatural abilities. However, said "witches" tended to not be operating within relation to the Church, and the Church, while, of course, believing in the supernatural, did not enjoy these women partaking in "miracles", as in healing people, without it being in the name of God, nor did they appreciate said miracles being enacted by laypeople (Bovenshcen). Therefore, these women were blamed of witchery, and of being possessed by the Devil, and were punished with torture and often death as a result.

However, it is important to point out that, not all these women who were deemed witches were women who were healers. Women with psychological disorders were also seen as witches (Faber), which, although resulting in the misfortune of many women who were declared as a witch, also ended up switching the narrative of witchery with hysteria for such women. In the 17th century, people started arguing that these women who showed signs of psychological disorder were not witches, but instead were showing clinical signs. One such person was Edward Jorden, who became involved in the trial of a woman accused of putting a spell on a 14-year-old girl, argued that said girl was showing signs, instead of being under a spell (Faber). New explanations for signs which were deemed "witchery", or "being possessed by the devil", were being developed. It is difficult to looked at hysteria in a positive way with our modern knowledge, considering the way women deemed hysteric were treated. However, the development of hysteria as an illness, and it replacing witchery in a sense, made it so that women who would've been considered "witches" and either tortured, hung, or burnt, wouldn't be seen as possessed by the devil and instead were seen as sick. Hysteria becoming

systemized, establishing symptoms and possible cures, resulted in women being treated better, in the sense that they were not seen as a servant of the Devil, and they could keep on living. Hysteria's establishment as an illness in the 17th and 18th centuries failed in providing people, especially women, necessary assistance for their disorders, but it was at least better than being burnt at the stake.

Our modern perceptions of these "roles" are very different as well. The term "witch" was adopted by feminists, with sayings such as "We are the granddaughters of the witches you couldn't burn", are derived from the supernatural aspects of witches, and their roles as sources of fear in society for both men and women. However, while adopting the word, the historical role witches carried in society was ignored, and instead their symbolic potential was adopted (Bovenschen). Said adoption of witchery can be considered cynical and tone-deaf, as it ignored the amount of pain and suffering women who were deemed witches went through. On the other hand, Bovenschen argues, that said adoption made "possible a resistance which was denied to historical witches" (Bovenschen. The way the word "witch" was adopted can be considered similar to how the word "queer" was adopted, as both of these words were "adopted by the person affected…" (Bovenshcen). However, the way these words are adopted are not one and the same. Of course they are similar when it comes to the origins of these words, how they were terms used to insult or even dehumanize people. However, the word "queer" was adopted by the queer community, and it was used to slander specifically the queer community. The word witch, by the time it was adopted by feminists, had lost its meaning of, basically "woman with supernatural abilities who is possessed by the devil", and instead it became a word used only for the sake of insulting women, women who were not witches. As such, the adoption of the word isn't exactly a "reclamation" like the word "queer", because "witch" as a word lost much of its meaning by the time it was adopted, and the people who adopted it were not "actual witches", and instead were people appropriating its aforementioned symbolic power.

When it comes to literary works involving witchery, one of the most well-known texts is The Crucible, a play by Arthur Miller. However, despite it being one of the most popular texts with witches, it is very unrelated to the roles in which witches actually had in society, nor does the play concerns itself with the ways in which gender or race were involved when it comes to the witch trials. The play takes place during the Salem Witch Trials, but it uses the setting as a tool to talk about not witchery, but instead McCarthyism. The play is a metaphor for McCarthyism, and, in a way, relates the modern concept of witch hunts which were prevalent in the era, with an actual witch hunt. As such, it has very little to do with the real historic relevance of witchery, and instead uses the chaotic environment of Salem to create a metaphor.

I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem by Maryse Conde can be considered as an almost opposite to The Crucible. The novel's narrative is a fictional life created by Conde for Tituba, an actual historical figure who was there for the Salem Witch Trials. The fact that Tituba is a woman, and a black woman, is very much central to the plot, as her identity immensely affects her place in the 17th century Salem and Barbados. Tituba is the daughter of Abena, a woman who was raped while being taken to Barbados from West Africa. After Tituba's mother's and "step-father" Yao's death, a woman named Mama Yaya looked after her, who also teached Tituba herbal medicine and "magic". It is possible to read Tituba's power's as non-magical, however my reading of the text is more direct, and I consider Tituba a witch. However, Tituba herself has problems with the word. She thinks that, since she uses her powers, whether this be medicine or things that can be considered magical, for good for almost her whole life, she consistently questions the role the society assigned her. "What is a witch, why is being a witch a bad thing, isn't she helping people, why is she considered evil" are all things she questions. Said questions, of course arise from the society that shuns her for being a witch, which is a result of her racial and gender identity. One thing about Tituba is her constant struggle for power and agency in her life. She always tries to create a space for

her existence and independence, but her desires get constantly crushed throughout the book, either by her own want for love, or the oppressive society around her. She gets enslaved, accused of witchcraft, blamed for not being able to make another character literally invincible, and she gets executed at the end for starting a rebellion that she, while supported, did not participate herself. Conde shows the role the "witches" in society were doomed to play in the 17th century, and her character she crafted is both a source to derive symbolic power from, as well as a character that shows the historical tragedies a witch would be forced to go through.

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys is a novel that adapts the character Bertha from Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte, and puts her in a postcolonial narrative taking place in the Caribbean. In the novel, it is possible to see two characters that can be analysed in a comparative sense in terms of witchery and hysteria, Antoinette and Christophine. Antoinette, is a character that was forced to carry her mother's legacy. Her mother, Annette, "went crazy" after her son's death after an attack to their house, and her psychological state is very much assigned to Antoinette as well. We see Antoinette, similar to Tituba, try to find a safe place for her to occupy peacefully, but she never manages to do so, as her step-father forces her to marry Rochester, who is never actually named in the book. Rochester is the man who turns Antoinette into Bertha, and in a way "whitewashes" her, resulting in a progressive psychological breaking down of Antoinette throughout the novel, as she loses her sanity along with everything she loves. On the other hand, there is Christophine, who is an "obeah". An "obeah" can be considered as an equivalent of a witch, and her characterization in the story is similar as well. Christophine is a source of fear for the people around them, even referred once as the reason Annette and her kids weren't killed, the islanders are scared of her and her possible abilities. Moreover, Christophine has a child, even though she was never married. She is constantly outside of the presumed roles a woman "should" have in that era, but she is able to create a safe place for her, despite her isolation from society.

In the final confrontation both have with Rochester, we see the two characters' differences. When the confrontation is with Antoinette, Rochester dominates the interaction between them, resulting in the collapse of Antoinette as a person, but when Christophine comes, she takes control of the discourse. Christophine is a character who establishes for herself, for the society, and for the reader that she is not going to be pushed around, while Antoinette fails to do so. This is the difference in the way these roles are characterized, as in witch and hysteric. Antoinette can be considered a "hysteric woman", and her later actions in the attic definitely further that consideration, while Christophine, as a witch is vastly different, as she is more self-reliant than Antoinette. However, it is also important to point out the way these character's gender and class come into play. In an era where women were practically forced to be financially dependent on men, Antoinette's role as an heir to many properties is a source of her problems. Rochester's dehumanization of her is of course largely sourced by her being a woman, but also her economic place makes her a commodity more than a person in the patriarchal society. Christophine has nowhere near the riches Antoinette does, so she is nowhere near an "economic bargain", and her identity as an "obeah" makes her seem as a woman who is harder to control, especially compared to Antoinette who, as said, is forced to carry her mother's legacy.

In conclusion, witchery and hysteria were both sources of great pain for many women who did not or could not conform to the presumed ideas and ideals of womanhood that the patriarchal society was forcing onto them. However, our modern perceptions of them are drastically different, as hysteria does not come up as a source of power while witchery can be a source of power to derive from, and these difference is of course based on the perceptions of the society for witchery and hysteria, the former being seen as a threat to the Christian world as it is a possession by the devil, while the latter is seen as an illness. Witches and hysterics are both types of characters that come up in literature quite often, as they are very relevant when it comes to the historic

period they were prevalent in. Their existence in literature is not uniform, Tituba and Christophine are very different as characters, for example. But, in a more general sense, the witch is allowed more agency than a hysteric woman, because of the former's innate nature as a source of danger. However, said agency also comes with bigger punishments, since their dangerous presence in the eye of the society makes them a threat, unlike the latter who is only seen as ill. In a sense, the witch is a character who is forced to be the villain in the society's eyes, while the hysteric woman is forced to be controlled by the society's perception of her as unfit.

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Sin, Aspersions and Gender: Women's Representation in Salem Witch Trial Literature

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Abstract

This paper examines the portrayal of women in literary works inspired by the Salem witch trials, serving as a metaphor for the oppression of women in a male-dominated society. The depiction of women in multiple literary works directly mirrors their social position within the historical context of the narratives. The events that happened in the seventeenth-century New England, governed by a patriarchal Puritan society with dogmatic and rigid beliefs, created an environment of suspicion and accusations against women culminating in mass hysteria and the tragic deaths of dozens of innocents. The patriarchal demonization and persecution of women, combined with distorted religiosity bordering on madness, turned so-called 'witch hunting' into an absurd spectacle, paradoxically justified in the name of God. Even after hundreds of years, this example of collective insanity and paranoia triggered by misogyny remains a shocking historical episode from the Early Modern period. Building on these historical events in Salem, I endeavor to demonstrate how the manipulation of religion, public opinion, and gender roles in history shaped the literary portrayal of women accused of witchcraft in The Crucible, I, Tituba: The Black Witch of Salem, and Lois the Witch.

Keywords: Salem Witch Trials, Misogyny, Collective Hysteria, Puritan Society

Introduction

Salem Witch Trials are the trials followed by famous witch hunts in Salem, colonial Massachusetts, between February 1692 and May 1693. In those times, the colonies in Massachusetts Bay were governed by Puritans, Anglican Protestants who wished to purify Anglicanism from the Catholic influence. They were the first colonizers to move to New England (British colonies in North America), aiming to build a society tied to strict and dogmatic beliefs and living in intense religious discipline. Their beliefs were strongly connected to fear of the devil and emphasized sin and obedience. Consequently, they created a system that took no criticism, especially from women. Considering the mass witch-hunting hysteria in Europe in the 1300-1600's, society started accusing women of small things, which was easy because of the male-dominated social structure. Even the language was highly influenced by the patriarchy: The term 'witch' came from its old form 'wicce' rooted in the verb 'wiccian' meaning 'to practice witchcraft' and became a shameful mark meaning 'a woman supposed to have dealings with the devil or evil spirits and to be able by their cooperation to perform supernatural acts' (OED). The Puritan women, who had always been belittled by the socio-patriarchal system of their community, became victims of mass hysteria and religious extremism. Their main prayer was not to become accused of witchcraft, because it would be the beginning of the end of their life. In this paper, I will analyze the portrayal of women in the works related to these events: The Crucible by Arthur Miller, I Tituba, The Black Witch of Salem by Maryse Condé, and Lois the Witch by Elizabeth Gaskell.

Part I: Sin and Alienation from Society

'The sin of witchcraft.'We read about it, we look on it from the outside; but we can hardly realize the terror induced.'
Elizabeth Gaskell (Lois The Witch, Chapter III)

The first concept that the paper works on is the relationship between being accused of witchcraft and alienation from the environment that you live in. First of all, it's important to understand the social norms of the Puritan community and Elizabeth Gaskell perfectly describes it at the beginning of the third chapter of her novella 'Lois The Witch'. She explores the concept of sin in Puritan doctrine and dives into the psychological aspect of being deceitful or possessed by evil. Even a little doubt would result in collective hysteria. Due to the pressure and terror of death, an accused woman would probably confess her relationship with the devil, or witchcraft, however unfortunately people tend to get cruel against things they're afraid of. Especially when the person is physically weaker, or if it is a woman. The artificial sense of revenge in the name of God, combined with cowardice and cruelty results in meaningless deaths of innocents like Lois.

In this novella, the absurdism of blind religiosity and inequality between genders is strongly emphasized. The Hickson family represents Salem, ruled by controversy, fear, pride, and denial. Grace Hickson, Lois's aunt and self-proclaimed proud and faithful woman, in reality, is a parody of a religious person. She has three children with interesting names connected to Christian concepts: Manasseh, Faith, and Prudence. Ironically, Faith and Prudence as characters are complete opposites of their names, however, it's hard to blame them since they are the actual products of their cruel environment. With Manasseh things take an interesting turn because Manasseh in the Bible refers to the King of Judah, a controversial king of the Old Testament, known for his wickedness: He built altars to Baal, one of the seven princes of hell in

Christian demonology. The absurd thing about Manasseh is the shared madness between him and the famous biblical character. This name preference emphasizes the lack of true knowledge of the Bible and Christianity: The townspeople are blindsided by their vicious visions of religion. In the end, they justify their cruelty in the name of God by using violence, manipulations, and lies making themselves paradoxically demonic.

The inequality between genders is strongly highlighted throughout the text. In the beginning, Captain Holdernesse, the captain of the ship on which Lois traveled to New England, openly ridiculed Puritans without hiding it. Lois, on the other side, was mocked by her Puritan relatives because of her ways of practicing religion. She grew up in England, under a church that was 'Romanized' according to Puritans, therefore every little remark or comment made by Lois became a target. Her attempt of kindness to her cousin Faith was openly ridiculed and raised suspicions of her attention-seeking cousin Prudence, for instance, she screams: *'Faith shall stay by me, not you, wicked English witch'* (Gaskell, Ch.2, p. 25)

 The climax of the work comes when Lois is accused of witchcraft by Prudence in front of the paranoiac crowd. Lois, the faithful and kind girl, who was innocent became targeted in that hysterical mess. At the same time, her cousin Manasseh in his manic episode made an act of blasphemy, which is going against God, in front of the crowd: *'On he went, plunging into heresy, caring not--growing more and more passionate every instant, but directing his passion into keen argument, desperate sarcasm, instead of allowing it to excite his imagination.'* (Gaskell, Ch.5, p.63). Despite his visible breakdown, the townspeople continued to blame Lois, highlighting the community's need to protect male purity by reinforcing the blame on a young, vulnerable woman. Furthermore, Grace, who was aware of her son's condition, found these accusations as an opportunity to cover her only son's mental illness: *'And over all reigned the idea that, if he were indeed suffering from being*

bewitched, he was not mad, and might again assume the honourable position he had held in the congregation and in the town, when the spell by which he was held was destroyed. So Grace yielded to the notion herself, and encouraged it in others, that Lois Barclay had bewitched both Manasseh and Prudence.' (Gaskell, Ch.5, p.64) The misogyny, also the internal one, is clear there because it's easier to blame the weak for things they are not able to comprehend. In those circumstances, the weak one was Lois, an alienated orphan who had nothing except her faith in God.

In conclusion, the main problem of Lois came from her alienation. She didn't belong to the society that she was sent to. She was an English orphan, 'the other', whose femininity was a trigger for the ill, male-dominated community, bordering on madness. Lois's struggles echo the pattern seen across Salem literature, where women, especially those who were different, portrayed as direct threat to religious order.

Part II: Lies, Aspersions, and Villainization

Old scores could be settled on a plane of heavenly combat between Lucifer and the Lord; suspicions and the envy of the miserable toward the happy could and did burst out in the general revenge.
Arthur Miller (The Crucible, Act I)

'The Crucible' by Arthur Miller has been one of the most influential theatre plays of the 20th century. The play, written in 1953, aimed to criticize the socio-communal system, as the US was in the Cold War against the USSR, a communist government. Therefore, it gives viewers broader insights into the common life of Puritan villagers, compared to Gaskell, who was more concentrated on Lois. Miller's interpretation, however, villainizes women to satisfy his wish to demonize communal life. In this section of the paper, I'm going to emphasize Arthur Miller's hypocrisy, reflecting on his portrayal of Abigail Williams.

Miller uses real historical characters but changes the ages to make the narration a little bit ethically appropriate, as Abigail Williams in history was an 11-year old girl. Still, the age change doesn't absolve the situation, as Abigail is 17 in the play, which makes her vulnerable to all kinds of manipulations. The whole drama of the play revolves around the complicated 'relationship' between Proctor and Abigail, as they had an affair. As Abigail cries in tears: I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart!' (Miller, Act I, p.24) it is understood that they had a sexual relationship and John Proctor not only took her virginity but also broke her heart. Proctor, who was married, committed adultery, which is one of the Ten Commandments. Disturbingly, Proctor didn't face any kind of judgment from his wife Elizabeth as she blamed a 17-year old girl, by calling her a whore: 'Elizabeth: Then go and tell her she's a whore.' (Miller, Act II, p. 62) Miller shows us the recognizable pattern of inner misogyny as both Abigail and Elizabeth show immense hatred towards each other.

By constructing the narrative around two women competing for a man's attention, he relies on a well-worn dramatic trope that diminishes female complexity.

Interestingly, Abigail is the only character in the play, who seems evil by nature, but is she? She was an orphan who witnessed the murder of her parents and was forced to move to her relatives. She had an affair with the older man, which in modern terms is called grooming. She was used to fulfill Proctor's sexual desires as his wife was ill. Then, he was too cowardly to openly reject her. Abigail and her friends danced in the forest while naked because she wanted to do that ritual to bring him back to her. Proctor had approached her with mixed intentions, which messed with her feelings as even Elizabeth says:
'There is a promise made in any bed
Proctor, striving against his anger: What promise!
Elizabeth: Spoke or silent, a promise is surely made.' (Miller, Act II, p.61)

Abigail can't be considered innocent, as she purposefully lied and accused people of witchcraft, however, she is the natural product of the environment that she was living in. As Miller himself states at the beginning *'This predilection for minding other people's business was time honored among the people of Salem, and it undoubtedly created many of the suspicions which were to feed the coming madness.'* (Miller, Act I, p.5). Therefore is it possible to openly villainize a young girl, who lied to save her life in this environment? The accusations started with the basic instinct of survival, however they continued with vindictive reasons, as Abigail believed that Elizabeth was the only thing that caused drift between her and Proctor. Other girls were copying her to fulfill their parents' greedy desires as Giles, pointing at his deposition says: *'The proof is there! I have it from an honest man who heard Putnam say it! The day his daughter cried out on Jacobs, he said she'd given him a fair gift of land.'* (Miller, Act III, 96)

After all, Abigail was a girl seeking attention from an older man who manipulated and used her. She was a traumatized and abused child, who didn't know how to get attention, therefore she committed those horrible crimes. Her background doesn't justify her, however, the adults should also be accountable. Her villain arc is not innate, it's artificial.

John Proctor denies his responsibility till the end of the play, as he openly calls Abigail a whore, while admitting his adultery in the court: *'Proctor, breathless and in agony: It is a whore!'* (Miller, Act III, 101). The question that arises here: 'Is the sexual affair done by just women, or is it an act where two people tend to take place?' Furthermore, nobody even thought that it may be an aspersion. Abigail became questioned not after Mary's testimony, but after John Proctor's pity confession of the affair. The men in the court immediately brought their attention to the possible adultery. It shows the pattern of how easy it is to call a woman a whore without proof, but just the man's words.

Miller seems to purify John Proctor by giving him the redemption arc, as he tries to save not only his wife but also all of the women accused by Abigail Williams. He is not able to prove anything to the corrupted and maniacal system and gets an honorable death in the end. Unfortunately, the whole narrative is not unique and reminds me of the work named 'The Devils of Loudun' by Aldous Huxley, where the priest, who had an intense sexual life, was accused of witchcraft and a young woman whom he seduced along with her influential family made everything possible for him to get judged. In the end, the narrator implies to the reader to feel sympathy towards the man who used all of these miserable women to fulfill his sexual desires. These two works tend to mirror each other in the way they demonize women who were hurt by men they loved. Miller, as Huxley, rewrites history to provoke sympathy for a man who manipulates vulnerable women, turning victims into villains to create a tragic male hero.

The final misogynistic move in narration is that at the end, Abigail William ran away from Salem and allegedly became a prostitute in Boston. Here, we have a traumatized girl with a shameful life, and the man who faced the consequences of his actions, but unfortunately got an undeserved glorious death.

In consequence, Miller's attempt to dehumanize the communist system is awkward, considering his narration. In painting Abigail Williams, whose life after trials is unknown, as a vindictive whore, with no morals and kindness, Miller uses the same misogynistic patterns he tends to criticize. The question is: 'Was it truly necessary to portray a literal whore to criticise the communal system, while Salem Witch Trials are historically the tragic consequence of communal fanaticism?'

Part III: Gender, Race, and Abandonment

"Life is too kind to men, whatever their color."
Maryse Condé (I, Tituba, The Black Witch of Salem)

The last part of this paper is concentrated on one of the most impressive retellings of historical events: I, Tituba, The Black Witch of Salem. This retelling is important because, for the first time, we are introduced to a strong female character that is usually overlooked by those who write about events that happened in Salem. Historically, Tituba was the first woman who was targeted by the fanatic sect. Maryse Condé retells her story through both feminist and racial lenses, creating a unique literary work. In this final section of the paper, I'm going to analyze the portrayal of Tituba, a strong black woman, who was villainized by religious fanatics, alienated by her fellows, and still managed to push the narrative on her terms.

Tituba's life revolved around tragedies, as her birth was a tragedy itself. Being a product of sexual violence, she had never experienced the pure form of love that people tend to get from their mothers: 'When did I discover that my mother did not love me? Perhaps when I was five or six years old. Although the color of my skin was far from being light and my hair was crinkly all over, I never stopped reminding my mother of the white sailor who had raped her on the deck of Christ the King, while surrounded by a circle of obscene voyeurs.' (Condé, Ch.1, p.6) This serves as a great example of generational trauma, as Abena herself being a traumatized child, 'replicated' her trauma in her daughter. Despite her mother's coldness, Tituba loved her, and her death created another major trauma that made her realize that the life of a black person doesn't have any value for the masters. They are not perceived as human beings by colonizers, who attacked their lands and came with their own rules. After her mother's coldness and violent death, Mama Yaya, who sheltered Tituba, became the gentle maternal figure that Tituba was looking

for. Even if this novel is a great example of magical realism, when we put all of the magic aside, we would see a little girl who is trying to cope with her trauma through imagination. Is it possible that Mama Yaya, who taught her everything she knew, was just an old lady who tried to help a child? Can we consider herbal medicine as something magical if it has always been common to treat illnesses with various herbs? Therefore, can Mama Yaya's words *'The dead only die if they die in our hearts. They live on if we cherish them and honor their memory, if we place their favorite delicacies in life on their graves, and if we kneel down regularly to commune with them.'* (Condé, Ch.1, p.10) be only used to console Tituba? When we consider that we are talking about a literal child, we can assume that her whole talking to the spirits was an actual coping mechanism, pushed by her imagination. She would imagine them from her mother's death till her own, and if we review the narration through this lens, we may say that all of the spirits were her actual consciousness. What appears as spiritual guidance is more likely a reflection of Tituba's coping mechanism, as she was a young girl dealing with the loss of her loved ones in complete abandonment. She was not a girl who sought advice, she had her battle with her consciousness and her feelings.

The emotional betrayals tend to trigger a sense of revenge in people, and Tituba was no different. Paradoxically, even if Tituba considered herself a person with immense hate and anger in herself, she didn't use any 'powers' to punish those who hurt her. As her MamaYaya said *'And you will have perverted your heart into the bargain. You will have become like them, knowing only how to kill and destroy.'* (Condé, Part I, Ch.4, p.30) . Even if Tituba tended to disagree, she had a humanist approach that her loved ones were proposing to her. The times she went against this philosophy were based on survival instincts. Is it possible to judge her when the matter was death or living?

Her abandonment trauma had also reflected on her romantic relationships and despite her intuition, she continuously seeks for male presence. For instance, in John Indian, she senses his lack of honor and all of those features that a good person should have: *'I could not forget the pain and shame I felt at his behavior in front of Susanna Endicott, but my rage sharpened my desire for him'* (Condé, Ch.3,p.23) It may look strange from an outer perspective that she desired this man, however, the reason is clear: She was alone. Unfortunately, some readers may criticize Tituba for allegedly seeking a man, and her sexual desires, however, it is too plain observation. As we would see throughout the novel, Tituba unfortunately seems to be needy in terms of love. She would try to get it from every person she meets and it is not related to gender, it's about the feeling that Tituba is loved. There are lots of examples of that as she seeks friendship with Elizabeth Parris and her daughter Betsey. She even accepted Abigail Williams, whom she was not fond of. Interestingly, she blindly believes every person she meets and gets betrayed every single time as with Elizabeth: *'Now, in the twinkling of an eye, all that had been forgotten had become the enemy. Perhaps, in fact, I had never ceased to be one and Goodwife Parris was jealous of the ties I had with her daughter.'* (Condé, Ch.10, p.71) As she grows in connection with someone, her wish of a man fades throughout the narration, as her need to feel loved is fulfilled.

Still, among her human relationships, the highlight of the novel in terms of feminist approach is the relationship between Hester and Tituba, as they grew a deep connection in their time in prison. Hester seems the complete opposite of Tituba in terms of men, and even she says that Tituba is desperate for love: '"You're too fond of love, Tituba! I'll never make a feminist out of you!" (Condé, Part II Ch.2, p.101) however, I would challenge Hester on that. Throughout the story, Tituba was targeted by men, and it has nothing to do with race, as even men of her colour dismissed her because she was a woman. Her lovers, except for Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo, tended to belittle her. The word 'woman' from all of her men came as an insult, despite her being a great

supporter for all of them. Her only wish was to be loved, therefore the question that arises here is 'Does the wish to be loved contradict feminism?' Loving someone is hard and it takes responsibility. Even if the men she loved didn't love her back Tituba showed the courage to still be able to love, so is that a true weakness? Despite Tituba being villainized, tortured and hated, her ability to have love and share it with others has to be glorified, not shamed. I do agree that sometimes she acted too naive, but considering all of the circumstances, is it something that we as readers should judge? Feminism has never been about hate, it is about equality. Tituba was aware that genders weren't equal, even in the black community as well, as she tended to recall Hester's words as she met John Indian during her imprisonment: *"Life is too kind to men, whatever their color."* (Condé, Part II, Ch.4,p.108). All of the women in this novel faced misogyny, however, even Hester chose to die by suicide rather than fight for her freedom. In the end, Tituba was the one who survived, who dreamt of freedom and eventually gained it, even if it was for a short time. She fulfilled her greatest wish, she returned to Barbados. She died as a free woman, who fought for freedom of her lands. Who is she if she is not a feminist figure? Does her desire to be loved make her less feminist? Tituba's life reflects feminist resistance in its most complex and intersectional form.

In conclusion, Tituba was a woman who survived humiliations, aspersions, and betrayals and still managed to be the purest out of each person she encountered. She was the easiest suspect because she was a black woman with a unique background. She was a warrior whose name people tend to forget among hundreds of women. She was not a victim but an antihero who acted on her survival instincts. She was a little girl who wanted to live freely with someone who loved her. She was Tituba, one of the strongest female characters in literary history. Thankfully, Maryse Condé was able to portray both a strong and vulnerable woman in the face of Tituba, without making her a victim who waited for her hero. Condé made Tituba an only hero for herself

respect, creating an opposite narrative compared to her colleague Arthur Miller.

Conclusion

Salem Witch Trials have been one of the most horrible crimes against women throughout centuries. They tend to terrify and seem appealing in terms of literary fiction, as they cover different themes, from women to politics. In those three works presented in this paper, the portrayal of women is examined through a feminist lens. Thematically, the paper is separated into three different sections, and as the title suggests, they revolve around sins, aspersions, and gender.

The first part of the paper concentrates on Elizabeth Gaskell's work, Lois The Witch, one of the earliest works on Salem Witch Trial literature with a female protagonist. This short story is one of the first works on feminist manifesto, as Gaskell uses her writing to criticize a male-dominated system. In this work, Gaskell challenges the concept of sin and connects it to femininity, as men tend to see a threat in women.

 The paper continues with the analysis of Crucible by Arthur Miller: a theater play written as a critique of the socio-communal system. Unfortunately, Miller uses a misogynistic approach to prove his point. The play revolves around aspersions and tends to oversexualize and villainize an underage girl while glorifying her predator. This work is used to show a misogynistic portrayal of women who suffer by men in Salem Trial Literature and contrast the other two works.

In the last part of this paper, Maryse Condé sets a perfect example of building a strong female character in her novel, I, Tituba, The Black Witch of Salem. Tituba is a black woman who was able to save herself and be free in the end.

In this work, Conde challenges gender inequality and aligns it with the feminist approach, giving concepts of feminist philosophy through spirits surrounding Tituba.

To conclude, all of the works analyzed in the paper give three different female characters who were targeted by a patriarchal structure despite their differences.

"So they killed Cassandra first 'cause she feared the worst" : The Silenced Women Throughout History

Esra Özkal

Abstract

Since the beginning of history, the stories of many women oppressed under the pressure of being silenced for speaking their truth have been told, ranging from Cassandra in Greek mythology to the Salem Witch Trials. This chain of women begins with the Biblical story of the first woman ever created, Eve, who was punished for eating the "forbidden fruit" from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. It continues through mythological and historical narratives in which women are blamed for speaking out and are punished for it, including being labeled as "witches" and burned at the stake. All these repressions eventually led to feminist movements such as the "Me Too" movement, which continues to resonate today with the contributions of women who resist the oppression of patriarchal societies that attempt to silence their voices. This study focuses on these women—whose stories have been told throughout the centuries, yet who have been forced into silence by the societies they live in—emphasizing the crucial significance of knowledge and truth for them.

Keywords: silenced women, feminism, religious narratives, salem witch trials, me too movement.

Since the beginning of history, the stories of many women who were oppressed for speaking their truth have been told. The chain of these women, who resist the oppression of patriarchal societies attempting to silence them, can be traced through religious narratives, mythological tales, and historical events. This paper focuses on such women, whose stories have been passed down through centuries, yet who have consistently been forced into silence by the societies they live in, emphasizing the crucial role of knowledge and truth in their lives.

Women who have challenged the male-dominated world have been systematically silenced for centuries. This oppression is rooted in a structure built by men, solely to serve their own interests. Women's roles were reduced to that of "understudies" to male dominance, and the public sphere was entirely denied to them. They were organized to serve the patriarchal order, and this entire construct confined them to the domestic sphere for the entirety of their lives. Within this system, a girl's life began in her father's house and, upon reaching a certain age, continued in her husband's bedroom. Thus, a woman's existence was bounded by these two male-dominated spaces, and any association with the outside world was unwelcome. In this sense, women's access to knowledge and education was considered a threat to society. Consequently, history has witnessed a long chain of women who were punished and cast out for striving to reach the truth and wisdom.

If we are to delve into this lineage of women, we must begin with the Biblical story of Eve—the first woman ever created—who was punished for eating the apple from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden. A closer examination of her story shows us a woman who goes against the established order by eating the forbidden fruit, which is a symbolic representation of knowledge and truth. As a consequence of her rebellious act, she is punished by God —the ultimate patriarchal figure. Her action becomes more significant when Adam eats the apple as well and disrupts the divine order created for

him. This order is shaken by the human being created from his rib and, solely for him. Their story is told in the Old Testament as follows,
So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.[2] (Genesis 3:6, p. 4.)

Thus, Eve's reaching to the wisdom, metaphorically, is a key point of how she is perceived as a threat to the society, and an error in the system, for possessing knowledge as a woman. The apple she eats is not merely an apple in the society's eyes –it is a symbol of a woman challenging the male-dominated societal order by breaking the barrier that confines her to the domestic space. It emphasizes the significance of a woman having her own opinions, knowledge, and truth rather than being reduced to a secondary role beside her husband, and how this is seen as a menace to the male dominance and their authorial power upon women.

Similarly, Eve is not the only woman who is blamed for all the evils in the world within the narratives she appears in. Pandora—the first woman ever created in Greek mythology—possessed a jar containing all the evils and miseries of the world. When she opened the jar, these evils were unleashed upon the earth. Pandora's guilt, like Eve's, lay in her association with curiosity and the pursuit of forbidden knowledge.

Eve is punished through her body, particularly her maternal side, as a consequence of her disobedience to the divine command. In Paradise Lost, an epic poem by the English poet John Milton, the biblical story of Eve's penalty is narrated as follows,
Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth, and to thy husband's will
Thine shall submit, he over thee shall rule.[3] (Book X, lines 193–196.)

God's punishment toward Eve includes endless suffering in childbirth and also eternal obedience to her husband, the patriarch. Her life is bound to infinite suffering and submission due to her act of reaching for the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Gaining knowledge and wisdom result in her divine penalty through her motherhood and womanhood.

When we take a closer look at Eve's story, we observe that it is a serpent who tells her to eat the forbidden fruit. This detail helps us understand why women have so often been associated with figures such as the snake, and with traits like deceitfulness, slyness, and evil throughout history. It is therefore unsurprising that Medusa—who was demonized in Greek mythology by a male-dominated society—was depicted with snake hair in the myths themselves.

Throughout history, many women associated with knowledge—such as Eve—have been targeted within the patriarchal frameworks. This chain does not only include the women who have a deep understanding of the world they live in, but also the women who possess foresight and insight into the future. One of the most well-known of these women comes from Greek mythology: Cassandra.

Cassandra's story holds significant value in understanding how society has historically feared women who possess knowledge that others do not. At this point, Cassandra's prophecy plays an uneasy role for the people around her. According to Aeschylus's tragedy Agamemnon, she is admired by the god Apollo seeking to gain her love by granting her the ability to see the future. Thus, it can be understood that wisdom is a gift given by a patriarchal male authority. Apollo uses the concept of knowledge as a treat to win Cassandra's love. In this sense, the knowledge becomes a tool for obtaining a woman. Cassandra accepts Apollo's proposal and gains the power of prophecy; however, she refuses to meet Apollo's request. As a result of her disobedience

to Apollo, she is cursed by the god. Apollo commands that her prophecies will never be believed in. Later in the myth, she predicts crucial events such as the fall of Troy and the death of Agamemnon, however, no one believes in her. In that regard, her power of knowledge, which was once a gift, has become her harshest curse. Cassandra's story begins as a wise woman and ends as a mad woman. Aeschylus portrays Cassandra's madness and misery in his tragedy, Agamemnon, deeply to the audience by the time her prophecy upon the fall of Troy happens,

Woe for my city, woe for Ilion's fall!
Father, how oft with sanguine stain
Streamed on thine altar-stone the blood of cattle, slain
That heaven might guard our wall!
But all was shed in vain.
Low lie the shattered towers whereas they fell,
And I-ah burning heart!-shaII soon lie low as well.[4] (Lines 1165-1171.)

Furthermore, these two states of her life are caused by the same reason, the power of knowing, and the whole community that once trusted her, suddenly starts calling her a mad woman. They do not realize how incorrect they are for not believing in her until they welcome the horse sent by the enemy which will bring about their fall. "The Trojans laughed at my screeches. 'She's crazy, that one. Come on, break open the wall! Now bring in the horse!'"[5] (p.136.) states Christa Wolf in her retelling narrative of the story from Cassandra's point of view. When Cassandra realizes that her words are not believed, she grows increasingly frustrated with the situation she finds herself in and Wolf portrays her insanity,

Now I understood what the god had ordained: "You will speak the truth,
but no one will believe you." Here stood the No One who had to believe me;
but he could not because he believed nothing. A No One incapable of belief.[6]
(p.136.)

Looking at the stories of Eve and Cassandra, it can be concluded that women who possess certain knowledge and the ability to tell one's truth are always defined as unnatural and abnormal within the patriarchal construct. These women are perceived as a threat because they possess the power to know something and speak the truth. Consequently, the male-dominated authorities have sought to limit these women by taking away their freedom of expression.

Patriarchal societies have not only targeted women on an individual basis but also collectively categorized them as suffering from hysterical behaviour, particularly through accusations of witchcraft. The figure of the witch and witchcraft itself hold significant space in feminist historiography. Throughout history, witch hunts have been used as a tool for the strict oppression against women. Since the Medieval era, many women, differing from one another in various ways, have been targeted by accusations of witchcraft. When we consider the features of women who have been mostly targeted for witchcraft, we may catch some patterns and certain categories such as independent women—widows, and those who have never married; naturists and healers; midwives; and women who do not fit the societal norms. These women are seen as a threat to the communities they belong in because of their knowledge and wisdom on the nature and the world.

The main purpose of these witch hunts was to limit women's access to knowledge and control their existential freedom. From a feminist perspective, witch hunts served as a tool of patriarchal societies to make women more obedient and confined them to the domestic sphere. Thus, the concept of the witch hysteria emerged as a pawn in the pursuit of this oppressive goal.

History has always presented us the examples of this witchcraft hysteria, and one of the most well-known of them is the Salem Witch Trials in 1692. These trials began as a result of some women in Salem Village, Massachusetts, accused of witchcraft by a group of other young women. As a consequence of

this hysteria, a special court convened in Salem to lead the cases. Bridget Bishop was hanged in June 1692 and became the first person executed for witchcraft during the infamous trials. She was not the only one who was convicted of these accusations, but also eighteen others were sent to the gallows after Bishop. Moreover, dozens of women, men, and even children were accused of the same allegations.

There are many reasons why these innocent people were sent to the gallows. However, I want to focus specifically on one woman among the victims, Martha Corey, and the representations of witches throughout history.

When Martha Corey's appearance and background are considered, it becomes clear that she embodies the archetypal definition of a witch in today's witchcraft narratives, fairy tales, and even cinematic adaptations of witches. According to *The Salem Witch Trials: A Reference Guide*, she had a controversial past and gave birth to a mixed-race son. She later married her second husband, Giles Corey, who was also accused of witchcraft in Salem, and they lived a reclusive life.[7]

According to the witnesses, during the questioning phase, *her tone was an intolerable blend of smugness, contempt and mockery*[8], and she kept a brave face throughout the entire examination process. Corey was 72 when she was executed, which is one reason she fits the archetypal definition of a witch: she was old, a widow, and had the so-called old ugliness, along with a past that was considered very problematic and questionable past in the eyes of the Salem community at the time.

When we look at depictions of witches in today's narratives, we observe that they are often portrayed as old and unattractive women who fit the stereotype of a *devilish-looking witch with a long, hooked nose*. The wisdom these women possess has always been used as an excuse for society to blame them

for witchcraft, and these women have always been depicted as old and ugly. This highlights how the patriarchal world has historically portrayed knowledgeable women as an outrageous, freaky, and horrendous being as a result of the internalized misogyny.

In addition to the representations of women, the witch hunts were also a way to seize their unrecognized labour. Silvia Federici, an Italian-American scholar, teacher, and Marxist feminist activist, argues in her most well-known book, Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation, that witch hunts during the rise of capitalism were linked to the colonization of domestic labour. She states in her work that the witch hunts were a tool of the patriarchal-capitalist world order to control and exploit women,

(...) there can be no doubt that the witch-hunt destroyed the methods that women had used to control procreation, by indicting them as diabolical devices, and institutionalized the state's control over the female body, the precondition for its subordination to the reproduction of labor-power.[9] (p.184.)

After centuries of women being systematically challenged for having their wisdom, speaking out their truth, and raising their voices, the feminist movements have altered this perspective on women. Especially, in the 20th century, the women's liberation movement rising with second-wave feminism, changed the understanding of witchcraft and the concept of the witch from their earlier patriarchal-historical conceptions to a symbol of women's resistance against oppression. In today's context, the figure of the witch has become a metaphor for resisting gender role repression. The slogan "We are the granddaughters of the witches you could not burn" functions as a powerful symbol of resistance that advances women's movements and feminist progress. Furthermore, all of these feminist initiatives and rebellions have led the way for women to raise their voices and speak out their truth without any threat of an oppressor. In that regard, the *Me Too* movement is a great

example of women's effort to be heard publicly and their resistance to the oppression of patriarchal societies that attempt to silence their voices.

Me Too Movement was founded by survivor and activist Tarana Burke in 2006. She states that the main purpose of the movement is to build a community of advocates determined to interrupt sexual violence wherever it happens. The community supports a wide spectrum of survivors, from queer and trans people to disabled individuals and all communities of colour. They create a safe space for survivors to raise their voices globally and find the right path for their healing journey.[10]

Movements such as *Me Too* show the world what happens when silence is broken, and women break the chains that have bound them for centuries. Furthermore, it has made women's struggles to seek knowledge and truth more visible, striking a destructive blow against the attempts to silence them. The effects of these movements reveal the patriarchy's fear of women who possess wisdom and highlight the liberating power of knowledge. By emphasizing the crucial role of knowledge and truth, these movements demonstrate how women have broken societal barriers and gained their freedom over the centuries.

Throughout history, in every society and every corner of the world, there have always been Cassandras. The stories of these women—unbelieved, marginalized, and even murdered—will continue to be told as long as humanity exists. Today, women who are unafraid to seek and speak their truth serve as pioneers and sources of inspiration for feminist movements that refuse to be silenced or oppressed. Women are no longer afraid to eat the apple, because from now on, *we refuse to be silenced*.

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Session 6: Archetypes and Mythical Figures: Feminine Archetypes Reimaged

MADELINE MILLER

AUTHOR OF THE #1
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
THE SONG OF ACHILLES

GALATEA

A SHORT STORY

Medea's Rebellion Against the Patriarchal Society

Aybüke Kınacı

The Status of Women in Ancient Greece: In Ancient Greek society, women did not possess the same social status as men. They were not considered citizens, and they were not seen as competent and autonomous individuals capable of making their own decisions. While men played an active role in fields such as education, commerce, and public life, women were confined to domestic roles. They were deprived of basic political and legal rights such as voting and inheriting property; under the pretext of ensuring their security, they were made part of the patriarchal system, rendered dependent on men, and lived under the guardianship of their fathers or a male guardian until marriage, and under their husbands' authority thereafter. Typically married at a young age, women were primarily expected to bear children, manage household tasks, obey their husbands, and stay away from public life. Patriarchal ideology legitimized these roles — motherhood, caregiving, obedience — within the framework of the social division of labour and established a structure that reinforced male dominance. Medea is a scream rising from within such a obscurantist world.

The Story: Euripides' Medea begins with Medea being abandoned by her husband, Jason, who decides to marry the daughter of King Creon of Corinth for political gain. Medea, devastated by Jason's betrayal—especially considering the sacrifices she made, including abandoning her homeland and family for him—becomes consumed with anger and seeks a horrific revenge. Fearing Medea's threats, Creon orders her exile, but grants her one last day in the city.. During this time, Medea carries out her plan by sending a poisoned gown and crown to Jason's new bride, killing both her and Creon. Ultimately,

to inflict the greatest pain on Jason, Medea murders her own children and escapes the city in a chariot sent by the gods. Through this tragic ending, Medea becomes a symbol of the extremes of vengeance, transcending the limits of both motherhood and womanhood. Jason argues that his abandonment of Medea is a political move rather than a personal betrayal. And in a society where male betrayals are excused, these actions are seen as 'natural' due to the privilege granted to men. Jason's abandonment of Medea is not only a personal betrayal, but also an act that further alienates Medea from society because of her foreign identity. In other words, Medea's rebellion against social norms may seem excessive at first, but we can actually say that it is a natural reaction.

The Foreign Woman: A Tragedy of Double Exclusion

"I am a stranger here, from a foreign land. I have no mother, no brother, no kinsman to shelter me from this storm."

Medea's tragedy is not only a story of betrayal; it is also the tragedy of a stranger, of the other. Medea is a woman who was not born in Greek lands and therefore she's excluded. By constantly identifying Medea as a "woman from a foreign land," Euripides shows that the pain she experiences is not only a personal but also a cultural exclusion. She was abandoned and left alone in the land she came to for her love, and she was also excluded because of her identity.

Here, Medea emphasizes how she is excluded and left alone as an "other" in the lands where she lives. It dramatically reveals Medea's rootlessness, dislocation and feeling of not belonging.

"I am deserted, a refugee, thought nothing of by my husband — I, who saved him."

These words show that Medea does not belong to Greece physically and that she is vulnerable because of her lack of family ties. They also summarize her individual and social loneliness. A woman who was only responsible for doing housework and pleasing her husband in society is now seen as a useless barbarian abandoned by her husband.

"The wrath of a woman who comes from foreign soil is dreadful."

This statement shows that Medea is seen as both the "other" and therefore her behaviour is seen as unpredictable or dangerous.

The Rebellion: Medea is an extraordinary female character who challenges the patterns of classical tragedy, a figure who rebels against patriarchal society and rejects the roles of "self-sacrificing mother" and "obedient, silent wife" that society assigns to women. In this country where she came as a foreign woman, she clashed with the expectations of society with both her identity and her stance, and rebelled against the feminine roles imposed on her.

Medea once assumed the role of the loyal wife that society expected of her, and abandoned her homeland and family for Jason. However, when she was betrayed, she lost faith in this role. While society expected women to endure all kinds of pain for their children, Medea rebelled against this expectation and decided to kill her children in order to take revenge on Jason. With this decision, she consciously rejected her identity as a 'self-sacrificing mother' and put her personal anger before the role of motherhood. In Medea's eyes, it was deeply unfair that women were defined only as wives and mothers, and even seen as a tool for the continuation of the male bloodline. Medea challenged the patriarchal order by opposing the limitations of these roles.

"A woman's greatest blessing is to be well governed by her husband." This

quote shows that Jason sees women as dependent beings who need to be controlled. He makes the woman's happiness dependent on the man.

Medea's rebellion against the male-dominated society is not only a personal resistance, but also a systematic one. Medea, who has been struggling with the roles imposed by society and her own internal conflicts since the beginning of the play, brings the tragedy to its climax by killing her children and creates catharsis in the audience. With this radical action, she commits the ultimate act of vengeance by sacrificing her children, transforming them into symbols of her resistance against patriarchal injustice. This may also be read as an expression of the woman's repressed anger; here, Medea becomes a symbol of resistance. Many critics have evaluated Medea as a murderer in terms of moral and ethical context, focusing on her killing of her children. While a mother is expected to protect her children in society, Medea's killing them for revenge reverses the most basic human and social relationship. In Emily McDermott's Euripides' Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder, Medea, who is presented as a figure of chaos that disrupts the social order, rejects the mercy, compassion and passivity attributed to the female identity. Using this point, the author argues that Medea has become an "anti-mother" figure. However, this evaluation ignores the double exclusion that Medea experiences at the intersection of her "foreign" and "female" identities. According to Helene P. Foley, this double exclusion deepens the loneliness and helplessness that Medea experiences. According to her, Medea's violence should be evaluated not only as an individual but also as a result of social isolation. In other words, instead of evaluating Medea's actions as norm-breaking behavior, we should see them as a radical reaction to the patriarchal order and ethnic discrimination.

Medea refuses to remain a "silent and obedient woman" in the face of Jason's betrayal. Instead, she openly voices her anger and refuses to submit.

Medea: Hero or Tragic Victim: Although Medea's actions can be seen as a reaction to the tragedy she experienced, she ultimately brought about her own tragedy. According to Simone de Beauvoir, Medea's killing of her children is a radical reaction against the patriarchal order in order to gain her freedom(de Beauvoir, 1949); Emily Cassaello, on the other hand, states that this action cannot be justified, but it urges us to understand the depth of Medea's rage. (McDermott, 1989). Although Medea is a victim of the male-dominated order, she turns into a destructive figure by harming the innocents around her instead of directly targeting this system. Although she initially seems like a promising feminist symbol of resistance, this attitude soon turns into destructive anger. Patriarchy affects us all; however, it has much more destructive consequences in women's lives.

When we examine the inner world of Medea, one of the most complex characters in Greek tragedy, we see that she experiences a deep dilemma between her devotion to her children as a mother and her desire for revenge. At the end of this conflict, her honour and pride prevail; because Medea is willing to abandon her humanity in order not to be trampled on.

We see the conflict between Medea's motherly love and desire for revenge. She is fighting with her inner voice; on the one hand, she wants to protect her children, on the other hand, she makes a painful decision not to be humiliated by Jason.

In conclusion; This study analyses Medea's conflict with the roles assigned to women in Ancient Greek society and the expression of her repressed anger in Euripides' Medea. Medea opposes traditional female roles by rejecting the "sacred-sacrificing motherhood, silent, passive, and obedient woman" identity imposed on women by the patriarchal order, and as a result of this rebellion, she becomes a figure completely excluded from the society.

The story of Medea is not just one woman's revenge; it is also the cry of women who have been suppressed, silenced and ignored for years. At this point, a question comes to mind: *Is Medea a hero who is the voice of women who have been driven to anger in the patriarchal society; or is she a tragic victim who was driven to such devastation that she killed her own children out of pain of betrayal?*

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Seducing the Patriarchy: Rewriting the Femme Fatale in Margaret Atwood's "Siren Song"

Beyza Aslıhan Güngör

Abstract

Margaret Atwood's "Siren Song" reinterprets the ancient Greek myth of the sirens, transforming them from passive, fatal seductresses into complex figures of manipulation and resistance. Traditionally, sirens are depicted as dangerous female figures who lure men to their doom, reinforcing patriarchal anxieties about female power and desire. However, Atwood disrupts this narrative by giving the siren a voice that is ironic, self-aware, and deceptively persuasive. This paper examines how "Siren Song" challenges the femme fatale archetype and reclaims female agency through a feminist perspective. Atwood's siren is not merely a tool of destruction and seduction but a character trapped in a performative role, forced to enact the desires projected onto her. The poem's use of free verse, conversational tone, and direct address to the reader create an unsettling intimacy that exposes how women's voices are simultaneously fetishized and dismissed in patriarchal discourse. By rewriting the siren's traditional place as both a critique and an act of restriction, Atwood highlights the paradoxical approach to female power, which is both feared and desired at the same time, ultimately leading to oppression. This paper will explore how Atwood's poem engages with feminist literary theory, particularly the notions of voice, autonomy, and performative femininity. Thus, the paper will demonstrate how "Siren Song" functions as both a deconstruction of patriarchal myths and a reflection on the complexities of female agency in literature and beyond.

Seducing the Patriarchy: Rewriting the Femme Fatale in Margaret Atwood's "Siren Song"

The myth of the siren has long functioned as a metaphor for dangerous femininity. In Homer's Odyssey, the sirens' song tempts men to death by offering irresistible knowledge, a theme which, in feminist theory, often corresponds to patriarchal anxiety about female voice and agency. The siren is feared not for her body alone but for her voice; her capacity to articulate desire, to lure, to influence. In Margaret Atwood's 1974 poem "Siren Song," this very voice is reclaimed, ironically framed, and strategically deployed to expose the performative constraints placed on women through the myth of the femme fatale.

Before diving into the poem, it is important to point out how siren figures depicted in the Ancient Greek Mythology. According to an article on Sirens, published by University of Colorado, "In ancient Greek mythology, a Siren is a hybrid creature with the body of a bird and the head of a human. Sirens are traditionally understood to be female, but similar figures with beards can be labeled either as Sirens or as daemons. Sirens are dangerous creatures who live on rocky islands and lure sailors to their doom with their sweet song." ("Sirens in Ancient Greece and the Near East" 2018). Additionally, according to scholar Jane Ellen Harrison, "Some surviving Classical period examples had already depicted the siren as mermaid-like."

Unlike the siren figures in the Odyysey, Atwood's siren is not a seductive killer, but a weary speaker trapped in a role that simultaneously empowers and dehumanizes her. Her song becomes a metaphor for the performative acts women are expected to carry out in order to be heard. Drawing from Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, Hélène Cixous's call for a new feminine language, and Barbara Creed's interpretation of the monstrous feminine, this paper explores how Atwood's siren not only critiques

patriarchal myth but also interrogates the costs of visibility and voice for women in literature and society. Atwood opens with a destabilizing paradox. The siren, known for her haunting melody, does not sing but tells us about the song:

"This is the one song everyone
would like to learn: the song
that is irresistible—" (1–3)

 This self-referential approach introduces irony from the outset. Rather than depicting the moment of seduction, the poem invites the reader to reflect on it. The phrase "everyone would like to learn" is particularly striking—it reframes the siren's power as enviable, even aspirational. The reader is drawn in not as a victim, but as an admirer, eager to access the secret of feminine persuasion. Yet this apparent allure is immediately problematized. The use of dash right after the word "irresistible" makes the reader pause while reading the poem, which deconstructs the poem's so called irresistability and disconnects reader from this "magical" song.

 By calling it "the song that is irresistible," the speaker commodifies her own power, reducing it to a learned tactic rather than something inherent. The siren had to learn how to be "irresistable" maybe just to protect herself, however, this didn't protect her from the constructed gender roles in the society. Feminist scholar Sandra Gilbert would describe this as a form of "containment," where female expression is acceptable only when it remains within the bounds of male desire (Gilbert and Gubar 73). In other words, Atwood's siren is both the object of admiration and its captive of the male gaze. Atwood continues the poem:

"the song that forces men
to leap overboard in squadrons
even though they see the beached skulls" (4–6)

Here, Atwood directly references the classical imagery of death that surrounds the sirens. Men leap to their deaths "even though they see the beached skulls," a line that introduces both dark humor and pathos. The phrase "in squadrons" ridiculously militarizes the male victims, as though they are willingly, even enthusiastically, enlisting in their own demise. However, at the same time, Atwood claims that the "irresistible" song "forces" men to jump off their ships Here, Atwood's irony is cutting—this is not a tale of helpless victimhood, but of willful complicity. At the same time, the siren is revealed to be weary of her mythological function. She later admits:

"I don't enjoy it here
squatting on this island
looking picturesque and mythical
with these two feathery maniacs" (7–10)

This passage further dismantles the seductive glamour associated with the siren. "Squatting" introduces a note of crude realism, undercutting the romanticized image of a sea-bound temptress. The "two feathery maniacs" refer to her fellow sirens, and the term "maniacs" suggests that the siren finds her company irritating, perhaps even threatening. Instead of a femme fatale relishing her power, the speaker is an isolated, disillusioned figure burdened by the expectations of her role.

This dissatisfaction speaks directly to Judith Butler's notion that gender identity is an "act" performed under compulsion rather than an expression of inner truth (Butler 192). The siren does not choose to be seductive; she is required to be as a female figure. Her mythical role dictates her every movement, down to her appearance—"picturesque and mythical"—which she describes with disdain. Judith Butler says: "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed". Thus, Atwood's siren is trying to break the chains of her performed self and gender and she explicitly says that:

"This song
is a cry for help: Help me!" (10–11)

This abrupt shift from controlled irony to apparent sincerity is one of the poem's most jarring moments. But its ambiguity raises an important question: is this a genuine plea for liberation, or just another part of the performance? The line "Help me!" could be read in multiple ways—desperation, mockery, even sarcasm. Atwood places this moment in the center of the poem, structurally mirroring the climax of a song, yet undercutting it by revealing the supposed enchantment to be nothing more than a cry. Feminist theorist Sara Ahmed argues that women's expressions of distress are often pathologized or fetishized rather than believed (Ahmed 30). Atwood taps into this dynamic—does the reader believe the siren, or do they continue to be seduced by her? The speaker continues with a rhetorical question:

"will you get me
out of this bird suit?" (13–14)

The "bird suit" is one of the poem's most potent metaphors. On the surface, it evokes the siren's classical half-bird form. But Atwood transforms it into a costume—something worn, artificial, and imposed. This metaphor critiques how femininity itself can be a kind of "suit"—a role that is performed for the gaze of others. The line suggests that the siren's monstrosity is not natural but manufactured. As Barbara Creed notes, the monstrous feminine is often a projection of male fears rather than a representation of female reality (Creed 7). The bird suit is not the siren's body; it is her cage. Atwood now flips the traditional power dynamic:

"Only you, only you can,
you are unique
at last." (15–17)

The siren, who was once the manipulator, becomes the flatterer. These lines parody romantic language, particularly the trope that "you" are the only one who can truly see or save "her." But the repetition of "only you" creates a false intimacy—suggesting that the siren has told this lie countless times before. The flattery here is strategic. By appealing to the listener's ego, the siren continues her performance, enacting what Simone de Beauvoir called the "eternal feminine"—a set of behaviors designed to reflect male desire rather than female subjectivity. Atwood forces the reader to confront their role in this dynamic. Are we seduced? Or are we complicit? The poem ends where it began, returning to the meta-description of the song:

"This is the song that everyone
would like to learn: it is irresistible." (18–19)

But this time, the tone is colder. The reader, having been drawn in, is now implicated. The repetition of the opening line reinforces the idea that the seduction was never personal—it was universal. Everyone falls for it. This circular structure suggests that the performance continues endlessly. The siren's voice, far from being silenced, is weaponized—but not by her. It is scripted, repackaged, and resold within patriarchal narratives. The siren is not a symbol of female power, but of its entrapment.

In conclusion, Margaret Atwood's "Siren Song" deconstructs the myth of the femme fatale by allowing the siren to speak—not to enchant, but to expose. Her voice is not a source of power, but a performance shaped by patriarchal fantasy. Through irony, ambiguity, and direct address, Atwood critiques how women are both fetishized and silenced in literary tradition. The siren's longing to escape her "bird suit" echoes broader feminist calls to move beyond essentialist notions of femininity. Her plea—whether sincere or strategic—reveals the deep cost of playing a role written by others. In reimagining the siren not as a monster but as a woman forced to perform monstrosity, Atwood challenges us to reconsider the myths we inherit and the voices we believe.
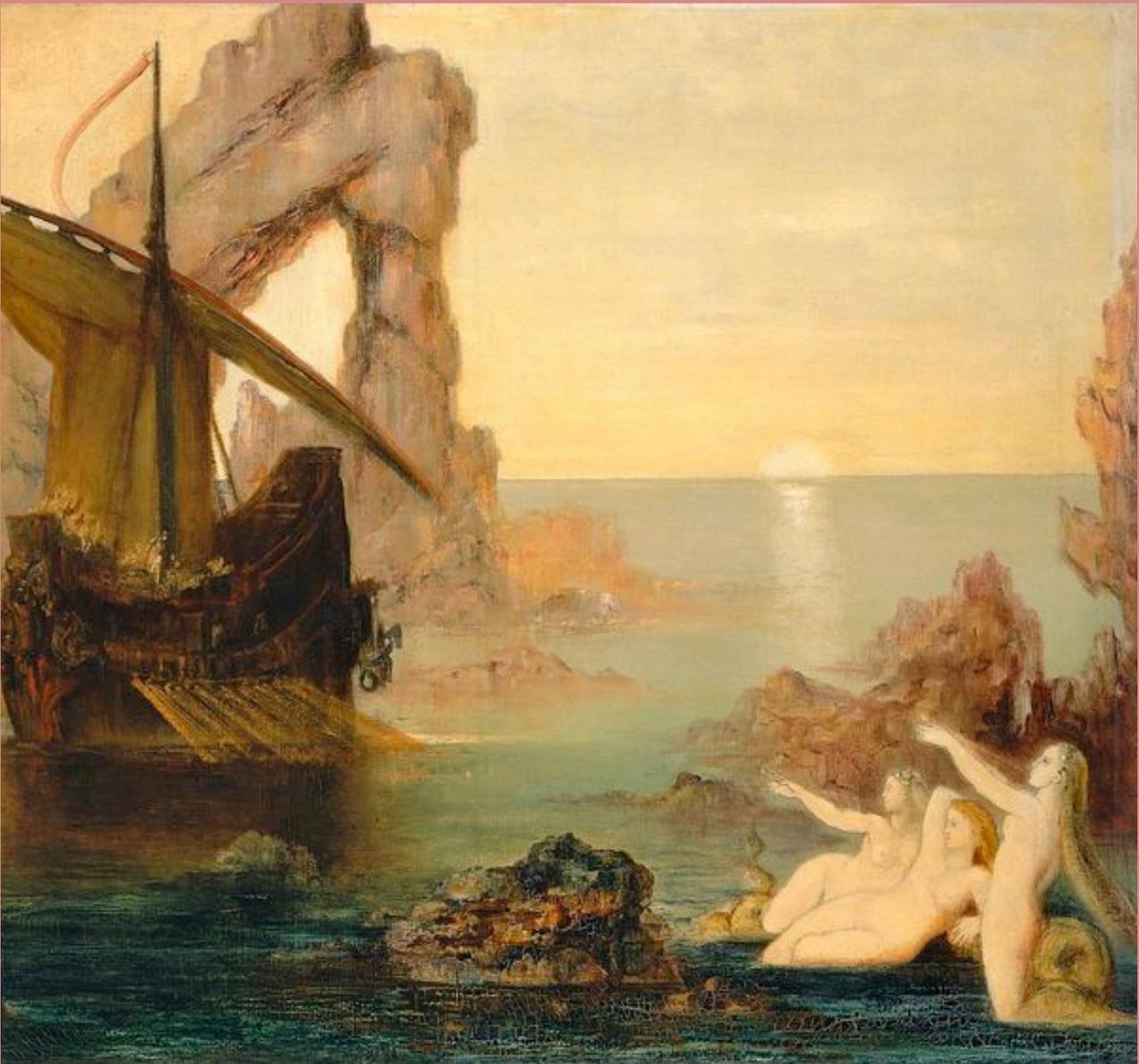
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Gaia

Ünzile Etoğlu

Mythological background of Gaia: Who is Gaia?

Gaia, also known as Gaea or Ge, is one of the first deities in Greek mythology and represents the Earth. She was born from Chaos and is seen as the great mother of all life. According to Hesiod's Theogony, Gaia gave birth to the Uranus (the sky), Ourea (the mountains), and Pontus (the sea), and from her came many gods and creatures. She played an important role in the mythological world, helping Zeus defeat the Titans, but later challenged him by sending a monster called Typhon. Gaia's story shows her as both a caring mother and a powerful force of nature.

Mythological Role of Gaia

Gaia is an important figure in Greek mythology, known as the origin of life and the Earth itself. Gaia often helps restore balance when there is conflict between powerful beings. For example, she supports Cronus in overthrowing Uranus and later helps Zeus fight Cronus. Her role represents the natural cycle of creation, destruction, and the struggle for justice across generations.

Connection between Femininity and Fertility

In Greek mythology, Gaia represents femininity and fertility through her role as the Earth itself. She symbolizes the nurturing and creative power often linked to women. In early myths, Gaia could give birth without a male, showing the belief in the female body's natural ability to create life. Her children include gods, mountains, seas, and plants, which shows her as the source of all life. This strong link between Gaia, nature, and womanhood reflects how ancient people valued the role of women and the Earth in creation and growth.

Ecological Perspective: Gaia Theory by James Lovelock: What is the Gaia Theory?

The Gaia Theory, developed by scientist James Lovelock, suggests that Earth is not just a planet with life on it, but a living system where all parts—living and non-living—work together to keep conditions suitable for life. He has a book about this theory called Gaia A New Look At Life On Earth and Lovelock says in his book:

"Gaia is a complex entity involving the Earth's biosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and soil; the totality constituting a feedback or cybernetic system which seeks an optimal
physical and chemical environment for life."
(Gaia: A New Look At Life On Earth by James Lovelock)

This means that life on Earth helps regulate the climate, atmosphere, and other conditions in a way that supports life itself.

Ecological Perspective

From an ecological viewpoint, Gaia Theory teaches that nature is not something humans can control or stand above—it is something we belong to. Lovelock explains that the Earth has stayed in balance for billions of years thanks to this deep connection between life and the environment:

"The Earth's surface environment has been maintained in homeostasis for over three billion years." (Gaia: A New Look At Life On Earth by James Lovelock)

This perspective encourages us to see Earth as a whole, living system—and to understand that when we damage ecosystems, we are also putting at risk the stability of the environment we depend on to survive.

From a Feminist Perspective: Matriarchal Societies and Gaia as Female Power

Feminist theory sees matriarchal societies as alternatives to patriarchal systems, where power is usually held by men. In matriarchal cultures, women have important roles in social, political, and spiritual life. These societies often value care, cooperation, and balance, instead of control or domination.

In ancient Greek mythology, Gaia is the goddess of the Earth. She is the mother of all life and a symbol of creation and growth. Feminist thinkers see Gaia as a symbol of female power, independence, and the deep connection between women and nature.

As Carolyn Merchant explains in The Death of Nature:

"The female earth was central to the organic cosmology that was undermined by the Scientific Revolution. As a nurturing mother, she was a benevolent, giving force, an organism that provided for all her children. But as the Scientific Revolution unfolded, the image of the earth shifted from that of a living organism to a machine. Nature was reconstructed as dead and passive, to be dominated and controlled by humans."

This shows how society moved away from respecting nature and women, and instead started to dominate both.

Feminism uses Gaia and matriarchal societies to imagine a world where power is based on care, balance, and respect for all forms of life.

Gaia and Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a movement that connects the exploitation of nature with the oppression of women, arguing that both come from patriarchal systems. It

suggests that the control of the Earth and the control of women are related problems that need to be addressed together.

In ecofeminist thinking, Gaia, the ancient Greek goddess representing the Earth, becomes a powerful symbol. She stands for the Earth as a living, caring, and connected being, not something to be controlled or harmed.

As Val Plumwood explains, *"The domination of women and nature is intertwined in the logic of patriarchy, where both are reduced to objects of control and exploitation."*

Ecofeminists use Gaia to show the importance of respecting nature, caring relationships, and restoring balance between humans and the environment. Through Gaia, ecofeminism calls for a society that values both women and nature, challenging systems of power with ideas of cooperation, sustainability, and care.

After considering these perspectives, I believe that Gaia can be seen as one of us and as a symbol of our mothers, grandmothers, and all Anatolian women. Like Gaia, they are nurturing, strong, and deeply connected to nature and life."

The Reflection of Gaia in Art and Literature

Gaia, as the Earth Mother, has had a significant impact on both art and literature. Throughout history, she has been seen as a symbol of nature, life, and the interconnectedness of all living things. In art, Gaia is often depicted as a powerful, nurturing figure who represents the earth's fertility and abundance. In literature, she has been a symbol of the deep connection between humans and the natural world, inspiring works that explore themes of nature, life cycles, and ecological balance.

One clear example of Gaia's influence in literature is Emily Dickinson's poem "Nature, the Gentlest Mother."

Nature The Gentlest Mother Is

Nature the gentlest mother is,
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest of the waywardest.
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller be heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation
A summer afternoon,
Her household her assembly;
And when the sun go down,

Her voice among the aisles
Incite the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep,
She turns as long away
As will suffice tolight her lamps,
Then bending from the sky

With infinite affection
An infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

Emily Dickinson

In her poem "Nature, the gentlest mother", Emily Dickinson portrays Nature as a nurturing, maternal figure, very similar to the concept of Gaia.

In the poem, Dickinson uses the word "gentlest" to show that Nature is loving, patient, and protective—even toward the weakest or most difficult of her "children." This image connects closely to Gaia, the ancient Greek goddess who represents the Earth as a lifegiving mother who supports and cares for all living things.

Throughout the poem, Dickinson shows that Nature has a calm but strong presence. She quietly teaches, guides, and brings order to the world, especially at night when she "lights her lamps" and brings silence. This gentle power reflects the Gaia Theory by James Lovelock, which describes the Earth as a living system that maintains balance and supports life.

The poem also links to feminist and ecofeminist ideas, where Nature is seen as a strong, female figure—not something to control, but something to respect. Like Gaia, Dickinson's Nature is both kind and powerful, offering care, stability, and connection to all life.

Through this poetic image, Dickinson helps us understand Nature not just as a background or resource, but as a living, feminine force—loving, wise, and essential to the balance of life on Earth.

Conclusion

To sum up, Gaia is not only a mythological goddess, but also a symbol of life, nature, and female power.

From ancient myths to modern ecological and feminist theories, Gaia represents balance, care, and the deep connection between humans and the Earth.

She reminds us to respect both women and nature, and to live in harmony with the world around us.

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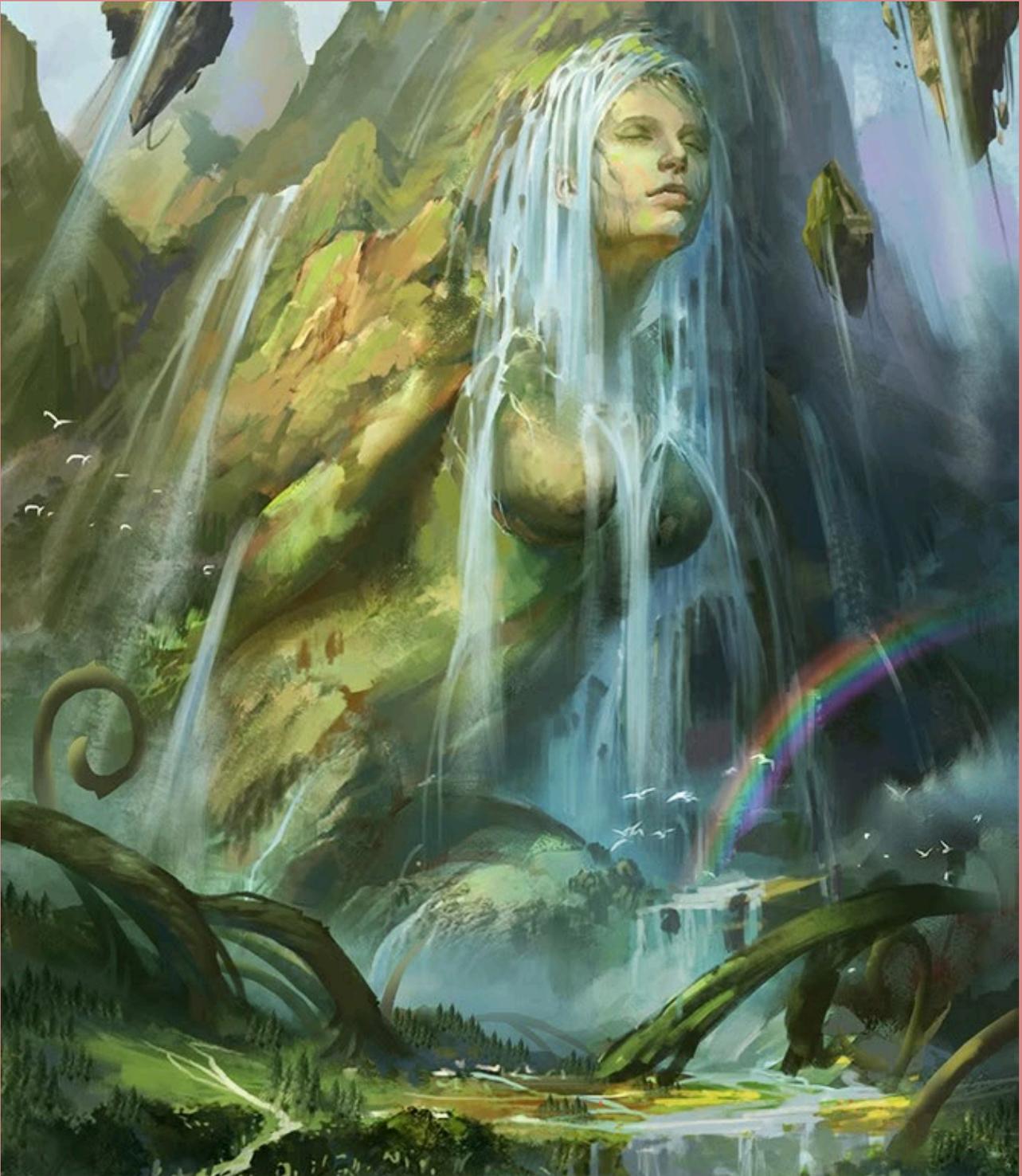
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A Body Not Her Own: Control and Defiance in Galatea

Hilal Biderci

Abstract

Madeline Miller's Galatea reimagines the Pygmalion myth through a feminist lens, granting voice to the previously silent statue and transforming her into a symbol of female resistance. In Miller's retelling, Galatea is not a passive figure but a woman trapped within a body designed to serve the ideals of male desire. The novella critiques patriarchal regulation of the female body, the obsession with perfection, and the struggle for autonomy, particularly within the context of motherhood. Pygmalion's creation of the "perfect" woman exemplifies the patriarchal impulse to construct and dominate feminine identity. However, Galatea resists being confined to servitude and idealization. Her maternal identity emerges as a site of defiance, allowing her to reclaim her subjectivity. Through her resistance, Miller challenges the notion that a woman's worth is contingent upon her physical perfection or conformity to male expectations. By rewriting an ancient myth, Galatea offers a profound critique of power, gender, and autonomy. In reclaiming Galatea's narrative from the male gaze, Miller exposes the psychological and emotional consequences of objectification, ultimately asserting female agency and resistance against imposed ideals of femininity. The novella exemplifies the enduring fight for self-definition and the resilience of the human spirit against restrictive constructs of identity.

Keywords: Feminism, myth retelling, female agency, autonomy, patriarchy, gender studies, literary resistance.

Session 7:
Woman Across Borders: Language, Gaze, and Identity

The Dynasty of Women

İsmail Gülören

Harem, sultanas, slavery, ... etc. It is appropriate to express that in this paper, we are going to examine these terms and many others such as the class system and the women's positions in harem of Topkapı Palace which is one of the most important and complicated complex in Ottoman Empire and hosted the dynasty for almost four centuries. During that clarification, the series called 'The Magnificent Century' and the real incidents will be taken into account. In addition to that, some reflections and comparisons are inevitable to employ as many components are needed. The reason why I opted that issue is that women in palace are both enemies, rivals and helpers at the same time and the point of view is quite fluid according to time, position and approach. In my opinion, it worths analyzing.

Before exploring the topic, as far as I am concerned that the etymology of some significant words utilized in the introduction section. In Arabic, the term "harem" is ḥarām, which means "forbidden" or "sacred." In historical context, it refers to the private areas in a royal palace or home that were only accessible to men who were family members and where the women of the family resided. The sultan's family, which included his wives, concubines, children, and female attendants, was referred to as the harem in the Ottoman Empire. To protect the harem's security and seclusion, eunuchs stood watch over it. The word "sultan" comes from the Arabic word "sulṭān," which means "power" or "authority." In Islamic countries, especially those of the Ottoman Empire, it refers to a king or ruler. The sultan, who possessed both political and religious power, was the ultimate ruler of the Ottoman Empire. The sultan's authority included military leadership, governance, and the defense of Sharia law[1].

To deepen the notions like slavery, sultan-born women, man and women relations, the slavery may be suitable to discuss among these terms in Ottoman Age. Slavery in Ottoman era is not similar to the ones in Western colonialism or their usages of the term. The Ottoman and Western slavery systems differed in scope and structure. Ottoman slaves came from diverse ethnic backgrounds, while Western slavery was racially defined and targeted Africans. Social mobility was more achievable for Ottoman slaves, while Western slaves faced limited advancement opportunities. Ottoman slavery focused on domestic labor, while Western slavery was driven by agricultural production.

Slaves can be male and female. They can be abducted after a war or a raid. Men are assessed as soldiers or civil servants according to their education which they get after being kidnapped and actually the male are not adult but children as one can not educate adult as wished if the person is not little. In women's perspective, there many ways to take advantage of them. One and the most important can be to raise them as concubines of the sultan or servants of queen mother. Women are educated in lessons such as manners, art, serving, obedience, etc. These contents of the lessons can be illuminating because there are not any sort of positive sciences such as chemistry, maths, or else. This is normal when we consider these concubines or female servants are not educated to contribute to the science but to charm the sultan so that the sultan like the women and the seclusion can be happened. Hence, it is obvious that women are present for sexual purposes.

In the selection part of the concubines, the classification is not random. Their being virgin, healthy, beauty, and obedient are vital. If they are not sufficient, they can not be sent to the sultan for ultimate goal. Apart from their eye-catching appearences, they must follow the rules and the orders given by their superiors or the queen mother as the system does not accept those who are incompatibles. That's why even a slave is examined quite in detail because they can give birth to heirs.

In palace, a concubine can be considered superior or more important as long as they have son because having son means you have the heir and your son have the right to ascend the throne when the time has come or anytime. Concubines rise in three ways. When they have seclusion, they are regarded as favorite. The slaves having a son are titled with haseki[2]. And the ones giving birth to the first-born son are considerd as the başhaseki[3]. There is one more possibility that they can be wedded, however that is quite rare and if one is wedded even if that concubine does not have a son has the highest rank among other women of the sultan. That classification system underlines that if a woman is succesful in domestic or feminine roles such as giving birth and raising the child, they are rewarded, otherwise they are only unimportant slave, but nothing else, which points out that in feministic aspect, the women's position is way lower compared to today's.

Most of the time the queen mother organises and decides on these issues as the head responsible of harem. In palace, there are two absolute authorities, the sultan as the owner of all Ottoman property and the queen mother as the ruler of the harem. In some cases they ask for help from each other, however there is a truth that queen mother has its power from her son directly so the power source is the sultan himself. Even so, a woman who is a queen mother coming to palace as a slave must accomplish many difficulties through her life if she can stay alive. Slavery can be expressed like that in a wide perspective.

After slavery system in harem, there are other women who are quite lucky. They are those who are members of the dynasty. They are not considered as ordinary woman. They belong to the highest class of the society in the sovereignty of Ottoman. They are daughters of the sultan. Even though they do not have power directly,they can possess it through their husbands' positions in divan[4]. So their husbands have to be vezirs[5]. As sultanas can not give birth to heir as tradition, they use their husband's power indirectly. If they are lucky enough, they can get married to one whom they love, which

does not happen quite often. Apart from that, if their husband is a grand vezir[6], they can be one of the most powerful family member after the ruler.

Being born in a dynsaty enable them to have some other privilages such as divorcing their husbands. Under normal circumstances, a wife can not divorce her husband in a religious marriage. The man has that opportunity, however, a sultana can divorce her husband with only three words. The main raison of this extraordinary situation is one is seen as subject while the other is the master. In this case the woman is the master as having a blue blood. Even in sexual occasions, if woman rejects, man can not make her do something. That unbalance situation can be complicated for some

 people, but being married to a sultana make them much more advantageous. When the marraige is decided, man has to divorce all her wives so that sultana can be the only attention point. In that topic, it can be said that woman can also be present at the top of the hiearchy without hesitation, nonetheless, that does not change the reality of the women being slave are always lower than the other lucky part.

 In addition to these notions, there is another point I need to clarfy about the discrimination between two sultanas having different backgrounds. Even a slave becomes a queen mother, the one borned as a sultana will always prevail. That condition is showed in the series I talked. In the series Hatice Sultan insults Hürrem as Hürrem said something about Ibrahim Pasha's harem as he is married to Hatice Sultan, he can not have a harem. If not, they could be the same class level. That frightened Hatice Sultan and she said many words[7]. Though she has that right, she still requires the ruler's approval in this divorce. Hence, even if one has a chance to be born as a daughter of sultan, she is to take the sultan's confirmation, which highlights the system's being that patriarchal in almost every case.

Apart from all these class discrimination and slavery, there are other issues to discuss in detail. That can be a little more about the series. It is Hürrem and her presence in harem. She came to the palace as a slave and all she thought of was to be able to survive in a new country and new complex. She even did not speak the language. After a while, she learns how to exist in the system and she uses her abilities as a woman. Seduction is her first weapon to be attractive for the sultan. At first, she was in depression, upset and shock, but after the entertainment held for the sultan, she gets a chance for the seclusion. And in time, she becomes favorite, concubine and haseki sultana. After being favorite, her main goal changes. She wants to reach the peak. As she survived, she had to make her position stable and strong. To achieve that, she made the sultan fall in love with herself thanks to her feminine and rebilious influences. She treated the sultan as an ordianry person rather than a blessed one. That was one of the most significant thing the sultan liked. When combined all of these, she was able to become the most beloved one compared to other concubines such as Mahidevran and Gülfem.

Though Mahidevran was the başhaseki and had the eldest son as the heir, she was not blessed with the sultan's affection any more, hence she was not as powerful as Hürrem. Hürrem had four princes as well as she got wedded with the sultan. All these factors made the power balance instable between Hürrem and Mahidevran. As Hürrem moved forward, her goals kept change as stated. After a while she wanted to be the queen mother and make one of her sons be the sultan. As all hasekis' duties ensure their sons to be the succesful heir and become the sultan, that could be seen as normal, but, due to many external and internal elements, she was noncorformist against the harem system.

In addition to her outclassed power among the others, she was quite near to sultan-born members of the dynasty. After a while, she had the seal of the harem, which shows that she can rule harem as she wishes. Considering that unconceivable consequence, she started the era of women in Topkapı. Her

successors were also quite influential in harem as well as in state affairs. Nurbanu and Safiye Sultan became queen mother and ruled the harem as the absolute authority. In that case, the princes' being rather young and unexperienced is an important factor. However, Kösem Sultan was the most important as she was Haseki, Queen Mother, Grand Queen Mother[8], Mother of the State and Regent of the Sultanate[9]. These examples in addition to Hürrem Sultan indicate that even in a male-centered regulation, there are exceptions as these women.

When anaylzing these women, they feared of losing their son, their husband's love, or just their lives. In harem, it is likely to get killed if one is too highlighted or seen as a threat for other women. As there were not cameras or something like that, it was almost impossible to determine accurately those who are the murderers or the ones giving the orders. In that perspective, their mentally situation must be took into account so that more and more correct and objective comments can be made. It is inevitable to say that most of them tried to survive as an instinct in an unknown atmosphere.

Apart from that, they had to accept being cheated by their beloved husband and adapt to that without rejecting. As a woman, that has to be one of the most difficult thing to bear as far as I presume. That circumstance is very cruel for those who are more fragile or emotional compared to their rivals. That kind of elements affected their psychology negatively. For instance, if someone constantly competes with others about the sultan in order to be the wife, there can occur many emotions such as jealousy, anxiety, low self-esteem, or low self-confidence. In Hürrem and Mahidevran's case, after Hürrem's coming to the palace and being the new favorite of the sultan devastated Mahidevran and she did many bad things to destroy her enemy. Under normal conditions, perhaps, she would not have done such things, but, after a while, a person might not be able to remain calm.

Additionally, if one is ignored or neglected in many aspects like sexually, or emotionally, they are becoming more and more desperate in time due to loneliness and lack of attention. As a result, if that situation is obvious even in harem and noticed by others, they also start to respect her less as she is not favorite as it used to be. As a final emotion, that can lead to depression and they can commit suicide or do much worse mistakes which results in their exile[10] to Old Palace[11] or called as Palace of Tears[12], too. Therefore, there can be a good class differenciation between as the ones having been able to become a sultan and having a heir and the others fading as roses and not being able to reach the degree of sultanate.

In this scenario, Mahidevran fades away whereas Hürrem brights like a diamond. In many scenes, Mahidevran's being hysterical, paranoid and disordered can be observed easily. She generally holds her son tight, looks for a help from a superior or creates theories about unoccurred events. However, it is cruelt to judge her being weak without including her past with Sultan in Manisa. Or Gülfem is another aspect to examine. She loses her baby and loses the title of başhaseki along with. After that unlucky incident, she never had a chance to become a mother and a sultana. Compared to Mahidevran, Gülfem is in a worse condition. She had no heir and son o power in harem. She is scattered idly. As there was a situation that a slave can only be free
  when her/his master is dead, but until then, as long as s/he is not emancipated, s/he remains as a slave. In this case, Gülfem and Mahidevran remanied until the sultan died. Despite that, thanks to the attention and affection of queen mother and Hatice Sultan, Gülfem remained in the palace unharmed but physically not mentally. As she was the one who was never cared by the sultan, she was like a soul having some concrete movements from time to time. In psychoanalytical point of view, all of these are counted as impactful notions.

As a conclusion, taking into consideration all the conventions, and rules

passed down by generations in the system of harem of Topkapı Palace, the circumstances under which the slaves are can be conceived and observed depending on many aspects as stated above such as feminist or psychoanalytic. In some cases, although it can be counted as a favour of woman, the underlying meaning or advantage is for the man. In the series as well as in the real life, in the palace, there were many discriminations between genders and the bloodline. As that caused unfairness, some exceptions were born and became unforgettable throughout the history of Ottoman dynasty. And, as far as I am concerned, this examination shows that it can be also noticed that there are many incidents or phenomenons to discuss. For further informations, I urge you all to read more about it by either biographies or history books.

Notes

[1] Arabic: شريعة, meaning "the way" or "path") is a set of Islamic legal and ethical principles derived from the Qur'an (Islam's holy book) and the Hadith (sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad). It serves as a comprehensive guide for both personal conduct and legal matters in Muslim societies.

[2] The phrase haseki, which means "special" or "belonging to" in Ottoman Turkish, was commonly used to signify "favorite concubine" or "royal consort."

[3] Baş, which means "chief" or "head," and haseki are combined to form the phrase başhaseki. Among the sultan's consorts, this term denoted that the woman was in charge. Generally speaking, a başhaseki had more status and authority than other haseki consorts.

[4] The word Divan (from Persian dīvān) can be translated as "council," "court," or "assembly." It referred to both the governing body and the place where council meetings were held. The Divan functioned as the supreme advisory and administrative council of the Ottoman Empire. It handled a wide range of state affairs.

[5] The word vizier (وَزِير) is of Arabic origin, meaning "helper," "assistant," or "minister."
In the context of governance, it came to mean a high-ranking advisor or official who assisted the ruler (the sultan) in state affairs.

[6] The highest-ranking official in the Ottoman administrative system, effectively functioning as a prime minister. The grand vezir had delegated authority from the sultan to oversee state affairs and lead the Divan-ı Hümayun (Imperial Council).

[7] 'How dare you talk about such a topic with me?Stop it! Hürrem, have you ever think about who you are? Who are you to think that you are equal to me? I was born as a sultana and I will die so. I have birthrights which any woman can never have. The fact that you gave birth to princes does not change your title, you remain slaves of the sultan for good. Ibrahim couldn't even look into someone else's eyes, let alone establish a harem. If he were with someone else, I would divorce him. He loses all what he possesses. I destroy him. You know why? I am Hatice Sultana of dynasty of Ottoman Empire.'

[8] Kösem refuses to go to the Old Palace and she creates a new title as 'Grand Queen Mother'(Valide-i Kebir). And the queen mother, Turhan Sultan, becomes the 'Minor Queen Mother' (Valide-i Sagir), which is unusual.

[9] The Regent of the Sultanate (Naib-i/Naibe-i Saltanat) is a temporary ruler who governs on behalf of a sultan who is unable to rule due to being too young, incapacitated, or absent. Regents, often Valide Sultans or high-ranking officials, wield full authority in the sultan's name to maintain governance and stability.

[10] The Ottoman imperial harem women were frequently exiled due to various reasons, including the death of a sultan, falling out of favor, failing to bear male heirs, or involvement in political intrigues. This exile was often framed as retirement, but it signified a significant loss of power and influence for the women involved.

[11] The first Ottoman palace built in Istanbul, serving as the imperial residence before the construction of Topkapı Palace. Later, it became a place of seclusion for members of the royal family, especially former consorts or harem women who lost favor or political influence.

[12] A term used to describe the Old Palace due to its association with the sorrow and exile of harem women sent there after falling out of favor or following the death of a sultan, symbolizing loss and mourning in Ottoman history.

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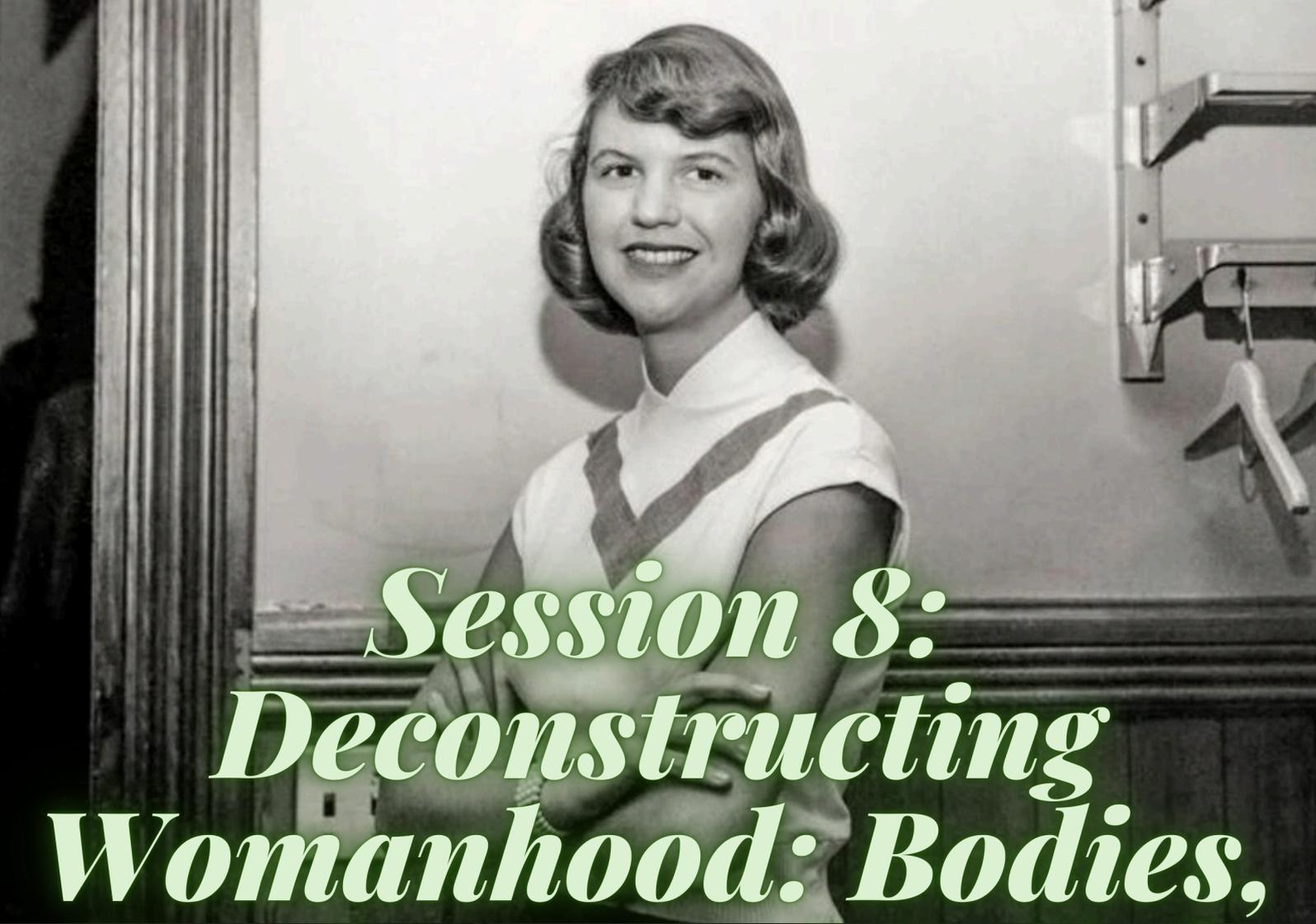
Session 8: Deconstructing Womanhood: Bodies, Borders, and Beliefs

Lady Lazarus: Death as Defiance

Edanur Coşkun

1.Historical Context: Women's Roles in the 1950s and 1960s

To understand the radical nature of Lady Lazarus, we must consider the 1950s social climate. After WWII, women were pushed back into domestic roles, and the "perfect housewife" ideal was reinforced by media and psychiatry. Those who felt unfulfilled were often labeled selfish or unstable—what Betty Friedan called "the problem that has no name." Plath wrote amid this identity crisis. In Lady Lazarus, the speaker's suicide attempts symbolize rebellion against a society that demands silence and obedience.

2.Sylvia Plath: A Woman Writing Against the Current

Plath's work, especially "Lady Lazarus," is now recognized as an essential part of feminist literature. Although she did not explicitly call herself a feminist, her poetry gives voice to the silenced experiences of women—experiences marked by invisibility, objectification, and emotional repression.

Now that I'll explore the themes and feminist context of "Lady Lazarus," By breaking it down line by line, we'll see how the speaker not only narrates her personal suffering, but turns it into a theatrical performance, a political rebellion.

Opening lines

Let's begin with the opening lines:

"I have done it again. One year in every ten I manage it—."

Here, Plath's speaker starts in a very casual tone—"I have done it again"—like she's talking about something routine. But what she's referring to is something very serious: a suicide attempt. She says it happens "once every ten years," suggesting a recurring battle.

"A sort of walking miracle, my skin
Bright as a Nazi lampshade,"

She calls herself a "walking miracle," but then compares her skin to a Nazi lampshade—referring horrifying stories of human skin being used during the Holocaust. Plath is showing how her suffering has been turned into something objectified and grotesque.

Stanza 2–3

"My right foot
A paperweight,
My face a featureless, fine
Jew linen."

She continues the theme of being a lifeless object. A paperweight is heavy, still, and useless. "Jew linen" again uses Holocaust imagery. The loss of identity here is powerful. She's no longer a person—just pieces of her body.

Stanza 4–6

"Peel off the napkin
O my enemy.
Do I terrify?"

Now, she's talking directly to someone—maybe society, or a doctor, or a male authority figure. "Peel off the napkin" is like removing a hospital cloth.

She asks, "Do I terrify?" It shows the idea that women must be passive. Her suffering is frightening—and she wants to show it.

"The nose, the eye pits, the full set of teeth?
The sour breath
Will vanish in a day."

She describes herself as a decaying corpse. She's saying, "This is what you made me. Are you happy now?" But also, "This won't last forever." There's something temporary here—maybe even hope for transformation.

Stanza 7–9

"Soon, soon the flesh
The grave cave ate will be
At home on me"

She's saying she's used to death. The grave is almost comforting, almost familiar. She doesn't fear it anymore.

"And I a smiling woman.
I am only thirty.
And like the cat I have nine times to die."

She compares herself to a cat with nine lives—again returning to the idea of constant resurrection. Every death is followed by another return.

Stanza 10–12

"This is Number Three.
What a trash
To annihilate each decade."

This is her third suicide attempt and she calls it "trash"—maybe mocking how society sees her pain as worthless or embarrassing. It's painful to hear, but that's the point.

"What a million filaments.
The peanut-crunching crowd
Shoves in to see"

Here, she shows how the public views her trauma as entertainment. A "peanut-crunching crowd" is like people at a circus. They're not there to help —they're there to watch.

"Them unwrap me hand and foot—
The big strip tease.
Gentlemen, ladies—"

She compares her recovery from death to a strip show. She's being "unwrapped" for an audience, her body put on stage. It's a critique of how women's suffering, especially mental health struggles, are turned into public spectacle.

Stanza 13–15

"These are my hands
My knees.
I may be skin and bone,"

Now she describes herself like she's an exhibit. These body parts are no longer part of her—they're being pointed out like in a museum.

"Nevertheless, I am the same, identical woman.

The first time it happened I was ten.
It was an accident."

She takes us back to her first suicide attempt, at just ten years old. It's heartbreaking, and it shows that this pain has been with her since childhood.

"The second time I meant
To last it out and not come back at all.
I rocked shut"

She's clear here—this wasn't a cry for help. She wanted to die. She was determined. "I rocked shut" sounds like a coffin being closed.

Stanza 16—18

"As a seashell.
They had to call and call
And pick the worms off me like sticky pearls."

The "seashell" image suggests she was empty, silent, unreachable. The image of worms being picked off her body is both grotesque and poetic. Even in death, she is being touched, cleaned, and interfered with by others.

"Dying
Is an art, like everything else.
I do it exceptionally well."

This is the most famous line in the poem. She turns dying into a form of art. It's shocking, but also deeply ironic. In a world where women are not allowed to control much, she takes control over death.

Closing Analysis

"Out of the ash
I rise with my red hair
And I eat men like air."

This is where everything changes. She doesn't stay dead. She rises—like a phoenix—from the ashes. "Red hair" symbolizes fire, rage, and power. And then she says, "I eat men like air." This is defiance. This is reversal. After being objectified, and controlled, she becomes the one with power.

3.Conclusion: A Poem That Refuses to Be Silenced

In conclusion, line by line, "Lady Lazarus" reveals a woman who has suffered deeply—not just from personal pain, but from how society treats that pain. Plath's speaker is broken, mocked, displayed—but she refuses to stay silent. She turns her trauma into a weapon. She returns, again and again, more powerful each time. That is what makes this poem so unforgettably and feminist.

Sylvia Plath's work is groundbreaking because it speaks truths that are still relevant today. While society has changed in many ways, the themes of "Lady Lazarus"—objectification, emotional repression, and the desire for liberation —continue to resonate. By using her pain and transforming it into art, Plath created a legacy that refuses to be forgotten. She did not simply write about death. She wrote about survival, resistance, and the unbreakable will of women who rise—again and again—from the ashes.

Being a Woman in The Middle East; Persepolis and Femininity

Şilan Topdemir

01. Introduction

The animation "Persepolis" (2007) is a film based on the graphic novel of the same name by Marjane Satrapi. The film is about the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979. With the Islamic regime, many laws and rules come that restrict women in society. Women are obliged to wear headscarves and are even forced to pay attention to their actions, behavior and thoughts as women. This change brought many restrictions and difficulties for the free-spirited Marjane. Oppression and restrictions cause a lot of harm to Marjane and her family members, so her family sends her to Europe in her twenties. Although she lives here as a free woman, the difficulties she experiences there lead her to seek her own identity. When she return to Iran, she gets married and gets divorced when the marriage does not go well. At the end of the movie, she returns to Europe and everything that was black and white begins to take color. This film deeply explains the second-class treatment and oppression experienced by women in Iran after the revolution. It is a short and impressive film shows that how women living in Iran are oppressed by the state, based on

the experiences of a woman. It is the narrative of the search for an identity within the framework of social pressures and rules as a woman and the struggle to exist as a woman. In summary, being a woman was not easy, but being a woman in Iran has never been easy.

02. Objective

This study aims to analyze the film Persepolis through a feminist lens, focusing on the representation of women's struggles and identity formation in post-revolutionary Iran. By examining visual elements and narrative structure, the study seeks to explore how the film conveys the impact of political repression on women's lives and personal freedom.

03. Methodology

In this analysis, I use feminist theory. Feminist theory looks at the life of women. It asks: Are women free? Are they equal? In the movie Persepolis, I look at how women are treated. I look at Marjane's life. I see how the rules in Iran hurt women. I also use visual analysis. I look at the pictures in the movie. The movie is black and white. This shows a sad and hard life. At the end, it has color. This shows hope and freedom. I use these two methods to understand the movie.

04. Results/Findings

In the movie, women are not free. They must wear a headscarf. They cannot sing, dance, or speak freely. Marjane is sad because of these rules. She wants

to be free. Her family also feels the pain. Many people go to jail. Some people die. In Europe, Marjane feels free, but also lonely. She does not know who she is. She comes back to Iran, but the rules are still bad. Her marriage is not happy. She feels lost again. At the end, she goes back to Europe.

05. Analysis

Persepolis (2007) tells the story of Marjane Satrapi and shows how life changed in Iran after the Islamic Revolution, especially for women. The film uses black-and-white animation to show the dark and strict atmosphere of that time. Marjane's journey, both in Iran and in Europe, shows her struggle with identity, freedom, and feeling like an outsider. From a feminist point of view, Persepolis is a powerful film that shows how women fight against unfair rules and try to find their true selves with the support of family.

06. Conclusion

Persepolis is a movie about being a woman in a difficult world. It shows that women in Iran have many problems. It also shows how one woman fights for her freedom. Marjane's story is sad, but also strong. The movie helps us understand how hard it is to live with rules and fear. It also teaches us that every person has the right to choose their life. Freedom and identity are very important. This movie gives hope to all women who want to be free.

Session 9: Writing Against Silence

The Fate of the Wild Woman: Autonomy and Erasure in Lucy Gray and The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes

İlayda Oruç

Introduction

- The concept of the wild woman archetype, along with its associated struggles against societal oppression, will be examined in relation to the character of Lucy Gray as portrayed in William Wordsworth's poem "Lucy Gray" and Suzanne Collins' The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes.
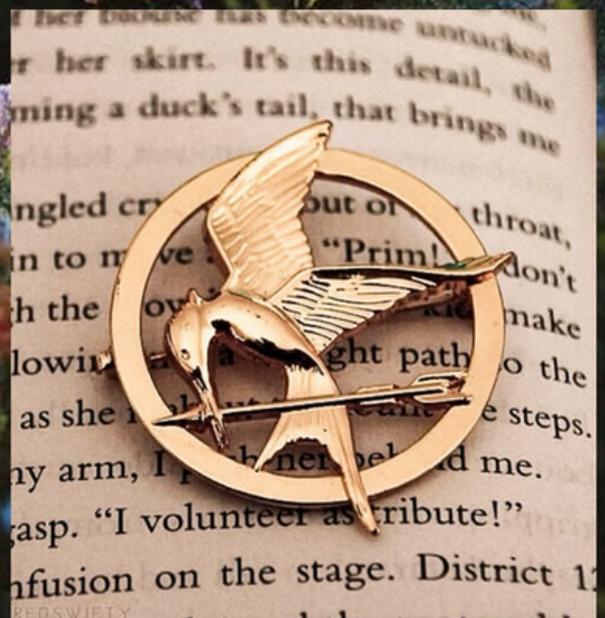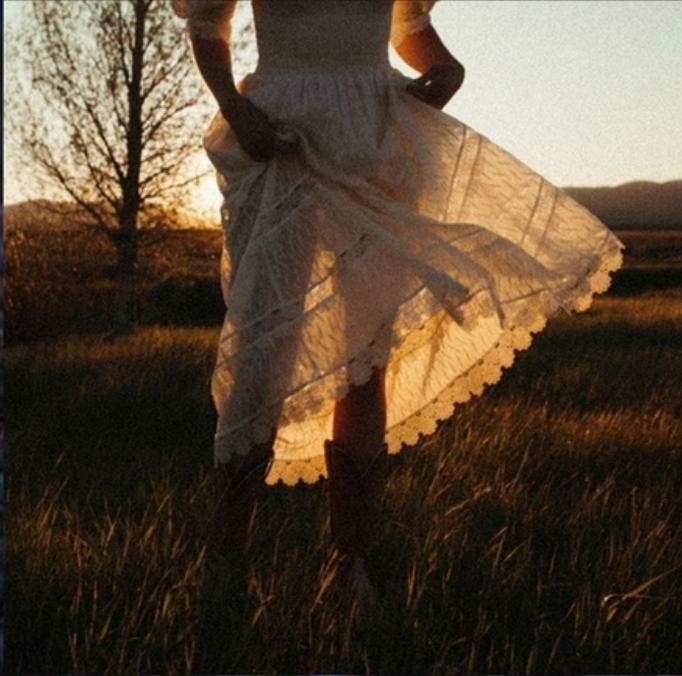
Lucy Gray, created by William Wordsworth

- Lucy is introduced as a young woman who lives "in the wild". She is portrayed as a solitary figure, but she represents more than isolation; she embodies freedom. Yet, this life of hers is interrupted; when she decides to go out in the snowstorm.

You yet may spy the Fawn at play,

The Hare upon the Green ;

But the sweet face of Lucy Gray

Will never more be seen.

Lucy Gray Baird, created by Suzanne Collins

- She is the female tribute from District 12. She grew up in the Covey, a traveling group known for living freely and singing songs. After the Games, she was last seen fleeing into the woods, after her conflicts, particularly with Coriolanus Snow. Her fate remains unknown.

THE HUNGER GAMES
LUCY GRAY BAIRD

Wild Woman Archetype

- The "wild woman" archetype represents the free-spirited side of femininity. She's a symbol of independence, rebellion, and individuality; these are the qualities that are often punished when they appear in women. The wild woman can never simply be herself because society requires that she's either domesticated, silenced, or forgotten.
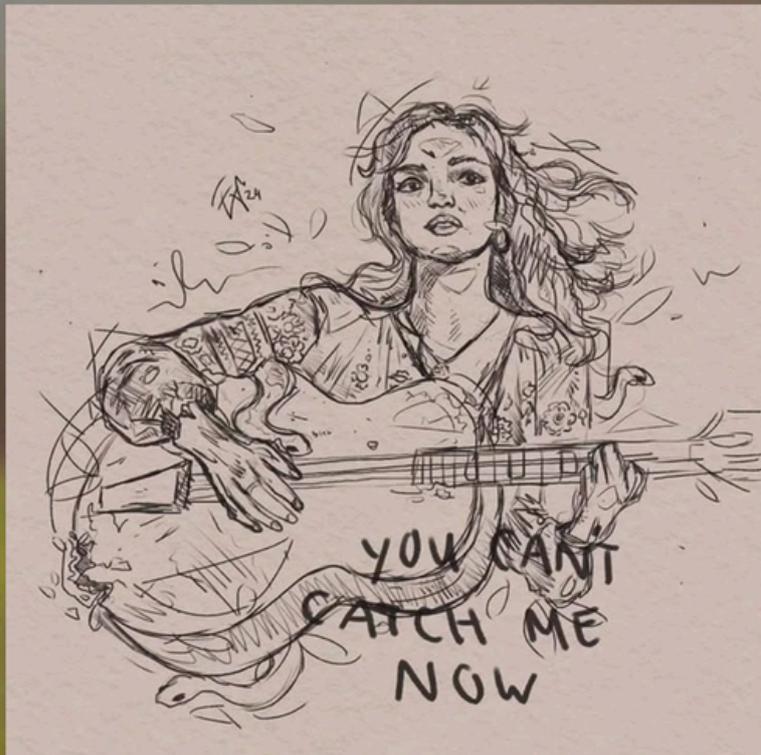
Women & Oppression

- The struggle of women against oppression is one of the most significant and complex battles throughout history. It's a not just a fight for freedom; its is a fight for visibility, autonomy, and the right to exist outside the rules of patriarchal systems that have historically controlled their identity and purpose.

- Lucy Gray's selection as a tribute in the Hunger Games, shows how women are often trapped in unfair systems. Her value is based on what she can do for others; not who she really is. Especially in a world controlled by powerful men like Coriolanus Snow.

- In Wordsworth's poem, Lucy Gray represents the quiet oppression faced by young women. She is sent on an errand alone, with no concern for her safety or well-being, reflecting how society often places burdens on women without considering their needs.

YOU CAN'T CATCH ME NOW

Singing Against Oppression

- Throughout history, music has always been a powerful way to resist; especially for marginalized groups. For women, singing gives them a way to speak out and share their pain.

- Her songs are not just for entertainment; they are deeply political acts. Her songs, especially "The Hanging Tree", became a form of resistance. It is challenging those in power, and giving a voice to those who are oppressed.

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT HOW WILD AND WONDERFUL IT IS THAT BIRDS SING SONGS?
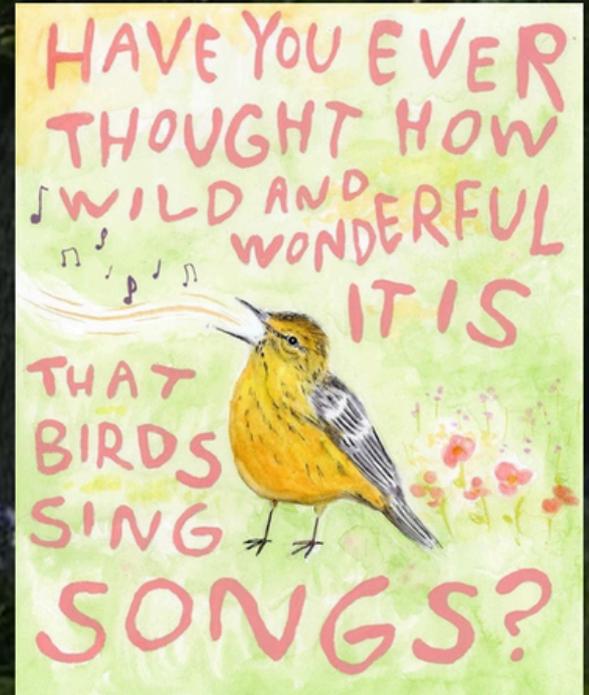
Women Who Resist

- Standing up against those forces can be a step toward freedom; but it can also lead to erasure, marginalization, and even to disappearance. Women who resist may find their voices ignored, their contributions dismissed, and their very identities overlooked.

- In both the real world and in stories like these; the wild woman is often reduced to something that people romanticize but don't have to face with. The wild woman can never simply be herself because society requires that she can either be domesticated, silenced, or forgotten.

- Lucy Gray, both the one who wandered the wintery fields of Wordsworth's poem and the one whose resistance challenged the Capitol's cruelty; isn't given the chance to stay in the world. She's been forgotten, pushed aside; like all the wild things that are left to fade away. But her disappearance is not freedom. It is not a release from the chains of oppression; it is simply another way the world make sures that she is never fully understood, and never fully free.

- Lucy Gray's story is one where her life is only significant in relation to her disappearance. She won't be remembered for her fight; but will be remembered for the mystique surrounding her struggle. As it is easier for society to digest.

- Lucy is clever, independent and emotional; these are the traits that threaten the Capitol's need for control. She doesn't follow the script of a grateful tribute or a broken victim. Instead, she sings, questions, resists. But the world around her isn't meant for women who won't stay quiet. So the narrative swallows her whole.

No, Lucy Gray was no lamb. She was not made of sugar. She was a victor.

The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes (A Hunger Games Novel)...
Suzanne Collins

He was glad about the erasure. It was just one more way to eliminate Lucy Gray from the world. The Capitol would forget her, the districts barely knew her, and District 12 had never accepted her as one of their own. In a few years, there would be a vague memory that a girl had once sung in the arena. And then that would be forgotten, too. Good-bye, Lucy Gray, we hardly knew you.

Does Lucy Gray's disappearance signify freedom from oppression, or is it simply another form of silencing?

- Both Lucy Grays disappear in the end, and that says something important. In both stories, their independence doesn't last. Instead of being allowed to live freely, they're either turned into symbols or completely forgotten. This shows how women who don't follow the rules are often removed from the story. And as I mentioned; they are removed to be silenced, not to be free. It leaves us wondering if they were ever truly free at all.

Fate of the Wild Woman

- The true pain of their disappearances lies not just in losing two extraordinary women; but in the fact that they never had the power to decide their own fates. There is no resolution in their stories. There is no justice, no peace. Just a vast and empty landscape where a girl should have been.

LUCY GRAY BAIRD

THE BALLAD OF SONGBIRDS AND SNAKES

Myth of the Cassandra

- Cassandra's myth centers around a girl who was given the gift of prophecy; only to be cursed so that no one would ever believe her predictions.

What could have happened if the world had let them stay?

- Their stories linger in the air like a song without a singer, a poem without anyone to speak it. Their disappearance is a harsh irony — it is freedom; but not the kind we hope for. It's the freedom of being forgotten, of being erased.

thank you

Women in the Shadow of Men

Hülya Karani

Throughout history , women have played crucial but often overlooked role in shaping societies and culture . These women have stayed in shadow of man . So , did they have a chance get out of this shadow ?

Today, we talk about women, but how many of us really know what the word *woman* means? Who is a woman? What is the deeper meaning behind the concept of womanhood? When I began thinking about this, I questioned everything, and I soon became curious about the etymology of the word *woman*.

Women are someone's mother daughter,or wife . This is not an irony or a joke.Etymologically, *woman* comes from *man*. Firstly , it was wifmon so wife of man in Old English.Than it evolved to wommen and finally it's became women. Women could only exist if they were tied to men.They could only exist if they were a man's wife.And this reflected the language. It is said that languages reflect the living conditions of the times, and this is one of the first examples of the lack of importance attached to women in those times.

And also some Renaissance linguists even believed that the word *woman* derived from *womb-man*. Perhaps early humans also saw women mainly through their fertility, associating their identity with the womb.

This etymological thought reminded me of Aristotle's idea: "A woman is a half-created man." It shocked me that even a philosopher like Aristotle, who was far ahead of his time in many areas, would view women as incomplete beings.

Later, I researched the naming traditions for women in different societies. Another thing that surprised me was that in some cultures, daughters were not even seen as significant enough to be given unique names. "In ancient Rome, girls were named using a structure first daughter had the name Prima,second had secunda ,and third had terita.Or did you hear the names like Vahide, Saniye, Salise, and Rabia — familiar names to us — actually reflect a hierarchy:

-*Vahide* means "the first,"
-*Saniye* means "the second,"
-*Salise* means "the third," and
-*Rabia* means "the fourth" daughter.

This tradition, coming from Arabic culture, shows how girls were seen as less important, and this too was reflected in language. There were even times when having a daughter was seen as unlucky, and girls were buried alive. From the beginning of recorded history, women have struggled for existence and recognition.

Even now, although women have gained many rights, the remnants of these historical injustices linger. In the past, women often stayed silent simply to survive. They were given roles — caregivers, cooks, wives — and had no right to education or freedom of choice. Ironically, they were accused of being ignorant while being systematically denied the right to learn. They were not celebrated as heroes of stories; instead, history is full of unnamed female geniuses whose stories were never told.

When we look at literature, the pattern continues. Eve, the first woman, is often portrayed as the cause of humanity's downfall. Is that fair? In famous novels, female characters often don't even have names. For example, in

Of Mice and Men, the woman in the red dress is unnamed, symbolizing her insignificance. Montaigne even uses the phrase "like a woman" to describe a despicable situation, further showing the disdain for women in historical texts.

Throughout history, women have quietly shaped the world as unseen heroes. Yet, history has tried to erase them. As Virginia Woolf once said, perhaps Freud had a more brilliant sister — but we don't know her name because of gender inequality. One clear example is Mozart's sister, Maria Anna Mozart, who was as talented as her brother but remains nearly unknown today.

When women tried to step into the public sphere, they were often punished — labeled as witches and burned or buried alive. Nevertheless, some women found ways to resist. They picked up their pens and began writing their own history.

However, women faced challenges even in literature. To be taken seriously, many wrote under male pseudonyms. The Brontë sisters and George Eliot are prime examples. George Eliot, whose real name was Mary Anne Evans, was a brilliant woman who would have studied at Oxford if she had been born a man.She faced many difficulties. And it is said that she was even ostracized by society because she was considered ugly.Because society dismissed women writers, she chose a strong, masculine pen name. Unfortunately, we still remember her more by this pseudonym than by her real name — another instance of a woman hidden under a man's shadow.

Similarly, Charlotte Brontë used the pen name Currer Bell, Emily became Ellis Bell, and Anne became Acton Bell. Under these names, they published masterpieces like *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Eventually, they chose to publish under their real names, helping to change the literary world forever.

Throughout history, women have been the silent architects of society, building the world quietly but powerfully. They were the pioneers, the unsung heroes who fought against all odds.

Today, as we stand in a world shaped by these incredible women, we must raise our voices. We must write, speak, and act — not just to honor them, but to ensure a better future for ourselves and for the generations to come.

Women and the Novel:
A Shared Historyof Subjugation and Subversion

Helin İldirin

Abstract

Throughout history, both women and the novel have been subjugated within social and literary frameworks, therefore, this subjugation positions them as subversive entities in hierarchical structures. The novel was often defined as an inferior literary form and was excluded from the literary canons, much like women were excluded from social, political, and intellectual territories. In addition to that, historically, men have detached themselves from what is perceived as feminine, asserting the idea that higher literature belongs to them while the novel remains a women's space. Consequently, both became outsiders in a spiritual sense, which opened an avenue for women to express their voices and this very exclusion allowed women to declare the novel as their own playground, where they can share their personal and social experiences and struggles, challenge dominant ideologies, claim intellectual authority, and establish their authentic autonomies throughfiction. In addition to that, this resistance marksthe initial stepstoward Irigaray's call for a feminine language that challenges the symbolic order of patriarchy. By examining this historical relationship, this paper highlights how the novel became a powerful literaryspace for women, allowing them to challenge conventions, assert creative and intellectual agency.

Keywords: Women, novel, subversion, literary hierarchy, feminization of the novel

Introduction

Both women and the novel have historically been considered inferior, one in society, the other in literature. While women were systematically excluded from intellectual fields, the novel was dismissed from positions of authority within the literary hierarchies where poetry and drama were considered superior. This parallel subjugation is intertwined because the novel and the woman are associated with emotion and the domestic sphere. In addition to that, both have been subjected to similarcontrol mechanisms. Yet both emerged as powerful forces of subversion. This paper examineshow the marginalization of women and the novel interconnect, and how their parallel exclusions provided women an opportunity to reclaim the novel as their literary space. Since men distanced themselves from the novel because they labeled it as feminine and therefore considered it unworthy, women turned it into an avenue where they could articulate their experiences, challenge societal norms, and declare intellectual authority.

The feminization of the novel didn't limit it at all, it transformed it into a subversive place where women could safely and creatively explore themes of identity and autonomy. In this context, the novel becomes more than a literary form, in which women were able to question dominant ideologies surrounding gender and identity. Through this approach, this paper argues that the novel offered women a way to turn their marginality into creative power, to write themselves into history, and to establish a legacy of resistance. Moreover, it is clear that literature not only reflects society but also actively participates in shaping societal structures. As women began to claim the novel as their space to express themselves, it became clear that the forces that had once tried to suppress women's voices, such as patriarchy, ended up changing the entire literary tradition.

Luce Irigaray's analysis implies that language is highly patriarchal and male-dominated. This analysis creates an understanding of how women writers

challenged the established forms of discourse. Irigaray argues that language itself is structured by patriarchal norms throughout history, and her argument of "feminine writing" is a call for the creation of a new language that embraces the female experience. Women were not only placing themselves into an existing literary discourse but were actively creating a new language that reflected their experiences, bodies, and desires. This performed as Irigaray's call for a feminine way of expression, not just as a means of storytelling but as a linguistic revolution. In this way, the novel became a space where both its form and language itself were in a process of change, transforming the phenomenon into a tool for feminist resistance, which used to silence women's voices.

1. The SharedMarginalization of Women and the Novel

Throughout literary history, both women and the novel have shared a position of subjection, believed to be lesser within patriarchal and hierarchical systems. The novel, especially in its early stages in the 18th century, was often criticized as lacking artistic importance and moral authority as much as poetry or drama does. It was considered sentimental and domestic. This association was not an accident, but it is rather rooted in deep societal concerns about gender, authorship, and cultural authority.

During the period when the novel began to appear as a distinctliterary form, women were still excluded from most institutional and intellectual spaces, they could not attend universities, own their properties, or publish freely under their own names. These limitations mirrored the novel's own struggle for legitimacy as a "serious form" of literature. Both were imprisoned, not only physicallybut also spiritually. Critics dismissed the genre as "light entertainment" for women, saying that they were unworthy of critical attention. Meanwhile, male writers and philosophers of- tenportrayed women as either intellectually weak or morally lacking, causing their exclusion from

the public.In this environment, the novel became a subject of patriarchal exclusion, associated with the domestic,and therefore feminine,and a form occupied by female readersand writers who themselves were denied cultural authority by the same forces.

By being overlooked as a "women'sgenre," the novel became the main literary form where women could express their voices and portray their realities. It became a powerful way for women writers and readers to turn marginality into resistance.

2. The Feminization of the Novel and the Fragility of Masculinity

The feminization of the novel was more related to the increasing majority of women engaging in reading and producing novels. As the literary rates increased, male intellectuals began to distance themselves from the novel as a literary form, fearing that being associated with the genre would undermine their masculine authority and intellectual credibility. Historically, masculinity has often defined itself not in terms of what it is, but what it is not. To be masculine meant to be rational, not emotional, public, not private, since these binary qualities were culturally assigned to women. The rise of the female novelist and the woman reader created a question in the male imagination: if the novel became a woman's genre, how could it remain a serious or prestigious art form?

The source of this question is rooted in what contemporary gender theorists refer to as "fragile masculinity", a condition in which manhood must be constantly asserted and protected against anything that might feminize or emasculate it. The novel, even though it was once seen as socially relevant, was increasingly belittledwhen women began to dominate its readership and authorship. Male critics and writers turned to other genres such as philosophy, poetry, or the emerging realist drama. The novel's marginalization

became empowering for women. It allowed them to take creative ownership of a space abandoned by those too afraid to be linked to the feminine. Men left behind a genre that women transformed into one of the most subversive and liberating literary forms in history.

3. Irigaray and the Languageof Feminine Writing

Luce Irigaray's feminist philosophy offers a relevant theoretical framework for analyzing women's reclaiming of the novel. In her work, Irigaray argues that language itself is historically structured through a male-dominated symbolic order. He´le`ne Cixous says, "Nearly the entire his- tory of writing is confounded with the history of reason, of which it is at once the effect, the support, and one of the privileged alibis. It has been one with the phallocentric tradition" (Cixous, 1976, 879). Within this phallocentric tradition, women are absent, not only in representation but in the act of creation of meaning or art. To exist within this system means constantly being the "other" and a reflection of what man is not, rather than a subject in one's own right.

In her studies, Irigaray shows that it is a necessity for women to develop a new way of articulation, and she calls itfeminine writing (e´criture fe´minine). This way of articulation rebels against linearity, hierarchy, and binary opposition. Instead of these concepts, it adopts multiplicity, mirroring the nonlinear and affective dimensions of female experience. Feminine writing, specifically within the genre which is considered sentimental, aims to challenge the basic frameworks of patriarchal language in addition to delivering meaning.

In this regard, the novel becomes a place for women where they can linguistically resist. While transforming the novel, women writers were not just engaging with content, but also they were reshaping the form. These

actions correspond with Irigaray's vision of a language that reflects the complexity of feminine subjectivity.

Whether they realized it or not, women writers started a linguistic revolution by writing fiction that focused on the feminine experience. By writing themselves into existence, they were opposinga language that had silenced them for centuries. With women writers, the novel became a symbolic space for reconstructing language, identity, and authorship in a feminist way. Thus, including Irigaray in this context emphasizes that women writers weren't just entering the literary world, but they were also transforming the nature of both literature and language through their voices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intertwined history of women and the novel reveals a parallel subjugation and a process of transformation. This parallel explains why both women and the novel emerged as forms of rebellion. Through this relationship, women find a place for themselves to render their realities, challenge dominant ideologies, and redefine literary authorities. This feminization of the genre is not only the result of women's adoption of a marginalized genre, but also involves the reshaping of language and the form of the genre.
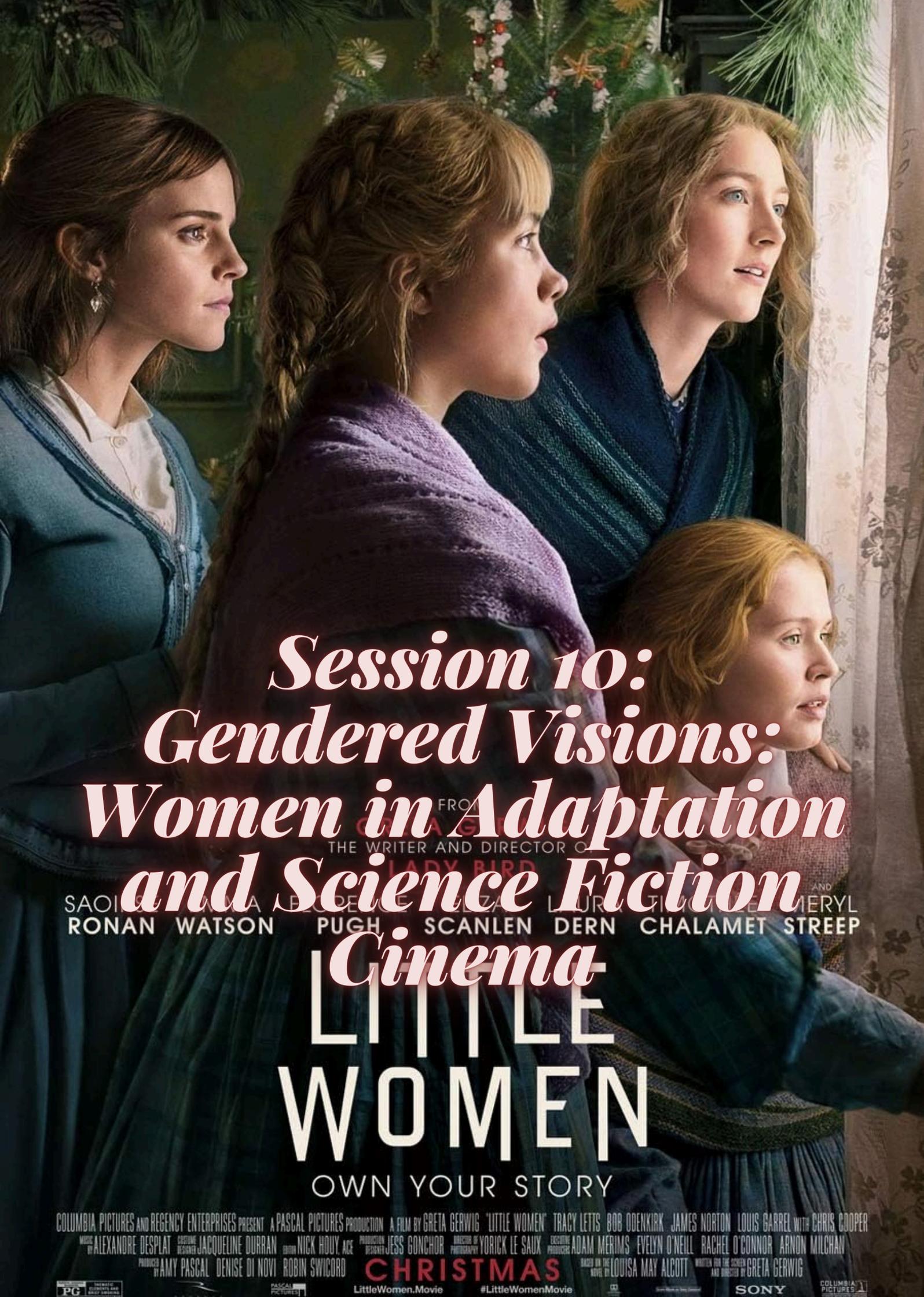
Drawing upon Luce Irigaray's theory of phallocentric language, it becomes evident that women not only established their identity and autonomy through writing but also took the first steps of creating a new, balanced language. Their narratives, including their emotional depth and subjective experiences, challenged the rigid, traditional structures of language and literature, and mirrored the principles of feminine writing (e´criture fe´minine). Through the novel, women constructed the defied hierarchical binaries to a more complex and layered narrative. By doing so, they performed cultural resistance.

As a result, the novel became a documentation of women's exclusion as well as evidence of their ability to alter literary tradition and language's structures. Today, the legacy of these transformations continues to echo, reminding us that literature is never a detached or apolitical platform. It is a space of struggle, creation, and new possibilities. By rewriting the novel, women rewrote themselves into cultural history and existence.

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Session 10:
Gendered Visions:
Women in Adaptation
and Science Fiction
Cinema

Female Protagonist in Film – Little Women (2019) by Greta Gerwig

Sacide Balta

Little Women (2019) is a period film adapted from Louisa May Alcott's novel of the same name, focusing on themes of individual identity and social roles. Under Greta Gerwig's direction,

1- Women's Independence and Choice

In Little Women (2019), women's independence and choice are presented as central social struggles, woven into the very structure of the story. The film emphasizes that in 19th-century America, women's lives were shaped by limitations imposed on them, both legally and culturally. Independence is portrayed not just as rebellion against these systems, but as the pursuit of self-determination within them.

2- Challenging Gender Norms

In Little Women (2019), gender norms are consistently questioned and subverted. The film critiques the rigid expectations placed on women — expectations to marry, to sacrifice ambition for family, and to find fulfillment solely in domestic roles. By emphasizing women's aspirations for creative, financial, and personal autonomy, the film reveals how social structures restricted female identity and agency.

The story dismantles the traditional ideal that marriage is a woman's ultimate goal. It presents marriage instead as a social and economic contract, often necessary for survival, not necessarily an expression of love or personal fulfillment. By making this economic reality explicit, the film exposes the

transactional nature of gender roles in the 19th century — and draws a connection to ongoing struggles today.

Creative work — writing, painting, teaching — is framed as a form of resistance. Women's art is shown as valuable not merely as a hobby but as labor deserving recognition and ownership. The negotiation over book rights symbolizes a larger fight for women's control over their own voices and intellectual property, challenging the norm that women's contributions should be secondary or invisible.

3- Sisterhood

In Little Women (2019), sisterhood is portrayed as a vital source of strength, identity, and emotional support. The bond between the March sisters is not idealized as perfect; it is dynamic, marked by rivalry, jealousy, love, and forgiveness. Their relationships reflect the complexity of growing up as women in a society that limits their opportunities but empowers them through their connection to each other.

Sisterhood serves as a counterbalance to societal pressures. When the world outside offers few options, the sisters nurture each other's ambitions — whether in art, marriage, or independence. Their encouragement, even when mixed with conflict, creates a space where dreams are taken seriously. Each sister's path is different, but their shared foundation of love and understanding allows them to envision broader possibilities for their lives.

Importantly, Little Women shows that sisterhood evolves over time. As they mature, the sisters must accept each other's differences and choices — learning that true support means respecting each other's individual journeys, not insisting on sameness. In this way, the film frames sisterhood as a lifelong negotiation between intimacy and independence.

4- Crituque of Marriage

In Little Women (2019), marriage is portrayed not as a romantic inevitability, but as a social and economic necessity, particularly for women. The film critiques the institution by revealing how marriage was historically less about love and more about financial security, survival, and social status for women, who had few legal rights and limited opportunities to earn their own living.

It highlights that women were often forced to view marriage pragmatically because they could not independently own property, earn fair wages, or inherit wealth. This reality strips away the notion that marriage is purely about personal happiness, showing instead that it often involved strategic calculation.

Rather than outright rejecting marriage, the film demands that marriage be a choice rooted in love and mutual respect, not economic dependence. It champions the idea that a woman's life and worth should not be defined solely by her marital status.

5- Meg March

Meg March represents a different expression of female independence — one that values love, family, and domestic life not as submission, but as a conscious, self-chosen path. Unlike Jo, who seeks freedom through career and creative ambition, Meg desires the traditional life of marriage and motherhood, but the film portrays her choice with respect and depth, not judgment.

"Just because my dreams are different from yours doesn't mean they're unimportant." This moment highlights the film's broader message that true empowerment lies in the freedom to choose one's own path. This decision

highlights that independence is not one-dimensional; choosing a traditional role can be just as radical if it is made freely, against materialistic or societal pressures.

6- Jo March

Jo March is the clearest symbol of female independence, creativity, and rebellion in Little Women (2019). She resists the traditional life expected of women in her time — marriage, domesticity, and self-sacrifice — and instead dreams of a life shaped by her own ambition and art. For Jo, writing is not just a passion; it is a path to personal freedom.

Women, they have minds, and they have souls, as well as just hearts. And they've got ambition, and they've got talent, as well as just beauty. I'm so sick of people saying that love is all a woman is fit for."

Jo is angry and heartbroken because she feels trapped.

She is saying that women are full, complex human beings — not just made for loving someone else (like a husband or family).

Women have brains (they can think), souls (they have deep emotions and dreams), ambition (they want to achieve things), and talent (they have real skills) — just like men do.

Jo is tired ("so sick") of the way society acts like the only thing important about women is who they marry or who they love.

She is fighting against the idea that a woman's only purpose is to find love and settle down. Instead, Jo is demanding the right for women to dream bigger — to work, to create, to think, to live their lives for themselves.

It shows that Jo's loneliness isn't just about missing Laurie or being single.

It's about how society limits women's lives and makes them feel incomplete without a man, even when they are talented and ambitious.

It expresses the core message of Little Women: women deserve more choices than just marriage.

7- Beth March

She is the most gentle and pure of the March sisters, not driven by ambition, romance, or rebellion like her sisters, but instead by a deep love for family, home, and goodness. Beth's character shows that strength doesn't always have to be loud or public; it can exist in quiet compassion and resilience.

Beth's symbolism is very important. She represents innocence and moral goodness — a part of childhood and home that is too perfect to survive in the harsh, growing adult world. Her death is not just a tragic event; it marks the end of innocence for the March family. When Beth becomes ill (after caring for a poor family's sick baby), her gentle nature is shown to be almost too good for a world that is often unfair and cruel.

Beth's role is not to achieve personal greatness like Jo, Meg, or Amy, but to be the emotional heart of the family. Her simple acts of kindness — like playing the piano for Mr. Laurence, or caring for others — have huge emotional impacts, showing that small, everyday goodness can change lives just as powerfully as ambition can.

8- Amy March

Amy March is often misunderstood, but in Greta Gerwig's Little Women (2019), she is reimagined as a deeply ambitious, self-aware, and strategic woman. Unlike Jo, who fights loudly against society's expectations, Amy works within those expectations to secure a future of power, stability, and dignity for herself. She understands that as a woman in the 19th century, marriage isn't just about love — it's also about survival and financial security.

the film shows that she is just as hardworking and disciplined as Jo — only her goals are different. She dreams of making great art, but she also understands the reality: women have fewer opportunities, and society will not support her unless she marries well. This doesn't make her shallow; it makes her practical and clear-eyed about the world she lives in.

— *"I'm just a woman... So don't sit there and tell me that marriage isn't an economic proposition, because it is"* — reveals her deep understanding of the limited options available to women. Unlike Jo's rebellion, Amy's strategy is to master society's rules and secure her independence through marriage

10- Narrative Structure

Nonlinear Timeline

The 2019 version does not tell the story in a straight line (chronological order).

Instead, it jumps between two time periods:

The past — when the March sisters are teenagers living at home, full of dreams and innocence.

The present — when they are young adults, dealing with real-world challenges like love, loss, career, and identity.

The film opens not with their childhood (like in the book), but with Jo already in New York, trying to publish her writing.

It mirrors memory — the way we remember the past when facing the future.

It emphasizes emotional connections between past and present.
(For example, Beth's illness scenes in the past are paralleled with her death later — showing how loss shapes Jo's adult life.)

It highlights character growth — by constantly contrasting who the girls were with who they become.

Key Cinematographic Techniques:

• Color Palette:

Past scenes (childhood):
Warm tones — golden, *cozy*, glowing light.
It feels romantic and full of life.

Present scenes (adulthood):
Cooler, bluer tones — colder, starker light.
It feels lonelier, more serious and real.

Meaning:

Color helps the audience immediately feel if they are in a memory or the harder reality of adulthood.

- Natural Lighting:

A lot of scenes use soft, natural light (sunlight through windows, candles, fireplaces).

It makes the March family's world feel real, lived-in, and intimate.

It also gives a sense of warmth and emotional closeness between the sisters.

- Framing and Camera Movement:

Handheld camera is sometimes used, especially in energetic group scenes — like when the sisters are rushing around the house.

It feels messy, joyful, alive — like you're inside their family.

Close-ups are used to capture tiny emotional details — a glance, a tear, a smile.

Wide shots show the beautiful landscapes (beaches, snowy hills) — nature feels big and emotional, just like the sisters' feelings.
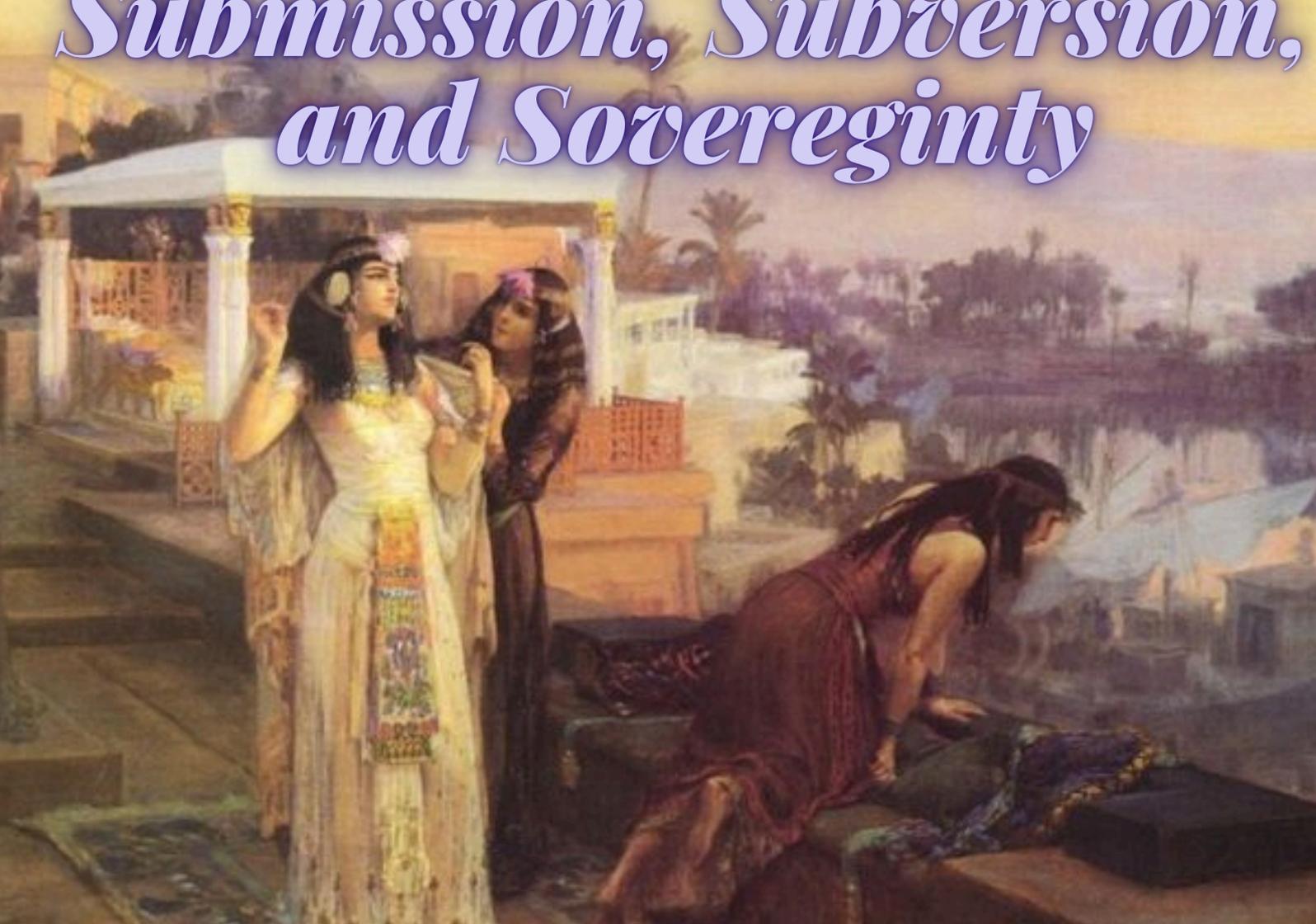
- Symbolic Shots:

Windows, doorways, and thresholds are used a lot — showing the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Scenes with Jo alone (writing or walking) often frame her small against big empty spaces, symbolizing her loneliness and independence.
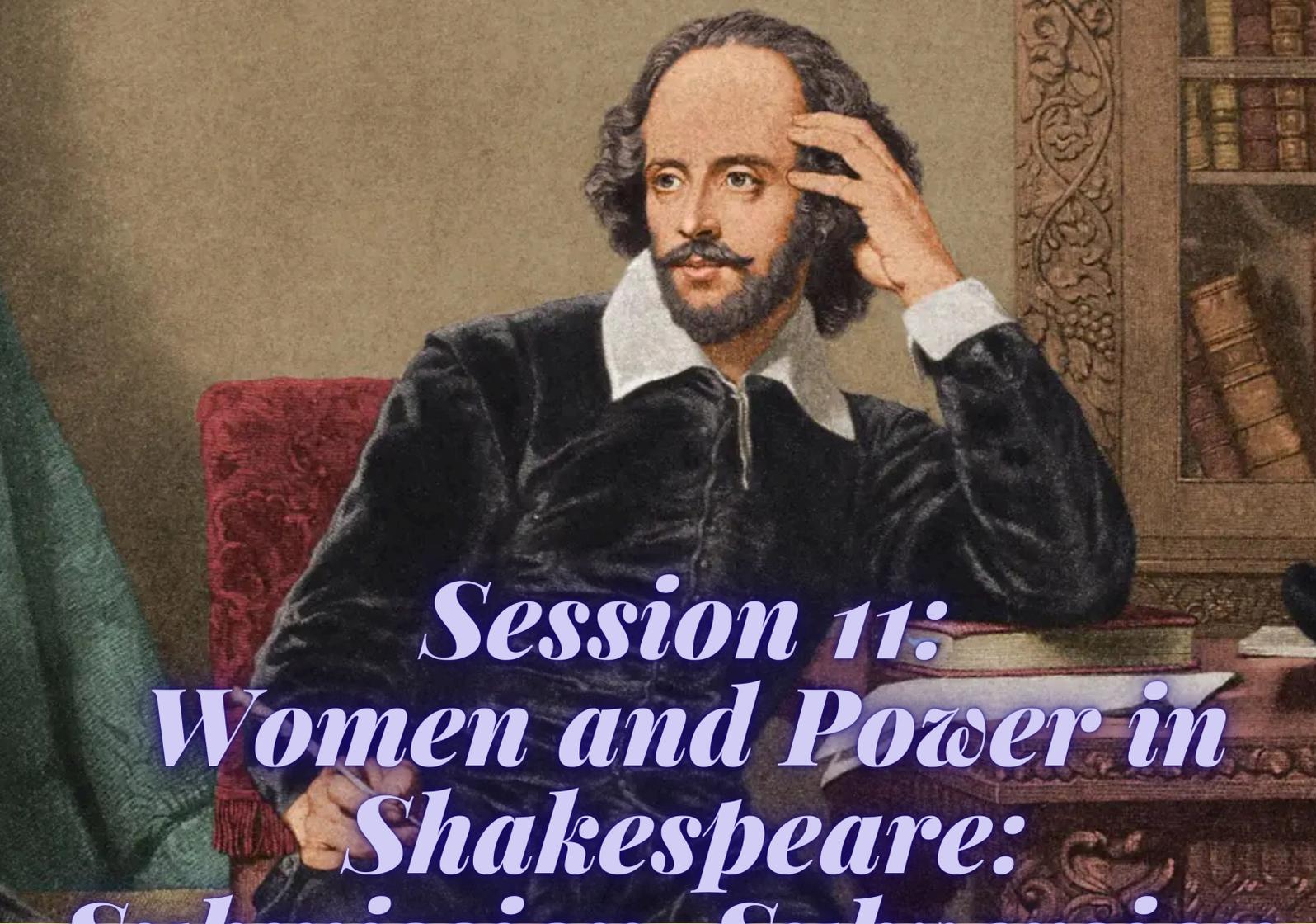
Session 11:
Women and Power in Shakespeare: Submission, Subversion, and Sovereginty

Female Submission in The Taming of the Shrew

Ayşe Subaşı

The Taming of the Shrew through the lens of feminist literary theory, with a particular focus on the theme of _female submission_ in the play: This theme is deeply embedded in the language, structure, and characters of Shakespeare's comedy, and while the play has often been interpreted as a celebration of patriarchy, a closer reading reveals a more complex— and possibly critical— stance on the gender norms of Elizabethan England.

Let's begin with the title: The Taming of the Shrew. It immediately frames the narrative in terms of _control,_ and more specifically, the control of a woman. "Taming" is a word we associate with animals—wild, unruly creatures that must be tamed and made obedient. When applied to Katherine, the so-called "shrew," term which means both uncontrollable woman and a small mouse, becomes dehumanizing. It suggests that a strong-willed woman must be reformed—or rather, subdued—to fit the expectation of the ideal wife in the society.

This is a concept grounded in _patriarchal ideology_, where a woman's worth is judged by her obedience, silence, and service to her husband. By comparing Katherine to something that must be tamed, Shakespeare presents us with a _cultural metaphor_ that equates female resistance with disorder and male dominance with stability.

But is this simply Shakespeare reinforcing the gender norms of his time? Or is he holding up a mirror to them, encouraging his audience—perhaps especially the women in that audience—to question the fairness and logic of such ideas?

The answer is up to you after analyzing the play.

Secondly, let's talk about our main character in the play, Katherine's characterization makes her a threat to patriarchal order. She is sharp-tongued, confronting, and deeply skeptical of the men around her. She refuses to be a commodity in a such patriarchal society, unlike her sister Bianca, who represents the quiet, passive ideal Elizabethan woman.

Katherine's wilderness causes discomfort—not just for the male characters but also for the society around her. She doesn't behave "properly." Her father sees her as a burden; the suitors avoid her. In short, she is a problem to be solved. And this is where Petruchio enters the story—not just as a potential husband, but as a figure of male authority who seeks to restore order by "taming" her by calling himself a hunter taming a falcon.

He uses a variety of techniques—gaslighting, starvation, denial of sleep and clothing— all of which mirror psychological and even physical abuse as if taming an animal. When he denies her food or tells her it's not good enough, when he contradicts everything she says, we see how submission is achieved not through love but through exhaustion and manipulation.

This relationship is presented comedically, but from a feminist standpoint, it is deeply troubling. It exposes how *marriage becomes a tool for domination*, not partnership.

Now let's talk about the nature of marriage in the play. Shakespeare appears to *satirize* the institution of marriage as much as he upholds it.

Katherine's final speech is perhaps the most debated moment in the play. She tells the other women:

"Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee..."

To many readers and viewers, this sounds like complete submission. Katherine praises Petruchio's role and urges other wives to obey their husbands. At first glance, it seems to confirm that she has been thoroughly tamed. But is it possible she's playing a role?

Some feminist scholars suggest that Katherine, rather than being obedient, has learned how to *perform submission* to regain some form of peace or to survive in patriarchal society. By playing the obedient wife, she might be manipulating the very system that tried to control her. In this interpretation, Katherine's intelligence is not defeated but redirected. She understands the rules of the game—and beats them by appearing to accept societal expectations.

In this way, the speech can be read not as a defeat, but as a *strategic survival tactic.* And Shakespeare, by giving her such a complex arc, might be inviting us to see the absurdity and cruelty of a system that forces a brilliant woman to pretend to be obedient in order to be accepted.

In addition, The Taming of the Shrew includes a frame narrative—the Induction—where a drunk tinker named Christopher Sly is tricked into believing he is a nobleman watching a play. This framing suggests that the entire story of Katherine and Petruchio is itself a *performance*, a farce meant to entertain but also to provoke.

Why include this detail? Perhaps Shakespeare is hinting that the taming of women, and the ideals that support it, are themselves *constructed performances*—both socially and theatrically.

By showing how easily gender roles can be performed and manipulated, the play draws attention to the *artificiality of patriarchy*. If gender roles are a performance, then they can be resisted, rewritten, or reimagined.

We should also examine the other female characters. Bianca, the "ideal woman," uses her sweet attitudes to control her suitors. She is not as innocent or submissive as she seems. This contrast between Bianca and Katherine shows that *submission can be just as much of a performance as rebellion*.

Moreover, by giving the most eloquent, emotional, and complex language to Katherine, Shakespeare challenges the audience to sympathize with the woman society calls a "shrew." Her pain, her wit, and her intelligence are central to the play's emotional weight. She is not a one-dimensional villain or joke—she is a full person caught in an oppressive system.

In conclusion, The Taming of the Shrew is not a simple performance of female submission. Instead, Shakespeare invites us to question the fairness of the roles that society assigns to women. Through Katherine, he shows how women are expected to conform, but also how they might *navigate, challenge, or even manipulate* those expectations.

Whether we see the ending as a happy resolution or a tragic capitulation depends on how we interpret Katherine's final speech and the context of the play's performance. What's clear, however, is that Shakespeare was deeply aware of the gender politics of his time—and that The Taming of the Shrew gives us a vivid, troubling, and still relevant look at *how power, gender, and performance are intertwined*.

Reality or Drama?: Cleopatra From a Shakespearean Perspective

Doğa Acar

Comparing two different approaches to Cleopatra, the legendary female figure of Egyptian history: One of the purposes of this presentation is to examine the character of Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt who has survived to this day, in the play Antony and Cleopatra, which William Shakespeare created with the words flowing from his fingers. It is to interpret the perspective of a female character by considering the similarities and differences between reality and drama.

Born in 69 BC, Cleopatra was the last pharaoh to ascend the throne of Egypt. Ancient sources describe her as both an intellectual and talented person. Although she was subjected to prejudiced descriptions by Roman historians, Cleopatra was not only characterized by her beauty, but also by her political intelligence, multilingualism and political consciousness. She is described by famous ancient historians as not just a ruler but as a woman of extraordinary charm and political brilliance. Rome aimed to damage Cleopatra's image according to their own interests. Cleopatra successfully defended her country in the male-dominated political situations of the period and developed romantic relationships with Julius Caesar and Marcus Antony, the most famous rulers of Rome.

William Shakespeare recreated these characters in dramatic ways in his Antony and Cleopatra, written around 1606. Cleopatra is described in this play not only as a queen, but also as a lover who is very much devoted to her love, as a dramatic, jealous for her lover, and then as a tragic heroine. Shakespeare's Cleopatra is different from historical reality. In the play we see

Cleopatra's dramatic scenes with her emotional complexity, sometimes as a woman in power, sometimes as a weak and helpless woman. The keystone of my presentation is that Shakespeare's Cleopatra is made up of fear combined with admiration. This character reflects the Elizabethan theater's and the period's view of the female character, its prejudice against different nationalities, and its stand against the Eastern side. With Cleopatra, Shakespeare portrays both power and gender roles. Throughout the play Cleopatra is presented as a wild, erotic and unlimited threat. In the play, Cleopatra is eroticized by being seen through the male gaze. From a feminist perspective, it is disturbing that the Cleopatra's sexuality is seen as a constant threat. At the same time, the play aims to understand Rome as a "man" with ambition and politics at the center, and Egypt as a "woman" with love and emotions at the center. This reveals the understanding of the female figure of the era. The actual icon of Egypt is Cleopatra. In the play, Egypt and Cleopatra are so identified that Antony does not call Cleopatra by her name, and even in the death scene he uses the name Egypt. For Antony, Cleopatra is a delicious Egyptian dish that he cannot refuse. As one of the examples of the demonization of Cleopatra in the play, in Scene 1, Philo's statement that Antony was the fool of a whore reflects how love for a woman was referred to at that time. In the same way, in the following scene one, in the conversation between Cleopatra and Kharmian, Kharmian says to Cleopatra: "Do everything he says, never defy him." It reflects the role that this period gave to women in relationships. In the following scenes, Cleopatra tells Antony to go to his wife, that she has him in the palm of her hand, and cries out to him as a helpless, poor woman blinded by love. Here we see a behavior that would never suit the real-life Cleopatra. Her jealousy and need for Antony's love is very obvious in the play and Cleopatra's powerlessness is portrayed, but this is quite different from the real life version.

The endgame is one of the most important parts of the presentation. In the last scene Cleopatra kills herself after Antony's , controlling her own destiny.

This scene is consistent with both its historical version and its depiction in the novel. In Act 5 scene 2, Cleopatra says: *"Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have Immortal longings in me."*

With these words, Cleopatra's death appears not as an escape but as a victory. Directing her own death takes her out of the role of a passive and poor woman and makes her an active subject. She protects her body by killing herself, rejecting all the pressures on her feminine self.

In this presentation, I analyzed Cleopatra, based on both historical sources and Shakespeare's narration. In reality an important, powerful and intelligent queen in history, in the text a dramatic, love-slave character. Also Shakespeare immortalized the Cleopatra in the West. Today I tried to explain to you the connection between the historical reality of Cleopatra and the dramatic character created by Shakespeare. This presentation helped me to see Cleopatra from a different perspective. It was a pleasure to study the contrast of Shakespeare's literary interpretation as well as his portrayal of her as a queen of strategy written by history.

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HALO