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FROM MARY SUE TO MARY MAGDALENE: FIRST-PERSON NARRATION IN FEMALE DRAG

NATASHA CHEVIK

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Natasha Chevik

ABSTRACT

FROM MARY SUE TO MARY MAGDALENE:
FIRST-PERSON NARRATION IN FEMALE DRAG

Chevik, Natasha
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This thesis analyzes two bildungsromans – Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* and Alberto Moravia's *Woman of Rome* (both written by male authors, but narrated by female protagonists from a first-person perspective) – through the prism of a Japanese drag performance style *josō buntai*, the Madonna/whore dichotomy embodied in the two protagonists, and a transcivilizational emphasis on the construction of femininities in two different post-WWI nation-building settings (Atatürk's Turkey and Mussolini's Italy).

Keywords: transvestite ventriloquism; male gaze; gender studies; Madonna/whore dichotomy; Reşat Nuri Güntekin; Alberto Moravia.

ÖZ

MARY SUE'DAN MECDELLİ MERYEM'E:
BİRİNCİ ŞAHIS ANLATIMINDA KADIN TAKLİDİ

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Bu çalışmada, her ikisi de erkek yazarlar tarafından birinci tekil kişi bakış açısıyla bir kadının ağzından yazılmış gelişim romanı örnekleri olan Reşat Nuri Güntekin'in *Çalıkuşu* romanı ile Alberto Moravia'nın *Romalı Kadın*, Japon drag performansı (*josō buntai*) stili açısından, iki romanın başkahramanına da biçilen Bakire Meryem/fahişe kompleksi karşılaştırmalı olarak ele alınacaktır. Buna ek olarak, "kadınlık" algılarının iki farklı I. Dünya Savaşı sonrası ulus devletinde (Atatürk'ün Türkiye'si ve Mussolini'nin İtalya'sı) nasıl kurulduğu ve anlaşıldığı medeniyetlerüstülük vurgusu ile ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kadın ağzından erkek yazını; erkek bakışı; cinsiyet çalışmaları; Bakire Meryem/fahişe kompleksi; Reşat Nuri Güntekin; Alberto Moravia.

DEDICATION

To Ariel Melisa, my newly found and infinite source of strength and inspiration.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

It is not uncommon for novelists from both genders to depict a protagonist of the opposite gender who is also a first-person narrator. This kind of narration undoubtedly requires a higher level of empathy and creativity in comparison with narration as a representative of one's own gender. As male authors more commonly engage in literary cross-dressing (or at least their works written in female drag are immensely more popular than the works of female authors written in male drag), I will discuss the common thread that arises in their more or less successful[1] attempts to take on a female voice: they are overly (unnaturally) feminine, or at least feminine within the confines of their own imagination. For this purpose, I will explore the first-person narration of two novels: *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* (originally *Çalıkuşu*, also translated to English as *The Gold Crest*) by the Turkish writer Reşat Nuri Güntekin and *The Woman of Rome* (originally *La Romana*) by the Italian writer Alberto Moravia. Both novels are bildungsromans in which a young woman shares self-reflections and recounts her life, so that the reader can follow her inner (and sometimes physical) journey from childhood and adolescence well into adulthood.

On the one hand, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* depicts the protagonist Feride as a vivacious, unconventional girl who, after she finds out about her fiancé's adultery, goes soul-searching throughout Anatolia as a teacher (which might as well be considered charity work in view of the remoteness of the posts and the salary she receives for her noble efforts to educate the Turkish youth), while desperately shunning potential emotional relationships with men (despite her eccentricities, she is a typical "Mary Sue"[2] character, in the sense that she is an exemplary

[1] Successful according to the general readership and the professional literary critics.

[2] Mary Sue is a perfect heroine (so-called "author insert"), originally a character from a parodical *Star Trek* fan fiction *A Trekkie's Tale*, written by Paula Smith in 1974. While ruminating on the trope in retrospect, Smith concludes that Mary Sue is a phase of the psychological development of young girls who discover their powers (of sexual attraction). In comparison, while Mary Sue characters are usually frowned upon as telltale signs of immature writing, such wish-fulfillment male heroes (e.g. James Bond, Superman) garner success, which she explains with the world we live in: it "is not just a patriarchy; it's a puerarchy – what gets focused on in the culture is defined by boys and young men. Psychologically, there's a turning point in men's lives. There's a point where they need to break away from women in their youth, and then later they come back to women as grown men, but many men never make it, never quite come back to a world that includes women as human beings." See Cynthia W. Walker, "A Conversation with Paula Smith" (*Transformative Works and Cultures*, No. 6, 2011).

woman in early republican Turkey). On the other hand, there is the story of a Mary Magdalene archetype in *The Woman of Rome* set in Italy under Mussolini, as illustrated by Alberto Moravia, who describes the inner turmoil of Adriana – a strikingly beautiful good-hearted woman (a "tart with a heart"[3] character) who, after experiencing a similar disillusionment with love like Feride (she finds out that her fiancé is already married and has a daughter) becomes a prostitute. Both women have unquestionable physical charms (as testified by the multitude of men who constantly pursue them), and both of them fall into the whirlwind of akin life circumstances, but their paths unfold in opposite directions: Feride remains chaste until the very end, faithful to the only man in her life whom she simultaneously loathes and loves desperately; and Adriana unleashes her sensuality and discovers that the love she thought she had felt for her fiancé is, in fact, nothing special or exclusive, as she starts experiencing the same level of affection and desire in her ensuing relations with other men.

The transcivilizational approach of my work employs Turkish and Italian writing through the blueprint of a Japanese concept regarding narration (and onstage performance) in female drag: I will use Rika Saito's analysis of the literary style called *josō buntai* (or "writing in female drag") as an analytical tool. This professor of Japanese language and literature makes a parallel between the use of drag in literature and the performing arts, and the resulting patriarchal premise that even with their flamboyant mannerisms, men (be it writers or *kabuki* actors) depict women more authentically than women depict themselves: "*onnagata* performed an idealized notion of femininity on stage, and people doubted whether female performers could in fact '[act] like a woman'."[4] This resonates with the mechanics of the male gaze, which "projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditionally exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness."[5] I will also consider all the aspects of writing in drag, all the elements that make a given text male or female – is it the gender of the author, the structure of the plot, or the effect it may have on the readers?

[3] This stock character is also known as "hooker with a heart of gold", and as the name implies, it signifies a sex worker with a good, innocent personality that appeals to the other characters, but also to the readers.

[4] Rika Saito, "Writing in Female Drag: Gendered Literature and a Woman's Voice", *Japanese Language and Literature*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2010), p. 150.

[5] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press (1999), p. 837.

Making a clear distinction between women and femininity, the Czech-French novelist Milan Kundera makes a categorization based on the attitude that men have towards them: machos or poets, who praise the idea of (exaggerated, stereotypical) femininity instead of actual women; and misogynists or gynophobes, who do not despise women – as it is commonly misconceived – but rather femininity. Furthermore, he uses Hegel's *Aesthetics* to designate womanizers as either lyrical or epic – a designation I will apply to Güntekin and Moravia as female impersonators (or transvestite ventriloquists). I use these two classifications and Kundera's likening of the male and female gaze to rape and castration, respectively, to scrutinize Güntekin's and Moravia's take on femininity and their portrayal of women.

The heroines of the two novels in question epitomize the infamous Madonna/whore dichotomy; hence, I explore its origin and numerous variations. Although the first literary record of this binary is the Greek myth of Pandora, a psychoanalyst view suggests that it is imbedded in the collective unconscious through the mother-child dynamic (the child sees the mother either as a goddess figure when she provides food and comfort, or a witch when she sets limits and punishes). However, the first to write a detailed study about it is the controversial Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger, who sees the typical woman either as a mother or a prostitute. Therefore, in addition to Saito's (and other authors') notion of female impersonation and the idiosyncrasies thereof, and Kundera's typology, I will also use Weininger's conception of female duality in comparing and contrasting the protagonists of Güntekin and Moravia. Weininger believes that the essence of womanhood has to do with the sexual function of women, and consequently, the characterization he drafts out in his masterpiece (as a matter of fact, his only work, which made him widely popular posthumously) *Sex and Character*, consists of two types of femininity: the mother (dealing with the result of the sexual act) and the prostitute (performing the act itself). Indubitably, there is a common inclination to perceive womanhood in those two extremes – in fact: two sides of the same coin – which were later popularized by the most prominent Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud as the Madonna/whore complex, stemming from his clinical investigations which postdate Weininger's hypothetical categorization by a couple of decades.[6] As much as Weininger can (rightfully) be labeled as a misogynist for this

[6] "Weininger approached Sigmund Freud with an outline of *Sex and Character* in the autumn of 1901. Freud refused to recommend publication, and advised Weininger to spend 'ten years' gathering empirical evidence for his

typology, he places these two polarities at the ends of a very wide spectrum, and furthermore, these are merely types of womanhood, not women themselves.[7] This overly simplified mother-prostitute dichotomy present in philosophy and psychoanalysis is merely the tip of the iceberg of a whole plethora of labels: *angel vs. monster* sprouting from Victorian literature, *Snow White vs. Evil Queen* (and similar *princess vs. wicked witch*) scenarios in folktales and fairy-tales ranging from the brothers Grimm to Walt Disney, *Mary vs. Eve/Lilith* in Christian tradition, and *women as the embodiment of fitna* in Islamic tradition.

These last two religious twists open up a different facet of the patriarchal limitation of the role of females. The Russian-Canadian comparative literature professor Vladimir Tumanov questions the correlation between mythology and biology: have Christian institutions and dogmas (created by men) helped solidify the Madonna/whore dichotomy (as epitomized in Mary – the eternal virgin, and Eve – the inventor of female sexuality[8]) resulting from paternal uncertainty? Cuckold anxiety[9], as identified by Tumanov, finding its creative outlet in religious texts, has trapped women between these two unrealistic binary oppositions. On the other hand, female sexuality in Islamic cultures has similar negative connotations too, and women are viewed as holders of family honor – as a marker of how well their men keep them under control. Thus, mate guarding strategies are at play, such as: veiling, limiting and monitoring male and female interactions, restricting women's rights, etc. in order to prevent *fitna* (in this sense, havoc caused by a woman let loose) from happening.

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assertions. 'The world', Freud said, 'wants evidence, not thoughts.' Weininger retorted that he would prefer to write ten other books in the next ten years." See David Abrahamsen, *The Mind and Death of a Genius* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1946), p. 55.

[7] Every woman contains elements of both types in different ratios, in the same way that every person – both men and women alike – contains a certain degree of feminine and masculine personality traits, where nothing is rigid and set in stone, but rather gradual and fluctuating, oscillating between the two extremes. Weininger stresses this in a letter to Friedrich Jodl – he "cautiously set out his theory of the 'ethical dualism' between M and W, his abbreviations for the ideal (Platonic) types of Man and Woman. He talks of 'ethical phenomenology' which he perceives as 'a kind of biology of ideals' [...] As the letter to Jodl shows, his typology of M and W was not as black-and-white to begin with as it then turned out in *Sex and Character*." See Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character: An Investigation of Fundamental Principles*, trans. Ladislaus Löb (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), p. XV.

[8] Vladimir Tumanov. "Mary Versus Eve: Paternal Uncertainty and the Christian View of Women", *Neophilologus*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (2011), p. 2.

[9] It seems as though writing is an anxiety-ridden (or anxiety-driven) endeavor: from the male anxiety of influence to the female anxiety of authorship (discussed in the first chapter), culminating in the explicitly male castration and cuckold anxieties (in the second and third chapter, respectively), the former creating the well-known male gaze, and the latter – the Madonna/whore dichotomy.

Bearing in mind that literary, religious, and cultural traditions are often intertwined, the following hypothesis arises: is the portrayal of the writer in drag conditioned by his cultural background (in terms of language/literature and religion)? Is cuckoldry so deeply ingrained in the collective unconscious of the Judeo-Christian tradition that authors like Moravia (and furthermore, the Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho in his *Eleven Minutes*, the American-Jewish writer Arthur Golden in *Memoirs of a Geisha*, etc.) are obsessed with the image of the prostitute, the elusive woman; whereas the Islamicate[10] mindset is only capable of positing and portraying its counterpart of a virginal (yet motherly) girl-woman with exquisite self-control, as exemplified in *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* by Güntekin (and moreover, a novel with a similar plot – *The Call of the Curlew* by the Egyptian writer Taha Hussein)? Certainly, there are more variables at play, so instead of labeling the two novels and their respective female depictions as either Christian or Muslim, and (even more crudely) Western or Eastern, the analysis in question will deal with the nuances of the two exemplars in the unique historical context of their time.

Wars often result in redefinition of the gender roles by causing a disruption of the usual behavioral patterns, and one of the reasons why I have chosen these two novels is the post-WWI nation-building setting they share, however with singular nationalist ideologies that give rise to different female prototypes. These two different milieus, or more specifically, Atatürk's Turkey and Mussolini's Italy, bring to mind the Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy[11] – and I will use those two concepts while analyzing the two protagonists and the socio-political settings of their stories. Likewise, both women can be identified with an array of mythological and religious archetypes, most of which correspond with the culture they – Feride and Adriana – originate from.

Lastly, I ponder on the impact these novels have on the general public, especially as bestsellers. The American writer Kurt Vonnegut has come up with a story-mapping coordinate plane, with the X axis representing time (past to future) and the Y axis the experience (bad to good), inspired

[10] The term "Islamicate" was first introduced by the American historian and scholar of Islam – Marshall Hodgson – referring "not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims." See Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, Volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 59.

[11] This philosophical dualism inspired by Greek mythology (namely, Zeus's two sons), as conceptualized by Friedrich Nietzsche in his work *The Birth of Tragedy*, is the foundation of art when the ideals represented by Apollo and Dionysus reach a balance.

by the Bible's resemblance to Cinderella in terms of the emotional ups and downs of the plot line.[12] The results of a computer-conducted research that identified the story arcs (as outlined and named by Vonnegut) of around 2000 novels, indicate that most authors prefer the narrative pattern "Rags to Riches" (rising curve), but when it comes to the most popular patterns among readers, those are the slightly more complicated "Cinderella" (rise, fall, rise), "Oedipus" (fall, rise, fall), and "Man in a Hole" (fall then rise). Not surprisingly, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* and *The Woman of Rome* fall into the readers' favorite categories ("Cinderella" and "Oedipus"). In addition, these two novels are written in the form of a diary and a memoir, which makes them even more convincing and appealing to women – who, purportedly, are the most avid writers and readers of diaries. Literature is a powerful means of propaganda, and it is easy to overlook the covert, but nonetheless potent element of gaslighting.[13] Even though some women aspire to the idealized prototypes presented in these two books, or at least believe that there is no female reality beyond them, in the end, they can choose to be active agents instead of passive victims of the construction of femininity, and that can happen only if they write their own stories.

[12] The creation myth is comparable to the fairy godmother bestowing glass slippers and other necessities for the ball upon Cinderella; the fall from Eden corresponds to the stroke of midnight at the ball; the expected redemption through the Messiah is epitomized in Prince Charming revealing Cinderella's identity and their happily-ever-after.

[13] Although gaslighting nowadays covers a wide spectrum of behaviors, the term itself originates from a very specific example of interpersonal manipulation: "The concept of gaslighting was derived first from Hamilton's (1939) play *Angel Street* and later from the 1944 movie *Gaslight* starring Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman. In both the play and the movie, the victim's husband manipulated the gaslight in a way that made his wife's complaint about it seem as if she were going insane. The husband's aim was to have her committed to a mental hospital so that he could gain her property for himself. Several British authors employ the terms *gaslighting* or *gas light phenomenon* to describe those situations in which one individual attempts to make others feel that a second individual is insane so that the latter will be taken to a mental hospital. Later studies in England and the United States considerably broadened the boundary of the gaslighting concept." See Theodore L. Dorpat, *Gaslighting, the Double Whammy, Interrogation and Other Methods of Covert Control in Psychotherapy and Analysis* (North Bergen, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc., 1996), pp. 31–32.

1. ASPECTS OF TRANSVESTITE VENTRILOQUISM

Narration is always partly a construction, and one cannot put an equal sign between the real-life writer and the fictitious storyteller, not even in autobiographies. "The real question is whether or not the narrator can use the first person to designate one of his characters."[14] Based on this, there are two types of narrators: heterodiegetic (the narrator is absent from the story, also known as third-person narrator) and homodiegetic (the narrator is a character), with autodiegetic as its subtype (the narrator is the main character). Both Feride and Adriana are autodiegetic narrators.

In the following chapters I will refer to autodiegetic narration in drag as transvestite ventriloquism – I borrowed this metaphor from Elizabeth Harvey, a scholar of English literature and feminist theory, who makes a "historical and theoretical study of male appropriations of the feminine voice in English texts of the early modern period."[15] While Harvey mainly focuses on classical and Renaissance texts written in English, and juxtaposes them to twentieth-century feminist theorizations of voice, I analyze one Turkish and one Italian post-WWI novel, within the theoretical framework of drag in stage performances and the Madonna/whore dichotomy to which ventriloquized impersonations are prone.

The negative examples that Harvey holds against male ventriloquists are somewhat dated, because men have certainly progressed a lot during the last two centuries. One of the literary theorists who engage in apologetics of male authors exploring (but not necessarily writing from) the female perspective, is Alan Williamson, who discusses the difficulties that they inevitably encounter. He repudiates the backlash of feminists by saying that

> [f]eminist criticism has felt the need to emphasize how hard it is for men *really* to imagine what women experience. It has been quick to smell preemption, rather than legitimate empathy, whenever male writers attempt to represent a female point of view. They fear that they will perpetuate stereotypes, offer up straw men, or rather straw

[14] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (trans. Jane E. Lewin, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 244.

[15] Elizabeth D. Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London, UK: Routledge, 1992), p. 1.

> women, so that the patriarchal side can have the last word, or, at best, steal insights women writers deserve the chance to express for themselves.[16]

In a way he implies that feminists who blame men for creating a cookie-cutter image for them to fit in, are actually victims who have become perpetrators, in that men who are constantly blamed for being sexist and patriarchal start/keep seeing themselves (and acting) as such.

There is also a psychoanalytical aspect of the urge to write as a woman, which almost makes writing in drag a form of therapy, or a means to channel the bottled-up emotions occurring after the age of six. Williamson resorts to the work of the psychoanalyst Jessica Benjamin, who traces the roots of male authors' female identification in the oedipal stage:

> During the oedipal stage, "commonality between son and mother" exists which includes "emotional attunement, sharing states of mind, empathically assuming the other's position, and imaginatively perceiving the other's needs and feelings". These are character traits which are commonly associated with women, and during the oedipal stage the male child posses these traits in relation to his mother. However, once the oedipal stage is over, the male must identify with his father and his masculine side which leads to grief over the lost bond with his mother. The male child either turns this grief into anger – which is the negative effect, or he tries to regain the bond he shared with his mother by re-identifying with women – which is the positive effect.[17]

I would juxtapose Benjamin's stance with that of Kaja Silverman, an art historian and critical theorist who hypothesizes that even though the mother is her child's first language teacher, commentator of everyday life, and narrator of nursery rhymes and bedtime stories, as the male child grows he reduces the female voice to infantile gibberish. More precisely, Silverman argues that

> the male subject later hears the maternal voice through himself – that it comes to resonate for him with all that he transcends through language. In other words, through a symmetrical gesture to that whereby the child "finds" its "own" voice by introjecting the mother's voice, the male subject subsequently "refines" his "own" voice by projecting

[16] Alan Williamson, *Almost a Girl: Male Writers and Female Identification* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001), p. 2.

[17] Cheryl Lange, "Men and Women Writing Women: The Female Perspective and Feminism in U.S. Novels and African Novels in French by Male and Female Authors", *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research XI* (2008), p. 2.

> onto the mother's voice all that is unassimilable to the paternal position. [...] In this case, what must be thus jettisoned is the vocal and auditory "afterbirth" which threatens to contaminate the order and system of "proper" speech. Thus, whereas the mother's voice initially functions as the acoustic mirror in which the child discovers its identity and voice, it later functions as the acoustic mirror in which the male subject hears all the repudiated elements of his infantile babble. [...] The female voice can become a dumping ground for disowned desires, as well as for the remnants of verbal incompetence.[18]

1.1. Origin of Drag

There is a certain similarity in the style of male authors and actors who impersonate a female character in writing and on stage. To fully illuminate narration in drag, I will delve into the etymology of "drag" (that further on inspired the idiom "in drag"). The word supposedly originated in the Victorian era (it was first found in print in the 1870s when, by some accounts, its sartorial connotation "might have arisen from the fact that such costumes could not be worn in public, and thus had to be dragged about in trunks from theater to theater",[19] and by others, it was used "in reference to the dragging sensation of long skirts on the ground, an unfamiliar sensation to men[20]; even though initially it referred only to the wearing of female attire by men mostly for comic purposes, later on it became a unisex term – hence, the use of male and female drag), but drag itself was present in England earlier – as a common stage practice in the Elizabethan era; however, it is a cross-cultural phenomenon, as the Ancient Greeks[21] were the ones who

[18] Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 81.

[19] Mark Morton, *The Lover's Tongue: A Merry Romp through the Language of Love and Sex* (London, ON: Insomniac Press, 2003), p. 204.

[20] Michael Quinion, "Drag", *World Wide Words: Investigating the English Language across the Globe*, http://www.worldwidewords.org/qa/qa-dra1.htm, 03.04.1999.

[21] Refuting accusations by some feminist critics that the Greek theater banished women from the *polis* (public sphere) and confined them to the *oikos* (household), there is a hypothesis that the association of theater with Dionysus (the androgynous god "whose essential function is to dissolve and confuse polarities") is to be blamed for men playing both male and female roles. "The Dionysian principle is feminine and also dyadic, that is, it constantly intermingles two factors, principles which are themselves part of an essential unity. Tragedy must therefore embody that conflict and realize the principle of the dyad 'not as two separate exponents but as a single human personality'." Tragedy evolved from manic Dionysian rites, in which "woman will either 'experience the most intense intoxication when everything that maddens and harrows her soul begins to subside and die, and, devastated she will awake and be reborn as someone else – or else she will kill, and in this holy slaying will find her ultimate emancipation, purification, catharsis'." The belief that women are "weaker than men in the sublunary world, but are more powerful in the divine sphere, capable of driving men to madness" is what made them perform the Dionysian religious rites, whereas men performed in the theater, because "by acting out tragic episodes, the male actors' psyches would not be

popularized theatrical transvestism long before Shakespeare. On the other side of the world, there is drag in the Sino-Japanese theatrical tradition, which persisted well into the twentieth century (whereas by that time in Europe naturalism in theater obviated drag performances).

The Scottish philosopher and economist Adam Smith notes that "there are some very agreeable and beautiful talents of which the possession commands a certain sort of admiration; but of which the exercise for the sake of gain is considered, whether from reason or prejudice, as a sort of public prostitution."[22] The social stigma of opera singers (performing artists in general, and athletes too) that has persisted for centuries was caused by two irrationalities: aristocratic class prejudice (the belief that respectable people – those with inherited wealth, obviously – can use their physical talents as leisure, but not for moneymaking) and fear of the body and its passions (especially the female body, although male performers were not entirely spared from the stigma either). I will look into the case of opera singers, more precisely, opera singers in drag – as they are considered the touchstone of femininity in the writing style *josō buntai*: "Female singers were considered unacceptable during the early history of opera; indeed, they were just displacing the castrati in Smith's lifetime, and they were widely perceived as amoral women. Male actors, singers, and dancers suffered too."[23]

Similarly, in China "the early Qing emperors' repeated prohibitions banished women from the imperial stage (with a few notable exceptions), because the Manchu rulers were concerned about female performers' sexual appeal, which was said to threaten social morality."[24] However, despite the fact that with the collapse of the Qing Empire and the advent of the Chinese Republic in 1912, the ban on actresses was lifted, and the intellectuals called for abolishing female impersonation (seeing it as an embarrassing remnant of the previous era that would keep them separated from the Western world), what followed was "the epoch of *nandan*" (male opera

imperiled by the loss of self undergone in rituals." See Laurence Senelick. *The Changing Room: Sex, Drag and Theatre* (London, UK: Routledge, 2000), p. 41; 42.

[22] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (1977), p. 152.

[23] Martha C. Nussbaum, "'Whether from Reason or Prejudice': Taking Money for Bodily Services", *Journal of Legal Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1998), p. 699.

[24] Guanda Wu, "Should *Nandan* Be Abolished? The Debate over Female Impersonation in Early Republican China and Its Underlying Cultural Logic", *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Spring 2013), p. 190.

singers impersonating women in the renowned Peking opera), with the most notable *nandan* being Mei Lanfang, who performed all around the world for heads of state and Hollywood stars in the 1920s and 1930s.

1.2. *Josō Buntai*

When it comes to narration in drag, Rika Saito tries to answer the question whether femininity is a learned behavior (in response to male expectations) or an inherent trait, by finding evidence in favor of the former in the Meiji period (1868–1912), "when male writers envisioned female writers, they found it difficult, if not impossible, to look beyond the feminine ideal. They thus sought to feminize female writers and their literary enterprises, creating a fantastic portrayal of women's femininity in the process."[25] As one of the best examples of this phenomenon (which I only use to highlight the degree to which the female experience is marginalized, without elaborating further on female writers in this thesis), Saito lists the advice the author Nakarai Tōsui offered to his protégé Higuchi Ichiyō on the naturalness of her characters:

> Why don't you go to the all-female Misaki Theater to observe the way women act? When playing a male role, the actress does a better job than generally expected, but she does not play a female role as well as a male kabuki actor. Her female role performance tends to be unfeminine because she behaves and speaks just as she would in her everyday life. A female writer tends to do the same; she is not really careful about writing female speech, writing lines she usually speaks without considering her femininity. For this reason, female speech in a female writer's text comes across as unfeminine. While everyday female speech does not sound that inappropriate when spoken, it seems very improper when written in literary texts.
> In the passage above, Tōsui suggests that Ichiyō improve the femininity of her writing by comparing the performances of the actress to the *onnagata*.[26]

The *onnagata* in the Kabuki theater are the Japanese counterpart of the *nandan* in the Peking opera,[27] and Tōsui's praise of *onnagata*'s drag performance and seemingly bizarre suggestion to

[25] Saito, "Writing in Female Drag", p. 149.

[26] Ibid., pp. 149–150.

[27] Contemporary *nandan* trying to revive this almost extinct performance style, have a similar opinion like Tōsui: "The Xun school performer Yin Jun points out that men pay greater attention to conveying femininity and consequentially have a more exquisite stage presence. 'Women playing women is life. Men playing women is art',

Ichiyō (herself a woman, which, apparently does not automatically translate as having a feminine style) indicate that he "was explicitly aware of gender as cultural practice rather than anatomical essence. [...] Femininity, in his view, was to be acquired and demonstrated, rather than naturally given or assumed; his metaphor of drag performances in the theater is particularly effective as a manifesto of performative rather than essentialist gender theory." [28] His belief is the basis of a literary form appropriate for women (depicting the ideal woman through the lens of a man) defined by the Japanese sociologist Seki Reiko as *josō buntai* ("writing in female drag" or "feminized discourse"):

> According to Seki, female drag is defined as the *normative feminine expressions created by male writers to represent femaleness* (e.g. texts narrated by a woman or written about a female protagonist). But Seki's use of the term *josō*, female drag, is applied to women writers only, and indicates a practice that enforces the normative and is thereby suppressive. As I will use the term, 'female drag' corresponds to the feminine ideal – such as that embodied by the *onnagata* in the *kabuki* theater – and is used by both male and female writers to create a "genuine" femininity. [...]
> Writing in female drag derives from a form of narrative transvestism or literary masquerade. Whereas the terms – transvestism and masquerade – are distinct, both represent the tools utilized in the creation of an equivocal identification of writing subjects.[29]

Rika Saito concludes that "the female drag writing style was likely invented by male writers originally to impose their view of femininity on women. Then, a bit ironically, the style was adopted by women writers because they recognized its value for themselves."[30] This would explain why female readers readily and eagerly consume novels like *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, *The Woman of Rome*, *Eleven Minutes*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Call of the Curlew*, etc. – because they like identifying themselves with the mellow and sappy (yet idealized) version of femininity with which male authors are (most likely unintentionally) brainwashing them.

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the 22-year-old says." See Zhang Zixuan, "Curtain Call", *China Daily*, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/life/2010-04/08/content_9701467.htm, 08.04.2010.

[28] Atsuko Sakaki, *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese Polarity in Japanese Literature* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), p. 209.

[29] Saito, "Writing in Female Drag", p. 151.

[30] Ibid., p. 167.

1.2.1. Female Characters as Simulacra

The femininities that the transvestite ventriloquists depict are, in fact, simulacra – copies of something that never actually existed (the notion of extravagant femininity exists only in their minds); nonetheless, copies that seem so real that it is difficult to differentiate between the real and the fake, especially when there is a general preference for the fake (for instance, real women strive to reach that non-existent ideal version of themselves; a mundane example of this would be a woman undergoing plastic surgery to look like Jessica Rabbit, Barbie, or another imaginary character – this should only illustrate the inanity of attributing validity to those standards). Thus, men's vision of women becomes hyperreality – more real than the real (women); even more so, this distorted vision becomes a litmus test, the standard according to which women should act. Simulacrum was coined by the French theorist Jean Baudrillard, who makes an interesting statement about the simulacrum of divinity:

> "I forbade that there be any simulacra in the temples because the divinity that animates nature can never be represented." Indeed it can be. But what becomes of the divinity when it reveals itself in icons, when it is multiplied in simulacra? Does it remain the supreme power that is simply incarnated in images as a visible theology? Or does it volatilize itself in the simulacra that, alone, deploy their power and pomp of fascination – the visible machinery of icons substituted for the pure and intelligible Idea of God? This is precisely what was feared by Iconoclasts, whose millennial quarrel is still with us today. This is precisely because they predicted this omnipotence of simulacra, the faculty simulacra have of effacing God from the conscience of man, and the destructive, annihilating truth that they allow to appear – that deep down God never existed, that only the simulacrum ever existed, even that God himself was never anything but his own simulacrum - from this came their urge to destroy the images.[31]

In the fashion of true iconoclasts, feminist critics try to break free from the omnipresent and omnipotent, confining and conflicting images of femininity with no reality behind them.

A noteworthy case of simulacrum is featured in David Henry Hwang's play *M. Butterfly*, in which a heterosexual French diplomat falls in love with a *nandan* performer, oblivious to the fact that he is a man and a spy (who uses him for gathering intelligence): "Song Liling female

[31] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Michigan, US: University of Michigan Press, 1884), p. 5.

impersonation is perfect, because the Chinese actor knows what is perfect to the Western mind and, moreover, because Gallimard intends it to be perfect. 'I'm a man who loved a woman created by a man. Everything else falls short', he exclaims in the end."[32] In a similar way, Güntekin and Moravia know what is perfectly feminine to the Turkish and Italian mind, and real-life women fall short of this simulacrum of femininity.

1.3. Male Orgastic Patterns of Narratives vs. *Écriture Féminine*

But what exactly defines a text as masculine or feminine? The American author Susan Winnett studies the orgastic pattern of *male* pleasure that creates a baseline of traditional narratives (arousal, discharge, and quiescence, corresponding to the dynamics of beginnings, middles, and ends in stories). According to her, the basis for this technique lies the fact that female (unlike male) orgasm is extraneous to the culmination of intercourse, hence, that libidinal economy extends to the relationship (metaphorical copulation) of writers and readers, which indicates that "the pleasure the reader is expected to take in the text is the pleasure of the man."[33] This (falsely) implies that the male response/pleasure is universal, and the bond created between the writer and the reader is homoaesthetic.

In a similar vein, long before Winnett, the French literary theorist Roland Barthes has addressed the pleasure of the text by creating patrilineal imagery – the Oedipus complex and Noah's curse on Ham and Canaan (his son and grandson) from the Book of Genesis.

> The pleasure of the text is not the pleasure of the corporeal striptease or of narrative suspense. In these cases, there is no tear, no edges: a gradual unveiling: the entire excitation takes refuge in the *hope* of seeing the sexual organ (schoolboy's dream) or in knowing the end of the story (novelistic satisfaction). Paradoxically (since it is mass-consumed), this is a far more intellectual pleasure than the other: an Oedipal pleasure (to denude, to know, to learn the origin and the end), if it is true that every narrative (every unveiling of the truth) is a staging of the (absent, hidden, or hypostatized) father – which would explain the solidarity of narrative forms, of family structures, and of prohibitions

[32] Ilka Saal, "Performance and Perception: Gender, Sexuality, and Culture in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*", *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 4, Engendering Manhood (1998), p. 634.

[33] Susan Winnett, "Coming Unstrung: Women, Men, Narrative, and Principles of Pleasure", *PMLA*, Vol. 105, No. 3, Special Topic: The Politics of Critical Language (May 1990), pp. 506–507.

> of nudity, all collected in our culture in the myth of Noah's sons covering his nakedness.[34]

Winnett discusses novels that do not follow the male dynamics, e.g. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* that due to its lack of resolution got negative critique, and analyzes two typically female phenomena – birth and breastfeeding – that can be analogous to female narratives: repetitive, and sometimes having beginnings and ends that overlap.

> Both birth and breastfeeding manifest dynamic patterns not unlike those described in the various orgastic sequences I cite above. Yet because they do not culminate in a quiescence that can bearably be conceptualized as a simulacrum of death, they neither need nor can confer on themselves the kind of retrospective significance attained by analogy with the pleasure principle. Indeed, as sense-making operations, both are radically *prospective*, full of the incipience that the male model will see resolved in its images of detumescence and discharge. Their ends (in both senses of the word) are, quite literally, beginning itself. With this change of focus, the "middle" and its repetitions too must be conceptualized anew. Breastfeeding involves much repetition without, I am told, all that much difference. Furthermore, it is stimulated by the demand of a very dependent other rather than by one's own desire. And its pleasure – which, I hear, is considerable – may well be why women keep doing it, but not why they are encouraged to.
>
> Both breastfeeding and birth involve the potentially – but not necessarily – satisfying presence of another, and not simply the other who makes intercourse perhaps more gratifying than, but not essentially different from, masturbation.[35]

The discharge (or climax and plot resolution) is equally important as the arousal (rising action in the story line), and in a different context, the American social critic Camille Paglia notes that "male tumescence is an assertion of the separateness of objects. An erection is architectural, sky-pointing. Female tumescence, through blood or water, is slow, gravitational, amorphous. In the war for human identity, male tumescence is an instrument, female tumescence an obstruction."[36] When applied to the orgastic pattern of narratives, the male pleasure most closely corresponds with the conventional plot outline.

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[34] Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York, NY: Hill and Wang 1975), p. 10.

[35] Winnett, "Coming Unstrung, p. 509.

[36] Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 91.

Comparatively, "in France writers such as Hélène Cixous advocate an *écriture féminine,* a style of writing that cultivates difference, as if to capture the fluidity of the female body, with its experience of blood, milk, and cycles."[37] *Écriture feminine* (literally meaning "feminine writing", in fact "female practice of writing"; but also known as "white ink", alluding to breast milk – as women are always mothers, not always literally, but as "source of goods"[38]) favors cyclical, decentered, non-linear narratives that defy the rules of phallogocentrism. In her distinguished feminist essay "The Laugh of the Medusa", Cixous prompts women to write (and thus reclaim their bodies and lives), likening the desire to write with the gestation drive:

> Oral drive, anal drive, vocal drive – all these drives are our strengths, and among them is the gestation drive – just like the desire to write: a desire to live self from within, a desire for the swollen belly, for language, for blood. We are not going to refuse, if it should happen to strike our fancy, the unsurpassed pleasures of pregnancy which have actually been always exaggerated or conjured away – or cursed – in the classic texts. For if there's one thing that's been repressed here's just the place to find it: in the taboo of the pregnant woman.[39]

As compelling as it sounds, one of the drawbacks of *écriture féminine* (or perhaps its advantage?) is that it cannot be defined: "It is impossible to *define* a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, coded – which doesn't mean that it doesn't exist."[40] Despite this problematic undefinability, there are, nevertheless, certain gender markers in language use that distinguish between male and female writing. First of all, according to recent findings, there are lexical and syntactic features that indicate the gender of the author of the text: men typically use more noun specifiers (determiners, numbers, modifiers), whereas women use comparatively more negation, pronouns and certain prepositions.[41] Secondly, there is the issue of topics, and another study confirms the gender stereotypes because its results "overwhelmingly suggest that women tend to write about domestic

[37] Elaine Hoffman Baruch, *Women, Love, and Power: Literary and Psychoanalytic Perspectives* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1991), p. 237.

[38] Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4. (Summer 1976), p. 881.

[39] Ibid., p. 891.

[40] Ibid., p. 883.

[41] The researchers used machine learning methods to categorize an unseen text as being authored by a male or by a female with approximately 80% accuracy. See Moshe Koppel, Shlomo Argamon, and Anat Rachel Shimoni, "Automatically Categorizing Written Texts by Author Gender", *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (2002), p. 406; 409.

issues and affairs of the heart, while men thrive in writing about 'serious' issues such as politics."[42]

In relation to my topic, it would be difficult to gauge the linguistic female markers in the two novels, as they are originally written in Turkish and Italian, but they are widely acknowledged as impressively convincing, despite conforming to male narratology regarding the principle of pleasure (there is a certain resolution in both novels). When it comes to feminine themes, however, I notice a high degree of idealization of motherhood (as the pinnacle of femininity) in both novels. The romanticized maternal instinct is apparent in Feride's description of the feelings for her adopted daughter: "It is impossible to express what I felt as I pressed that beautiful little girl in my arms. It was as though a hot spring was boiling in the depths of my heart. There was a kind of fire in my breast, bringing tears to my eyes and making me catch my breath."[43] Adriana too is positively overwhelmed by the prospect of becoming a mother (making generalizing statements about all women):

> It was the same feeling which fills the hearts of all women with hope and satisfaction when they learn that they are pregnant. Certainly my child would be born in the least favorable conditions imaginable; but he would still be my child, I would be the one who had given him birth, and I would educate him and delight in him. A child is always a child, I thought, and no woman, however poor she is, however desperate her circumstances and uncertain her future, however abandoned and unprovided for, can help being happy at the idea of giving birth to a child.[44]

[42] The authors of this study analyzed 10,287 book reviews published in *The New York Times* between 2000 and 2015. tracing the most distinctive words used to describe books written by men versus women: "Book reviewers are three or four times more likely to use words like 'husband', 'marriage', and 'mother' to describe books written by women between 2000 and 2009, and nearly twice as likely to use words like 'love', 'beauty', and 'sex'. Conversely, reviewers are twice as likely to use words like 'president' and 'leader', as well as 'argument' and 'theory', to describe books written by men." See Andrew Piper and Richard Jean So, "Women Write about Family, Men Write about War", *The New Republic*, https://newrepublic.com/article/132531/women-write-family-men-write-war, 08.04.2016.

[43] Reşat Nuri Güntekin. *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, trans. Sir Wyndham Deedes (London, UK: Allen & Unwin, 1949), p. 165.

[44] Alberto Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, trans. Lydia Holland and Tami Calliope (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Italia, 1999), p. 397.

1.3.1. Sentimentality in Good-Cry Novels

Also focusing on the connection between the writer and the reader, although not on the pleasure derived, but rather on the cathartic effect those writings have, the American literary and feminist scholar Robyn R. Warhol describes feminine discourse (regardless of the author's sex) as sentimental, usually found in the so-called good-cry novels.

> Gender gets produced and reproduced through countless cultural patterns, including narrative strategies associated with texts that are marked within a given culture as "masculine" (such as adventure stories) or "feminine" (such as good-cry novels like *The Color Purple*). Narratology provides a useful vocabulary for describing the ways this works.
> Sentimental narrative discourse requires a particular handling of "internal focalization", narratology's term for narrative discourse conveying the perceptions (vision, thoughts, feelings, etc.) not of the narrator but of a character, regardless of whether the discourse is in the narrator's or the character's voice. Scenes in sentimental novels tend to be focalized either through victims or triumphant figures who have formerly been represented as oppressed. This focalization invites the reader to participate emotionally from the subject-position of the oppressed, in the diegetic good times and the bad. Sentimental novels can use embedded first-person narratives to achieve this effect.[45]

If feminine narratives are sentimental, and sentimentality is achieved through the focalization of a victim (be it present or former), the femininity of the given text lies in the self-identification as a victim, or the empathy one feels for victims.

She further defends sentimentalism as reinforcing essentially positive values, even though it is often associated with bad writing,[46] or used as a means of manipulation.

[45] Robyn R. Warhol, "How Narration Produces Gender: Femininity as Affect and Effect in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*", *Narrative*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Contemporary Narratology (May 2001), p. 183.

[46] The Nobel laureate VS Naipaul, during an interview at the Royal Geographic Society, has stated that not only can he infer whether a text is authored by a woman within a paragraph, but also that "this was because of 'women's 'sentimentality, the narrow view of the world. And inevitably for a woman, she is not a complete master of a house, so that comes over in her writing too', he said. He added: 'My publisher, who was so good as a taster and editor, when she became a writer, lo and behold, it was all this feminine tosh'." See Amy Fallon, "VS Naipaul Finds No Woman Writer His Literary Match – Not Even Jane Austen", *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/jun/02/vs-naipaul-jane-austen-women-writers, 02.06.2011.

> That is why I'd call it a "feminine narrative", as it enforces and reinforces the physical experience of an emotion the culture marks as specifically feminine. The "femininity" of the text is not linked to the "femaleness" of the author or characters, nor to the sex of the presumed readers' bodies: it is a narrative effect.
> To those who ask, "What's 'good' about 'the good cry'?" I respond (only somewhat self-consciously) that the ideals of sentimental culture – the affirmation of community, the persistence of hopefulness and of willingness, the belief that everyone matters, the sense that life has a purpose that can be traced to the links of affection between and among persons – are good ideals. Sentimentalism has a bad reputation, among general readers and critics alike; it is no coincidence that Steig, for one, reports resenting Dickens's "manipulation" of his tears. To be sure, sentimentalism is often exploited in order to promote agendas far less progressive than Walker's or even Dickens's. If manipulators of public sentiment unscrupulously deploy the narrative techniques of the sentimental tradition in the service of nationalism, capitalism, and commercialism, however, that does not drain the techniques themselves (or their potential affective impact upon actual audiences) of value. Becoming more conscious of how those techniques achieve their effects does not render readers immune to them, but it can offer us the opportunity to affirm "feelings" that constitute what is worth preserving from traditional feminine culture.[47]

1.4. Pen as a Metaphorical Penis and Female Anxiety of Authorship

Not only the (male/female) structure of the text and the (masculine/feminine) effect it provokes can assume a gender role, but also the talent for authorship. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar offer a feminist perspective on the power of the writer; the opening sentence of their most famous work *The Madwoman in the Attic* stirred some controversy: "Is a pen a metaphorical penis?",[48] and several pages later a rephrasing of the question: "If the pen is a metaphorical penis, with what organ can females generate texts?"[49] The former question was inspired by the English (Victorian) poet Gerard Manley Hopkin's belief that the male quality (which marks off men from women) is the creative gift, which leads Gilbert and Gubar to the conclusion that "the patriarchal notion that the writer 'fathers' his text just as God fathered the world is and has been all-pervasive in Western literary civilization, so much so that, as Edward Said has shown, the metaphor is built into the very word, *author*, with which writer, deity, and *pater familias* are identified."[50]

[47] Warhol, "How Narration Produces Gender", p. 186.

[48] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 3.

[49] Ibid., p. 7.

[50] Ibid., p. 4.

The latter question, on the other hand, is more difficult to answer (if there is an answer at all):

> Lacking the pen/penis which would enable them similarly to refute one fiction by another, women in patriarchal societies have historically been reduced to *mere* properties, to characters and images imprisoned in male texts because generated solely, as Anne Elliot and Anne Finch observe, by male expectations and designs. Like the metaphor of literary paternity itself, this corollary notion that the chief creature man has generated is woman has a long and complex history. From Eve, Minerva, Sophia, and Galatea onward, after all, patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs, and ingenuity. [...]
> The roots of "authority" tell us, after all, that if woman is man's property then he must have authored her, just as surely as they tell us that if he authored her she must be his property.[51]

In her essay "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity", Gubar further develops the image of man as a creator and woman as his creation – a blank page awaiting his writings, while also referring to the blank page of women's literary and cultural history.

> This model of the pen-penis writing on the virgin page participates in a long tradition identifying the author as a male who is primary and the female as his passive creation – a secondary object lacking autonomy, endowed with often contradictory meaning but denied intentionality. Clearly this tradition excludes woman from the creation of culture, even as it reifies her as an artifact within culture. It is therefore particularly problematic for those women who want to appropriate the pen by becoming writers. [...] But just as important as the anxiety the male pen produces in the would-be woman writer is the horror she experiences at having been defined as his creation.[52]

The inability to attempt the pen for many centuries, results in a certain anxiety that inevitably affects the writings of women, resulting in a shared plot: "Reinterpreting Harold Bloom's influential theory of a male 'anxiety of influence',[53] Gilbert and Gubar argued that women

[51] Ibid., pp. 12–13.

[52] Gubar, Susan. "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Winter 1981), p. 247.

[53] The American literary critic Harold Bloom describes the anxiety of influence as the vital element of poetic creation, described as a as a filial (rival) relationship "between strong equals, father and son as mighty opposites, Laius and Oedipus at the crossroads" in which the son-poet constantly tries to overthrow his father-predecessor (other poets in history looming over him, whose works he must surpass). This poetic universe is inherently patriarchal, because it is based on the dynamics between the male poet, his male precursor, and his female muse (in fact, a poet's defining, primal scene – in Freudian terms – "is his Poetic Father's coitus with the Muse. There he was begotten? No – there they failed to beget him. He must be self-begotten, he must engender himself upon the Muse

experience an 'anxiety of authorship' that requires them to deny the power and self-assertion implicit in their art. They examined works by canonical figures with a strong sense of their interrelatedness, persuasively unveiling the shared plot concealed in their prose and poetry."[54] Similarly, my goal is to unveil the shared plot(s) in male novelists' writings in drag.

Otto Weininger in a way justifies the female anxiety of authorship in the context of psychological studies about women, while recognizing the problematics of the fact that men are the ones who conduct them (therefore, there is no first-hand information, hence absolute reliability and authenticity). However, if a woman attempts to write her own psychological study, according to him, she would face a threefold obstacle: she might not be able to describe herself with the necessary precision, she might not have the same interest in the areas of her personality that interest men, and lastly, she might not be willing to talk about herself. It turns out that the most qualified experts for studying women are men who are in touch with their feminine self: "Just as in other areas we owe any really valuable revelations about the psychological processes in woman solely to men, the sensations of pregnant women have also been described only by men. [...] We can therefore rely on one thing only: on what is feminine in men themselves."[55] Even in general, women do not possess a worthy speaking voice:

> A psychological proof of the masculinity of the function of judgment is that Woman perceives the act of judgment as masculine and is attracted by it as by a (tertiary) sexual characteristic. A woman always *demands* firm convictions from a man, so that she may adopt them. She has no time at all for the doubter in a man. Furthermore, she always expects the man to *speak,* and she regards the man's discourse as a sign of masculinity. Women have the gift of language, but not the gift of discourse. A woman converses (flirts) or chatters, but she does not speak.[56]

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his mother. [...] The strong poet fails to beget himself he must wait for his Son, who will define him even as he has defined his own Poetic Father. To beget here means to usurp." In conclusion, "he errs in seeking imagoes – the Muse was never his mother nor the precursor his father."), leaving a lot of unresolved issues for a hypothetical poetess (because there is no female counterpart for the poetic forefather and a male counterpart for the muse). See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press (1997), p. 11; p. 37; p. 61.

[54] Annette R. Federico, "Introduction: 'Bursting All the Doors'", Annette R. Federico (ed.), *Gilbert & Gubar's* The Madwoman in the Attic *After Thirty Years* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2009), p. 2.

[55] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 76.

[56] Ibid., p. 169.

1.4.1. Female to Male is like Nature to Culture, or Civilization to Culture

There is an age-old distinction between nature and culture and many symbols associated to each of them. Even though the French anthropologist and ethnologist Claude Lévi-Strauss claims that "the interrelationship between nature and culture does not favor culture to the extent of being hierarchically superimposed on nature and irreducible to it",[57] another anthropologist – Sherry B. Ortner – argues that culture (as transcendence of natural existence) is universally held in higher esteem while devaluing nature, and according to her, the underlying cause of this hegemony is the association of nature with women, who are subdued in most cultures. Women are held back by their reproductive biology (menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, etc.), in contrast to men, who are free to develop and assert their creativity. While men are seen as the creators and representatives of culture, women's role is intermediary at best:

> Insofar as woman is universally the primary agent of early socialization and is seen as virtually the embodiment of the functions of the domestic group, she will tend to come under the heavier restrictions and circumscriptions surrounding that unit. Her (culturally defined) intermediate position between nature and culture, here having the significance of her *mediation* (i.e. performing conversion functions) between nature and culture, would thus account not only for her lower status but for the greater restrictions placed upon her activities. In virtually every culture her permissible sexual activities are more closely circumscribed than man's, she is offered a much smaller range of role choices, and she is afforded direct access to a far more limited range of its social institutions. [...] Both the subversive feminine symbols (witches, evil eye, menstrual pollution, castrating mothers) and the feminine symbols of transcendence (mother goddesses, merciful dispensers of salvation, female symbols of justice, and the strong presence of feminine symbolism in the realms of art, religion, ritual, and law). Feminine symbolism, far more often than masculine symbolism, manifests this propensity toward polarized ambiguity – sometimes utterly exalted, sometimes utterly debased, rarely within the normal range of human possibilities.[58]

Gilbert and Gubar continue along the same lines by identifying this polarized symbolism as the root of women's exclusion from the literary world and from culture in general: "That is, precisely because a woman is denied the autonomy – the subjectivity – that the pen represents, she is not

[57] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, trans. James Harle Bell and John Richard von Sturmer (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1969), p. XXX.

[58] Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture", eds. M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 85–86.

only excluded from culture (whose emblem might well be the pen) but she also becomes herself an embodiment of just those extremes of mysterious and intransigent Otherness which culture confronts with worship or fear, love or loathing."[59]

The Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp makes a similar remark as Ortner by granting women the role of preservers of the past, especially in respect to the halcyon days of pure (uncontaminated by foreign influences) Turkishness; analogously to Ortner's distinction between nature (women) and culture (men), he distinguishes between civilization (*medeniyet*, evolved from magic, transmitted by women), and culture (*hars*, evolved from religion transmitted by men) and similarly, he sees women as marginalized (in the case of Turkey), but only because of an imbalance between the two realms caused by futile and pernicious attempts to assimilate alien social mores and the progress of other (Arab, Persian, Byzantine) civilizations into the autochthonous Turkish culture. He has high hopes for the emancipation of women and he sees their role as pivotal in the formation of the Turkish Republic, because, after all, they are the preservers and transmitters (or, as Ortner says: intermediators) of both Turkish language (as Ottoman was accessible only to a highly educated minority) and the Islamic religion – both of which need to be purged: "Correct religious practice was not to be found in following the *ulama*, but rather in the rituals of women. It was women, based as they were in magic (the ancient manifestation of civilization) who had in their ritual activity most closely preserved the forms of the ancient civilization; in short, who now played the role once played by ancient magical systems."[60]

1.5. Characters in Drag and the Phallic Woman

In order to synthesize Saito's idea of male writing in drag (and its impact on female writing) and the subjugation of women as exemplified by Gilbert and Gubar, Ortner, and analogously, Gökalp, I will use Sandra Gilbert's article "Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature", which deals with the transvestism of (both male and female) fictional characters, and

[59] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 19.

[60] K. E. Fleming, "Women as Preservers of the Past: Ziya Gökalp and Women's Reform", ed. Zehra F. Arat, *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 136.

not that of authors, but nonetheless provides curious insights about the changes these figurative costumes trigger both in the cross-dresser and the people that surround him/her. Gilbert discusses the transvestism in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and several other works, noticing how differently male and female modernists describe costumes – costumes with the purpose of enacting gender disorder.

> For since women were traditionally defined as "the lustier sex" – the sex made for sex – it was only natural, if paradoxical, that a man could achieve sexual strength by temporarily impersonating a woman. Through grotesque submission, he would learn dominance; through misrule, he might learn rule; through a brief ironic concession to "petticoat government", he would learn not androgynous wholeness but male mastery.
> Discussing the phenomenon of "the phallic woman", [Robert] Stoller argues that the male transvestite uses the degrading apparatus of female costume to convert "humiliation" to "mastery" by showing himself (and the world) that he is not "just" like a woman, he is better than a woman because he is a woman with a penis. [...] Such a "phallic woman" does not merely, as Davis suggested, gain female sexual power by impersonating femaleness, he assimilates femaleness into his maleness – not his androgyny – so that he mysteriously owns the power of both sexes in a covertly but thrillingly male body.[61]

So, even though a woman is perceived as "a thing under the yoke" in Joyce's *Ulysses*, at the end of the metamorphosis the cross-dresser feels empowered rather than subordinated, as he (turned she) gets the best of both worlds. To relate this to transvestite ventriloquism, the male authors act as phallic women who are, in their minds, better females than the biological ones. On the other hand, there is Woolf's Orlando – even though he mysteriously morphs into a woman overnight, his metamorphosis is not degrading, for he is in essence androgynous:

> As "man become woman", Orlando stands naked before a mirror, but Woolf merely remarks that he/she looks "ravishing", then brings on three parodic virtues personified as ladies – Chastity, Purity, and Modesty – who throw a towel at the unclothed being. That the towel bearers are *ladies* suggests at once the connection between self-definition, sexual definition, and costume, a connection that Woolf makes more clearly as her narrative unfolds. Her transsexual, she argues, is no more than a transvestite, for though Orlando has outwardly become a woman, "in every other respect [she] remains precisely as he had been" (p. 138), and this not because sexually defining costumes are false and

[61] Sandra M. Gilbert, "Costumes of the Mind: Transvestism as Metaphor in Modern Literature", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter 1980), pp. 397–398.

> selves are true but because costumes *are* selves, and thus easily, fluidly interchangeable.[62]

From this it can be inferred that for men (male authors) costumes are something false, concealing the real self, whereas for women (female authors) they are real and entangled with their own sense of self and gender. While analyzing *The Madwoman in the Attic*, the Victorian literature scholar Annette R. Federico notes that "Gilbert and Gubar introduced tropes and metaphors – madness and monstrosity, domesticity and escape, starvation and burial – that became part of the vocabulary for reading nineteenth-century women's texts."[63] Keeping the above excerpts in mind, I wonder what are the tropes and metaphors that I will unveil. On the one hand chastity, purity, and modesty (as the personified virtues in *Orlando*), and on the other hand lust, promiscuity, and exuberance (as the "phallic woman")?

[62] Ibid., p. 405.

[63] Federico, "Introduction: 'Bursting All the Doors'", p. 3.

2. KUNDERA'S TYPOLOGY

2.1. Machos-Poets vs. Misogynists-Gynophobes

It is noteworthy (if not praiseworthy) to see so many male novelists dwell on the female condition, and try to put themselves in women's shoes. Men in drag – in real life or narrative voice – raise the question of machismo and misogyny, so I take recourse to an exploration of these two terms by Milan Kundera, who deals with the masculine attitude towards femininity by categorizing men as poets (or machos) and misogynists (or gynophobes):

> Misogynists don't despise women. Misogynists don't like femininity. Men have always been divided into two categories. Worshipers of women, otherwise known as poets, and misogynists, or, more accurately, gynophobes. Worshipers or poets revere traditional feminine values such as feelings, the home, motherhood, fertility, sacred flashes of hysteria, and the divine voice of nature within us, while in misogynists or gynophobes these values inspire a touch of terror. Worshipers revere women's femininity, while misogynists always prefer women to femininity. Don't forget: a woman can be happy only with a misogynist.[64]

The last sentence rings true because a real life woman would be more compatible with a so-called misogynist who resents everything stereotypically feminine, rather than a man who holds her to an impossible standard. Kundera also claims that the poet's goal is to dominate what he adores – the archetypal femininity – and by doing so, he glorifies his own archetypal masculinity, or virility.[65] Toying with this classification, I would argue that all the discussed authors (both Eastern and Western, or more specifically, Turkish and Italian) are machos-poets who praise (exaggerated) femininity. Their heroines encounter similar adversities (hard financial times with no one to rely on, losing faith in men because of betrayal from the loved one), but they respond to them in two diametrically opposite (yet equally feminine) ways, engaging different aspects of their "womanly nature": in Feride's personality the highlight is on motherly nurturing and caring

[64] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, trans. Aaron Asher (New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1999), pp. 181–182.

[65] Milan Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, trans. Linda Asher (New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1993), p. 138.

for others (above all – children, because she mostly interacts with them, due to her profession: teaching); and Adriana's sensuality and love of pleasing others (above all – men, again, because she mostly interacts with them, due to her profession: modeling, and subsequently, prostitution) become so exuberant that they are overflowing to multiple recipients.

2.1.1. Christian Tradition (and Orientalism): Female Love is Self-Sacrifice

Bearing in mind Kundera's classification of men as machos and misogynists (according to their attitude towards femininity) and my conclusion that the writers in question are in that sense, without exception, machos – regardless of their origin, I will present an opinion – in fact, another brief analysis of *M. Butterfly* – which supports this claim, and gives it a religious tinge:

> For Gallimard, *Madame Butterfly* is memorable for the beauty of its story, which is 'pure sacrifice'. As he develops this idea through the film he expands it to mean the unconditional love extended by Oriental women to men who are unworthy. This is an intoxicating idea for the West. After all, in one sense, it is the exact parallel of Christian theology. While Hwang appears not to be dealing with religion, *M. Butterfly* is an intrinsically religious text. Hwang subtly deploys essential Christian ideas to demonstrate their integral role in the creation of the Orientalist vision. Pure sacrifice, unconditional love for the unworthy, these are familiar, indeed central ideas within the constellation of Christianity.[66]

Pure sacrifice and unconditional love for the unworthy are central ideas in Christianity that are equally associated with (Oriental, but also generally all) women. What the cultural critic and polymath Ziauddin Sardar says is true in respect to both Occidental and Oriental writers (who, paradoxically, seem Orientalist when it comes to their women). All protagonists from the discussed novels (even the prostitutes who can hardly be associated with monogamy) suffer a lot because of that one man for whom they would die. Moreover, it is not just that one man who is the undeserving recipient of their love, but rather, as Adriana notices: "In reality my heart was full to the brim of affection – then as always – an affection which for lack of lawful objects I

[66] Ziauddin Sardar, *Orientalism* (Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, 1999), pp. 5–6.

poured out even on unworthy things and people, rather than leave it unused and unwanted."[67] And furthermore, speaking of self-sacrifice:

> I never noticed what a sacrifice my life really was, with no amusements, love or affection. When I think of the girl I was, and remember my goodness and innocence, I cannot help feeling deeply sorry for myself, in a powerless, poignant sort of way, as you do when you read of some charming person's misfortunes in a book and would like to be able to ward them off, but know you cannot.[68]

The male attitude towards women mirrors the Orientalists' relationship with the Orient: "The pathology of the Orientalist vision is based on two simultaneous desires: the personal quest of the Western male for Oriental mystery and sexuality and the collective goal to educate and control the Orient in political and economic terms."[69] This relates to the machos' striving to dominate the objects of their adoration, reflecting itself in the two texts. Namely, Feride's work life (and life in general, because she relocates because of work) depends solely on men in power – she flees from one job to the next because of the inconvenience caused by unwanted advances and unrequited love; and even though Adriana feels empowered because she can manipulate men with her body, she is still dependent on them for money. Both Feride's and Adriana's financial stability is directly related to the whims of the men they interact with, who – even as minor characters – give momentum to the plot development, and set in motion the protagonists' life paths.

2.1.2. Islamicate Tradition: Female Beauty is Obedience, Silence, Immobility

Furthermore, the authors' "machismo" (as contrasted to misogyny defined in Kundera's terms), or the femininity they see as selfless love, unquestionable loyalty, helpless abandon and yielding to the object of that love, is not associated with Christianity only. Or, as the Moroccan feminist writer and sociologist Fātna Aït Sabbāh (also known by her real name Fātema Mernissi) muses in the conclusion of her book *Women in the Muslim Unconscious*:

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[67] Alberto Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, trans. Lydia Holland and Tami Calliope (Hanover, NH: Steerforth Italia, 1999), p. 145.

[68] Ibid., p. 20.

[69] Sardar, *Orientalism*, pp. 1–2.

> The ideal of female beauty in Islam is obedience, silence, and immobility, that is, inertia and passivity. These are far from being trivial characteristics, nor are they limited to women. In fact, these three attributes of female beauty are the three qualities of the believer vis-à-vis his God. The believer must dedicate his life to obeying and worshipping God and abiding by his will.
> The believer comes into a world organized and programmed beforehand by a divine power, and God explicitly requires him to be passive. Any manifestation of will by the believer, any attempt to change the existing order, to create alternatives is bida', innovation, and this is errant behavior. The source of the orthodox discourse is the Koran, which is the discourse of the superior one, God. The voice of the believer cannot make itself heard without destabilizing the equilibrium of the system and perverting the order. Man must invest his energy, not in attempts to express himself, but in attempts to decipher the discourse of the almighty. [...] The believer is fulfilled not by expressing himself, but by making his own the expression of the other, the superior one, God.
> In the sacred universe the believer is fashioned in the image of the woman – deprived of speech and will and committed to obedience to another. The female condition and the male condition are not different in the end to which they are directed, but in the pole around which they orbit. The lives of beings of the male sex revolve around the divine will. The lives of beings of the female sex revolve around the will of believers of the male sex.[70]

The ideal woman – according to the Islamicate tradition – does not have a voice of her own, but rather lets her beloved man speak for her. This also resonates with Weininger, who believes women (or at least the ideal – in Platonic sense, not implying evaluation – Woman: W) to be so consumed by their sexual function (focused either on the act itself – as a prostitute, and its product – as a mother) that they cannot transcend the physical world in order to become a genius or reach and worship the absolute, which is an area reserved for men.

> W's existence revolves entirely around her sexual life, the sphere of copulation and reproduction, i.e., in her relationship with a man and with children, and her existence is totally absorbed by these things, while M is not only sexual. [...]
> While W, then, is fully occupied and absorbed by sexuality, M knows a dozen other things: fighting and playing, socializing and feasting, discussions and learning, business and politics, religion and art.[71]

[70] Fātna Aït Sabbāh, *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (New York, NY: Pergamon Press, 1984), p. 118.

[71] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 79.

2.2. Lyrical-Romantic vs. Epic-Libertine Ventriloquist

Kundera comes up with another useful distinction, applicable to the question at hand – this time of womanizers (although the male novelists I am writing about "pursue" women in a different way, some parallels can be drawn between those who womanize and those who ventriloquize):

> Men who pursue a multitude of women fit neatly into two categories. Some seek their own subjective and unchanging dream of a woman in all women. Others are prompted by a desire to possess the endless variety of the objective female world.
> The obsession of the former is *lyrical:* what they seek in women is themselves, their ideal, and since an ideal is by definition something that can never be found, they are disappointed again and again. The disappointment that propels them from woman to woman gives their inconstancy a kind of romantic excuse, so that many sentimental women are touched by their unbridled philandering.
> The obsession of the latter is *epic,* and women see nothing the least bit touching in it: the man projects no subjective ideal on women, and since everything interests him, nothing can disappoint him. This inability to be disappointed has something scandalous about it. The obsession of the epic womanizer strikes people as lacking in redemption (redemption by disappointment).[72]

Kundera further elaborates on the lyrical and epic types of womanizers in his essay collection *The Art of the Novel* referring to classical German philosophy:

> This corresponds to the classical distinction between the lyric and the epic (and the dramatic), a distinction that appeared only toward the end of the eighteenth century in Germany and that was masterfully developed in Hegel's *Aesthetics*. The lyric is the expression of a self-revealing subjectivity; the epic arises from the urge to seize hold of the objectivity of the world. For me, the lyric and the epic extend beyond aesthetics; they represent two possible attitudes that man might take towards himself, the world, other people (the lyrical age = youth). Alas, such a conception of lyric and epic is unfamiliar to the French that I was obliged to let the translator turn the lyrical womanizer into the romantic fornicator, and the epic womanizer into the libertine fornicator.[73]

[72] Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York, NY: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2009), p. 104.

[73] Kundera, *The Art of the Novel*, pp. 137–138.

I would extrapolate this categorization of womanizers within two groups – lyrical and epic (or romantic and libertine, according to the French translation of his novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, where he first brings up that terminology) to the authors in drag, in relation to their fictional representations of femininity – I would categorize Güntekin and Moravia as lyrical-romantic and epic-libertine ventriloquists, respectively. Güntekin, as a lyrical ventriloquist, seeks (thus, while writing he identifies with) the utmost perfection of chastity and monogamy; and Moravia, as an epic ventriloquist, plays with an array of different – and sometimes opposing – personality traits and changes, all occurring within the same woman, she herself polyamorous as her "polyamorous" creator who delves into the infinite varieties of womanhood.

2.3. Male Gaze and Castration Anxiety

Kundera makes other astute observations about the male-female dynamics, this time regarding the power of the gaze (male vs. female) and the word "no" (or lack thereof). Even though he focuses on the less studied female gaze, he introduces it as an antithesis (and a weapon against) the infamous male gaze: "The gaze of a man has often been described. It seems to fasten coldly on the woman, as if it were measuring, weighing, evaluating, choosing her, as if, in other words, it were turning her into a thing."[74] Indeed, in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (presented in 1973 and subsequently reworked and published in 1975, hence, predating Kundera's novel for at least four years), the British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey talks in particular about the cinematic form of the male gaze because of its voyeuristic potential, its possibility to shift the emphasis of the look through its three lenses focused on the female character: the camera – the male filmmaker, the audience – the male spectators, and the male characters(s) in the film. Mulvey differentiates between the active/looking and passive/looked-at split in terms of sexual difference in the cinematic pleasure – there is a double mechanism at play: firstly, the male spectator enjoys watching the woman as an erotic object (a manifestation of the scopophilic instinct, which Freud associated "with taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze"[75]), and secondly, achieves gratification through identification with the male hero (which is ego libido – the narcissistic aspect of scopophilia), and

[74] Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, p. 285.

[75] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", p. 835.

vicariously gets the girl too. In essence, cinema provides a twofold mechanism – voyeuristic and fetishistic – for dealing with the male castration anxiety: "One strategy Mulvey describes is voyeurism, in which the disturbing woman is relentlessly investigated in an effort to demystify her. [...] The second way to deal with a dangerous woman in film is to transform the disturbing 'other' into an icon of pleasure. Hence the cult of the female film star."[76] In both cases, men are active observers and women are passive objects to be observed.

In both novels, the protagonists are extremely attractive. Feride, however, is uncomfortable with her to-be-looked-at-ness and although initially she is not in the habit of wearing a veil, eventually she finds it indispensable for keeping unwarranted attention at bay, for instance, when she inadvertently becomes the talk of the town: "On the way to school and back, people follow me, interrupt my walk to peer into my face under my veil; so that I've begun to wear it doubled."[77] However, the veil is not entirely foolproof:

> I noticed that while the Director of Education was speaking of his grandiose schemes, the Engineer was looking at me out of the corner of his eye. Finally, so that I shouldn't understand, he said in a very broken French: "I beg you, my dear, find a pretext to make this girl show us her face; its color glows like fire under her veil. Where's she come from?" [...] The engineer pestered him again in that beautiful French of his: "This is an exceptional little creature. You go on and leave me. Whatever happens, I must find some way of getting her to uncover her face."[78]

As opposed to Feride, Adriana is at her best on the streets, especially as a poor person, for whom all the entertainment and *joie de vivre* take place outside:

> I have always liked to wander among the crowds and to listen without turning round to the amorous suggestions which the most unexpected passers-by, with the sudden excitation of their senses, risk whispering on the spur of the moment.

[76] Robert Schultz, "When Men Look at Women: Sex in an Age of Theory", *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Autumn 1995), pp. 368–369.

[77] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 233.

[78] Ibid., p. 187–188. Later in the novel, the Municipal Engineer gets his wish fulfilled and sees Feride's face at last, although under different circumstances in a different setting.

> I have always loved to pace up and down the same street again and again, feeling almost worn out at the end but as fresh and eager in my heart as at a fair, where the surprises are inexhaustible.[79]

In light of her modeling profession – posing naked to painters – she is used to men gazing at her body as an objet d'art: "He looked at me without desiring me, as he would at an object, and this comforted me. Later on, when he knew me better, he always treated me with kindness and respect, as a human being and no longer as a mere object. I was attracted to him immediately, and I might even have fallen in love with him out of sheer gratitude."[80] Not only does she feel comfortable on display, but also grows aggrieved when her nudity does not elicit the expected reaction:

> These glances, as well as mother's veiled allusions, roused my sense of coquetry and made me conscious both of my beauty and of the advantages I might draw from it. At last I not only became accustomed to their tactlessness, but, after a while, I could not help feeling delighted when I saw how excited the visitors became, and disappointed when they were indifferent to me. And so, all unawares, my vanity led me to think that whenever I chose to, I could improve my situation by making use of my looks, just as mother had said.[81]

Adriana has an instinctive urge to respond with encouraging flirtatiousness whenever someone shows interest, even if a random passerby casts a lustful glance, even when she firmly decides to leave prostitution behind: "I was not at all sure that I liked him. Then I realized that the desire to attract him had set my whole body on edge, like hidden sap bursting out of the rugged bark of some tree in a number of tender shoots, forcing me to relinquish my reserved manner. This was only one hour after I had decided to change my profession!"[82] This indicates that Moravia imagines that women equally enjoy being objectified as the men who objectify them.

[79] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 133.
[80] Ibid., p. 4.
[81] Ibid., p. 9.
[82] Ibid., p. 224.

2.3.1. Nude vs. Naked: Voyeur vs. Lover

Regarding the objectification of women in their to-be-looked-at-ness in the realm of the visual arts, while revisiting Kundera's division of men on machos and misogynists, the English art critic, writer and painter John Berger draws a line between nudity and nakedness (depending on the prism of the spectator):

> To be naked is to be oneself.
> To be nude is to be seen naked by others, and yet not recognized for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude. (The sight of it as an object stimulates the use of it as an object.) Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display. [...]
> In the average European oil painting of the nude the principal protagonist is never painted. He is the spectator in front of the picture and he is presumed to be a man.
> Everything is addressed to him. Everything must appear to be the result of him being there. It is for him that the figures have assumed their nudity. But he, by definition, is a stranger – with his clothes still on.[83]

He singles out Peter Paul Rubens's painting *Het Pelsken* (translated as *The Fur* or *The Pelt*) portraying his second wife – Hélène Fourment – as an exceptional example of nakedness. This full-body portrait is not fanciful at all, but rather peculiar, and even awkward – like real people are. "The painter's beloved is not idealized as an object for general fantasy. She is, as Rubens has painted her, relentlessly herself, an individual and not the representative of a group (generalized woman) or a type ('Madonna' or 'whore')."[84] The secret ingredient, as it were, is "the element of banality which must be undisguised but not chilling. It is this which distinguishes between voyeur and lover"[85] and subsequently, between nude and naked, general and specific sexuality, fantasy and desire, and finally, macho and misogynist. Therefore, in terms of visual art, Feride and Adriana, as they are stock characters with no real-life peculiarities, would be stock images of nudity – of course, figuratively (although Adriana literally works as a nude model).

[83] John Berger, Sven Blomberg, Chris Fox, Michael Dibb, and Richard Hollis, *Ways of Seeing: Based on the BBC Television Series with John Berger*. (London, UK: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972), p. 54.

[84] Schultz, "When Men Look at Women", p. 374.

[85] Berger et al., *Ways of Seeing*, p. 61.

2.3.2. The Man Rapes, the Woman Castrates (the Female Gaze)

Kundera enters the realm of the female gaze with a description of the feelings of a man who sees himself through the eyes of a woman he is trying to woo, as his own imperious, smoldering gaze fades and retreats before her dubious one: "He saw the pitiful pantomime of his gaze and gesture, that stereotyped gesticulation emptied of all meaning by years of repetition. Having lost its spontaneity, its natural, immediate meaning, his gesture suddenly made him unbearably weary."[86] Adriana experiences something similar when faced with her own reflection in the male gaze as embodied in Mino (the brooding rebel by whom she is infatuated) and she is rather perturbed when she sees herself in all her ignominy – her disreputable occupation, lack of education, trivial interests and pursuits:

> At the very instant when I was about to embrace him with renewed ardor, I felt his cold, steady gaze once more taut upon my back, like a piece of wet wire, and I suddenly felt ashamed and bewildered. My ecstasy died down; slowly I slipped from him and let myself fall on my back, separate from him. I had made a great effort of love, I had put into it the whole impulse of an innocent and primitive despair. The sudden realization that my effort was useless filled my eyes with tears, and I put my arm across my face to hide from him the fact that I was crying. Apparently I had been mistaken; I could not love him or be loved by him, and I also thought that he must be judging me, without any illusions, for what I really was. Now, I knew I was living in a kind of cloud I had created in order to avoid mirroring myself in my own conscience. But he, on the contrary, had dispersed the cloud with his glances and had placed the mirror once more before my eyes. And I saw myself as I really was, or rather, as I must have been for him.[87]

Going back to the subject of castration, Kundera too touches upon it, but he sees castration as a means of defense against the male gaze, not as its root cause. He metaphorically represents the male/active/objectifying and the female/passive/objectified aspect with the relationship between the carpenter and the hammer (able to see through the carpenter's façade and incapacitate him[88]).

[86] Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, p. 284.

[87] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 207.

[88] The fact that, in the above-mentioned example Adriana – as a typical woman (typical according to Weininger, who sees the extreme W either in the role of a prostitute or mother) feels the disarming and disillusioning gaze of Mino which, according to Kundera, is the female gaze, indicates that in her relationship with Mino she is more M than W.

> Less well known is that a woman is not entirely defenseless against that gaze. If she is turned into a thing, then she watches the man with the gaze of a thing. It is as if a hammer suddenly had eyes and watched the carpenter grip it to drive in a nail. Seeing the hammer's malicious gaze, the carpenter loses his self-confidence and hits his thumb.
> The carpenter is the hammer's master, yet it is the hammer that has the advantage over the carpenter, because a tool knows exactly how it should be handled, while the one who handles it can only know approximately how.
> The ability to gaze turns the hammer into a living being, but a good carpenter must bear its insolent gaze and, with a firm hand, turn it back into a thing. It would seem then that a woman undergoes a cosmic movement upward and then downward: the flight of a thing mutating into a creature and the fall of a creature mutating into a thing.[89]

While discussing two separate, but very similar unpleasant incidents, with the main difference being the gender of the sufferers (endurers of the gaze), they are labeled as rape and castration respectively, in addition attributing a certain eroticism to the former (claiming that women are aroused while violated by the gaze), subsequently musing on the beauty of the word "no" in the habitual imitations of rape among consensual partners, in a dialogue between a female and male character:

> – "When a woman says 'No', she really means 'Yes'." That male aphorism has always outraged me. It's as stupid as all human history.
> – But that history is inside us, and we can't escape it. A woman fleeing and defending herself. A woman giving herself, a man taking. A woman veiling herself, a man tearing off her clothes. These are age-old images we carry within us!
> – Age-old and idiotic! As idiotic as the holy images! And what if women are starting to be fed up with having to behave according to that pattern? What if that eternal repetition nauseates them? What if they want to invent other images and another game?
> – Yes, they're stupid images stupidly repeated. You're entirely right. But what if our desire for the female body depends on precisely those stupid images and on them alone? If those stupid old images were to be destroyed in us, would men still be able to make love to women?[90]

The power of the female "no", it is diminished in *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, and it seems that Güntekin is of the same opinion – that some women's words and behavior go against their best interests (as in the case of Feride), so it is for a woman's own good to disregard her resistance. This is well illustrated in the letter that Hayrullah – Feride's husband (only on paper)

[89] Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, pp. 285–286.

[90] Ibid., pp. 287–289.

and closest confidante – addresses to her archenemy (and yet most beloved) ex-fiancé Kāmran, instructing him to reclaim her without taking no for an answer:

> You know her nature well. She's a strange girl. Perhaps she will behave capriciously; but don't, on any account, let yourself be taken in. Even if you knew she was going to die, don't leave her. Treat her, if you must, as fiercely and roughly as if you were one of the men of the mountains, who carry women away. You can be sure that if she were to die in your arms, it would be of joy. Let me tell you one thing more: I haven't given any thought whatever to you, in this matter. As far as I'm concerned, you must know that I wouldn't willingly entrust you with my dog or my cat, let alone a precious girl like Feride. But see for yourself how impossible it is to make the senseless girl see things plainly. What she can love in an uncouth, heartless fellow like yourself I cannot think![91]

Hayrullah's utter indiscretion too is an act of violation of Feride's privacy – ignoring her "no" – because he outright steals her diary (blaming others for it) and, in his self-righteousness, sends it to a person he himself deems unworthy and incompetent, objectifying her most innermost thoughts by subjecting them to inspection: "Feride's journal is in the envelope. Last year, when we went to the farm, I arranged for it to disappear, as well as the box it was in, and made out that the drivers must have stolen it. I could see she was very worried at that; but she said nothing. How right I was in my conviction that, sooner or later, the journal would come in useful!"[92]

The disrespect of her refusal takes a more physical dimension when Feride faces potentially harmful situations, which she dodges with a slight physical damage: she faints with Burhaneddin (a major with whom she is unwillingly set up on a blind date) and falls down a flight of stairs bruising her head with Jemil (the son of her employer, taking advantage of the fact that she lives in their house as a governess of his sisters). Of course, she openly blames herself – the victim – afterwards: "There's nothing extraordinary in what you've done, sir. It's usual enough to treat women servants this way, as though they were adopted children. By taking a position in your house so like theirs, I've provoked the situation myself. You needn't be afraid: I'll find some excuse or other, and leave tomorrow, without any talk"[93] and leaves the city.

[91] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 327.
[92] Ibid., p. 327.
[93] Ibid., 273.

On the other hand, Adriana succumbs to sexual assault at least twice (both Astarita and Sonzogno rape her, but she receives money afterwards, so she does not perceive their abuse as rape) and engages with the perpetrators after the fact, but at the same time repeatedly explains how she is (and women in general are) not powerless against unwanted advances: "We were standing in a dark stretch of the road where there were no shops or street lamps. He took hold of me round the waist and tried to kiss me. I could have broken free easily enough because I am very strong and no one can kiss a woman if she doesn't want to be kissed"[94] and yet again: "I know what he wants, he wants to make love to me – but no one has ever been able to force a woman to make love against her will. He blackmailed me once, when I was still inexperienced, but he won't be able to bring that off again."[95] She, like Feride, has a "blaming the victim" mentality and she rationalizes the behavior both of her ex fiancé Gino, who has taken her virginity with false promises, and the rapist Astarita, who has initiated her in the world of prostitution.

> I did not dream of blaming him and did not really feel any deep sense of injury towards him. I had not been led astray without my own complicity. And the memory of the pleasure I had enjoyed in his arms was too recent for me not to try to find excuses, if not justification, for his lying. I supposed he had been weak rather than wicked, carried away as he was by desire, and that the fault, if fault there was, lay with my beauty, which made men lose their heads and forget all their scruples and obligations. In the long run Gino was no more to blame than Astarita, only he had used fraud whereas Astarita had used blackmail. Both of them loved me very much, and certainly would have preferred to possess me by legal means if they could, and would have secured for me that modest form of happiness which I had set my heart on. Fate, on the contrary, had led me, with all my beauty, to meet the very men who could not obtain that kind of happiness for me.[96]

Apart from delighting his readership with a thought-provoking typology of men and a witty analysis of eroticism, Kundera is also notorious for stereotyping female characters based on the generally accepted opposition-based thinking, thus (mis)representing them either as a Madonna or a whore.

[94] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, pp. 235–236.

[95] Ibid., p. 412.

[96] Ibid., p. 118.

> Men exploit women by exploiting the extreme simplicities of this opposition. Havel's conclusion is, in some ways, right on the mark. He laments what amounts to the end of (his) male desire, an erotic apocalypse brought on not because women as whores are unable to arouse men, but because the conquest of women requires that the Madonna/whore opposition be firmly in place. Whether it is inspired by the scandalous "pleasure" of the Madonna becoming a whore or the rarer opposite border crossing, male desire in Kundera's fiction thrives on, and sometimes depends on, a movement from one extreme to the other, a movement that is almost always controlled by men. Women, of course, suffer for the perceptual switch from Madonna to whore, a change that often results in a crisis of identity ("I am me, I am me, I am me...") or in physical violence.[97]

Unfortunately, he is not the only male author to pigeonhole female characters in these two stifling categories, so I will dwell on this phenomenon in the following chapter.

[97] John O'Brien, *Milan Kundera and Feminism: Dangerous Intersections* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 10.

3. GENEALOGY OF THE MADONNA/WHORE DICHOTOMY

In her most famous work – *The Second Sex* – that set the agenda for women's movements, Simone de Beauvoir aptly notes: "This world was a masculine world, my childhood had been nourished by myths forged by men, and I hadn't reacted to them in at all the same way I should have done if I had been a boy."[98] However, there seems to be a chicken or the egg dilemma, because psychoanalysts believe that the mythicizing of women in the goddess/witch (or Madonna/whore) dualism works as an entirely opposite process – it is not children who are nourished myths, but rather they are the ones who forge the myths which are later on perpetuated:

> When the mother brings food and warmth, comfort and nurturance, the child perceives her as the magical goddess figure. But when she deprives and frustrates as she inevitably must, the mother becomes the witch in the infant's limited world. In his "Contributions to the Psychology of Love", Freud examines the polarity of the wife/mistress and Madonna/prostitute, seeing in the unconscious fantasies of childhood and the prohibitions of adolescence the reasons for the dissociation in some men's erotic life.[99]

As far as literature is concerned, the existence of this polarity goes far beyond Victorian England; in fact it is believed that it began in Ancient Greece, with the myth of Pandora:

> The story of Pandora opened more than a box of horrors; Pandora began what was to be the entrapment of the female character in literature, the entrapment in one of two roles: the angel or the monster. Women are already considered inferior in Greek society, but by writing down this supposed inferiority, the Greeks engraved the female character in stone. Later, as the Greek Pantheon condenses down into the Jewish, and later Christian, faith, the angel and monster dichotomy continues, entering into The Garden of Eden with Lilith and Eve.[100]

Not just Pandora, but also the Keres, Moirae, Harpies, and Sirens with which Greek mythology abounds are surpassed by Medea, the child-killer; she "contravenes the most fundamental criterion of femininity – maternal love. She shares this with many fantasies of female evil: the

[98] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Richard Howard (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1968), p. 103.

[99] Hoffman Baruch, *Women, Love, and Power*, p. 167.

[100] Vanita Carrillo-Rush, "Suffocating under a Sealed Bell Jar: The Angel/Monster Dichotomy in the Literary Tradition", *Humanities Capstone Projects* (2012), Paper 10, p.1.

inquisition condemned witches for cannibal feasts on children; in Judaic myth, the succubus Lilith was believed to haunt cradles of newborn infants to carry them off, and the classical Lamia was a child-stealer as well as a bloodsucker."[101] As motherhood is often considered a defining trait of womanhood, its negation is the pivot of female monstrosity.

The Madonna/whore binary, which rigorously limits women's portrayal, is not present just in literary fiction – there has been a tendency among authors of all disciplines to toy with its numerous variations from times immemorial. Philosophers have been making condescending remarks about women and reducing them to their bodily functions starting with Plato and Aristotle, then Jean Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, and Friedrich Nietzsche, but one of the most notable exemplars is the German pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer, who is Otto Weininger's precedent.

3.1. Mother vs. Prostitute

Emphasizing the secondary status of women, in his essay "On Women", Arthur Schopenhauer concludes that "they are *sexus sequior*, the inferior second sex in every respect: one should be indulgent towards their weaknesses, but to pay them honor is ridiculous beyond measure and demeans us even in their eyes."[102]

Otto Weininger, who emulates him, has many similar observations: "Man has the penis, but the vagina has Woman",[103] "Absolute Woman has no self",[104] "The greatest, the only enemy of the emancipation of women is Woman",[105] "Woman can have no real value, because she lacks the intrinsic value of the human personality",[106] "Woman must be described as incapable of having genius",[107] "A female genius is a contradiction in terms",[108] etc. Regarding the last claims –

[101] Marina Warner, *Managing Monsters: Six Myths of Our Times* (London, UK: Vintage, 1994), p. 32.
[102] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2004), p. 55.
[103] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 81.
[104] Ibid., p. 161.
[105] Ibid., p. 65.
[106] Ibid., p. 175.
[107] Ibid., p. 99.

almost exactly like Schopenhauer[109] – he sees women as knowledgeable solely when there is a prospect for luring a partner:

> A genuine need, and a real capacity, for emancipation in a woman presupposes masculinity. The vast majority of women certainly never *lived* for art or for knowledge, which they only pursued, in place of the usual "handicraft", as a mere *pastime* in the undisturbed idyll of their lives, while many others engaged in intellectual or artistic activities only in an enormously strained form of *coquetry* in front of more or less specific persons of the male sex.[110]

Confirming this bias, Adriana laments that she is not a match for Mino (her love interest) intellectually, which would have, at least, enabled her to foresee the dangers of his passion for politics.

> The fault was entirely mine, due to my ignorance, which, however, was not my own fault but the fault of my condition. When I read a newspaper I always skipped the first page with the political news, which didn't interest me, and glanced through the reports of criminal cases, where certain incidents and crimes gave my mind something to feed on, at least. My condition was actually very like that of those transparent little creatures that live, they say, in the depths of the sea, in the dark almost, knowing nothing of what is happening on the surface in the sunlight. Politics, like many other things which people seem to think so important, reached me from a higher and unknown world, they were even weaker and more incomprehensible to me than the light of day to those simple little creatures in the depths under the sea.[111]

She considers her condition – poverty – to be the reason for her ignorance, but her poverty and lack of education also partially explain why she has become a prostitute in the first place. Feride too has not planned to work at all as a married woman, but after her bitter disenchantment with her fiancé, she still has something to fall back on: "My diploma lay in a corner of the cupboard, tied up with red ribbon. I'd thought it was fated to grow yellow with age; but it had suddenly

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[108] Ibid., p. 163.

[109] "Man strives in everything for a direct domination over things, either by comprehending or by subduing them. But woman is everywhere and always relegated to a merely indirect domination, which is achieved by means of man, who is consequently the only thing she has to dominate directly. Thus it lies in the nature of women to regard everything simply as a means of capturing a man, and their interest in anything else is only simulated, is no more than a detour, i.e. amounts to coquetry and mimicry." See Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, p. 54.

[110] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 61.

[111] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, pp. 295–296.

acquired a new value. All my hopes rested in this piece of paper, which I'd been told was well worth having."[112] Still, the diploma from a French private school is not the only thing separating the teacher and the prostitute; after the death of her parents Feride resides in a Catholic convent school run by nuns, and Adriana (no matter how much in touch with her religion – Catholicism) is raised by her widowed mother who is terribly ignorant herself,[113] and more importantly, who instills a sense in Adriana that she can and *must* profit from her beauty, which is evident from her advice about modeling: "She told me I would have to be very careful, perhaps this artist had no dishonorable intentions, but many of them employed models with the idea of making them their mistresses. I was to repel their advances at all costs. 'They are all penniless', she explained, 'and you can't expect to get anything out of them. With your looks you can aim much higher, much higher.'"[114] Her mother's influence, coupled with her own belief that the job requirements fit her personal temperament ("I had vocation and was really born for my new profession, even if I longed for something different in my heart of hearts"[115]) and profuse sensuality ("I soon realized that my passion for Gino had not been anything particularly unique and that in my heart of hearts I liked all men, for one reason or another. I do not know whether this happens to all the women who take up my profession or whether it means that I had a special vocation for it; I only know that each time, I felt a thrill of curiosity and expectation which was rarely deceived."[116]), results in her foray into prostitution. Even though she can be a seamstress like her mother, or even continue modeling, she readily accepts money from her rapist (being raped is another major difference in the two plots), who thus becomes her first customer:

> The feeling I experienced at that moment bewildered me and, no matter how or when I have received money from men since, I have never again experienced it so clearly and so intensely. It was a feeling of complicity and sensual conspiracy such as none of Astarita's caresses in the restaurant bedroom had been able to rouse in me. It was a feeling of inevitable subjection which showed me in a flash an aspect of my own nature I had ignored until then. I knew, of course, that I ought to refuse the money, but at the

[112] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 104.

[113] "I often cursed my ignorance and pettiness and the fact that mother was even more petty and ignorant than I was. One's first impulse in moments of difficulty is to turn to someone older and more experienced for advice. But I did not know anyone who possessed these qualities, and asking mother for help would have been like asking one of the many children who used to play in the courtyard." See Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 411.

[114] Ibid., p. 8.

[115] Ibid., p. 146.

[116] Ibid., p. 166.

> same time I wanted to accept. And not so much from greed, as from the new kind of pleasure which this offering had afforded me.[117]

Weininger notes that "incidentally, even young prostitutes usually find it hard to make ends meet, because they have to pay high rents, to wear unusual clothes, and to keep their pimps. The frequent occurrence of prostitutes returning to their earlier occupation after being married demonstrates how deeply rooted the inclination to their way of life is in them"[118] and Adriana confirms both claims:

> The money I earned in this way, however, was not as much as might be supposed. First of all, I was incapable of being as mercenary and greedy as Gisella. I wanted to be paid, of course, because I was not going with men for my own amusement; but my nature led me to give myself to them more out of physical exuberance than out of convenience and I did not think about the money until the time came to be paid, that is, when it was too late. [...]
> There was another reason why my earnings were insufficient. This was the fact that, since I was far less careful about what I spent than I had been before, and had spread myself on buying a few dresses, some perfume, toilet articles and other things that I needed professionally, the money my lovers gave me never went very far, very much like the money I had earned as a model and by helping mother with her sewing. I seemed no better off than before, despite the sacrifice of my honor.[119]

Weininger's disparaging conclusions culminate in a clear-cut division of womankind into prostitute and mother. Interestingly enough, his definition of the prostitute is rather open-ended and almost all-encompassing: "The type of the prostitute includes not only women who sell themselves, but also many so-called nice girls and married women, some of whom never commit adultery not because the circumstances are not favorable, but because they themselves do not allow things to reach that point."[120] Unlike Adriana whose earnings explicitly and exclusively depend on her body (she poses for artists and later on sleeps with men who need to find her attractive in order to hire her), Feride is oblivious to her beauty, in spite of it being the source of all the privileges she gets (quite conveniently, she gets promoted by gentlemen who pursue her

[117] Ibid., p. 88.
[118] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 190.
[119] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 167.
[120] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 190.

discreetly) and improprieties she encounters (she moves from a place to a place because of rogues who pursue her indiscreetly).

> The office of the Director of Education is never in want of visitors. From an armchair in the corner, a voice was heard, stuttering slightly: "B-But what a delightful little girl!"
> I turned round sharply. At last I had caught one of those disrespectful people who called me names; who persisted, moreover, in calling me names that suggested sweets or silkworms. I would teach him a good lesson and pay him out for all the others. But he gave me no chance to say anything; he turned to the Director of Education, and said in a very authoritative voice: "For God's sake, give this young woman what she wants: don't torment the child."[121]

As for the root of the problem of prostitution – who is responsible for it and whether it is something that men force upon women – Weininger admits that "often enough a man is certainly to blame if a girl has to leave domestic service and finds herself unemployed. But the ability to resort to prostitution in such a case must lie in the nature of the human female herself."[122] Accordingly, Adriana sees Gino (in particular his shattering of her mundane dreams) as the initiator of her straying into the world of prostitution, but he denies it, claiming that what is not in one's nature, cannot be provoked by external factors: "'Don't try to put the blame on me. No one has to be a whore and a thief if she doesn't want to.' 'Obviously I was one without knowing it, then', I answered. 'You gave me my chance to become it.'"[123]

Weininger dwells on the type of the prostitute more, due to his fascination by the mysterious fact that the phenomenon of prostitution is typical only for the humankind: "Animals and plants, which are completely amoral and have no connection of any kind with the anti-moral, know nothing but motherhood."[124] However, he redeems women a bit when studying the opposite end of the binary: "All the bad and hateful things that I have said about women will be countered with the notion of Woman as a mother."[125] Unlike the prostitute whose sole concern is the man, the mother's sole concern is her child. Most importantly, "the surest touchstone is her relationship

[121] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, pp. 268–269.
[122] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 191.
[123] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, pp. 171–172.
[124] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 209.
[125] Ibid., p. 189.

with her daughter: a woman can only be called a mother if she never envies her daughter's greater youth or beauty, if she never in the slightest grudges her daughter the admiration of men, *but completely identifies with her* and is as pleased about her daughter's admirer as if he were her own".[126] Even though Feride, according to this division, would belong to the type of the mother, as Munise (her adopted daughter) grows, and there is the prospect of her getting married – something Feride is convinced that the future does not hold for her – a tinge of envy shows up in her diary entries:

> The veil had made her look quite grown-up. Indeed, the child has grown a great deal these last two years. She is very slender now, and nearly as tall as I am; imperceptibly, she has become a gracious and delicate girl, whose beauty grows as a flower's does, from day to day. But one never notices such things, when they're right under one's nose. I should have been happy to see it; but no! It made me sad, somehow.
> Munise noticed my sadness. "Abla, what's happened to you? It was a joke. Don't be angry."
> I was gazing at the poor child, and she began to wonder if she had done something wrong. "Munise", I said, "I shan't be able to keep you with me always; because I can see that you won't stay. You are already adorning your head like a bride, and trembling with excitement. I know how it is – you'll set your heart on being a bride, and then you'll leave me."
> My eyes filled with tears, as though I felt the pain of loneliness beginning. With a look and a gesture I begged Munise to give me a word or two of comfort; but the faithless child pursed her lips and answered: "What can I do, abla? That's the custom."[127]

Just like in every person "there are any number of intermediate stages between the complete Man and the complete Woman",[128] every woman contains traits of the mother and the prostitute in varying degrees and ratios.

3.2. Angel vs. Monster

Going back to *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert's and Susan Gubar's main emphasis is on female protagonists as envisioned by female authors, which, comparatively to Weininger's categorization, invariably fall into the category either of an *angel* or a *monster*. The

[126] Ibid., pp. 192–193.
[127] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 241.
[128] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 13.

original madwoman (serving as an inspiration for the book title) is a character from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* – Bertha Mason (Rochester's wife), who, with her madness and uncontrollable passion is juxtaposed to Jane's purity and moderation. This stereotypization is, of course, influenced by men's age-old ambivalent feelings toward women (their dread of women and contempt for female creativity/unrestrainedness), resulting in extreme portrayals that inspire either adoration or abhorrence, fluctuating between the transcendence of the feminine (mother goddess, nurturer) and its subversion (hag, harpy, jezebel, harlot); women writers followed suit, rarely managing (or even trying) to overcome these two antitheses.

> Male dread of women, and specifically the infantile dread of maternal autonomy, has historically objectified itself in vilification of women, while male ambivalence about female "charms" underlies the traditional images of such terrible sorceress goddesses as the Sphinx, Medusa, Circe, Kali, Delilah, and Salome, all of whom possess duplicitous arts that allow them both to seduce and to steal male generative energy.
> The sexual nausea associated with all these monster women helps explain why so many real women have for so long expressed loathing of (or at least anxiety about) their own, inexorably female bodies. The "killing" of oneself into an art object – the pruning and preening, the mirror madness, and concern with odors and aging, with hair which is invariably too curly or too lank, with bodies too thin or too thick – all this testifies to the efforts women have expended not just trying to be angels but trying *not* to become female monsters.[129]

Their book deals mostly with women's 19th century texts, hence, belonging to the Victorian era (technically, these writings antecede both the publication of Weininger's *Sex and Character* in 1901 and Freud's coinage of the Madonna/whore complex around 1925), when a common ideal of womanhood was the "angel in the house"[130] – the paragon of moral and domesticity – kept in the house in order to prevent corruption from the outside world, as women were considered to be the pillars of family life (and society at large) by setting a positive example to their husbands and children. "'What shall I do to gratify myself or to be admired?' is not the question a lady asks on arising, declared Mrs. Sarah Ellis, Victorian England's foremost preceptress of female morals and manners, in 1844. No, because she is 'the least engaged of any member of the household', a

[129] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 34.

[130] This idealized Victorian stereotype is named after the title of Coventry Patmore's poem which he wrote in his wife's honor in 1854.

woman of right feeling should devote herself to the good of others."[131] This, coupled with the "anxiety of authorship", provides a unique sense of enjoyment when willingly taking on the costume of the monster:

> All the nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary women who evoke the female monster in their novels and poems alter her meaning by virtue of their own identification with her. For it is usually because she is in some sense imbued with interiority that the witch-monster-madwoman becomes so crucial an avatar of the writer's own self. From a male point of view, women who reject the submissive silences of domesticity have been seen as terrible objects – Gorgons, Sirens, Scyllas, serpent-Lamias, Mothers of Death or Goddesses of Night. But from a female point of view the monster woman is simply a woman who seeks the power of self-articulation.[132]

3.2.1. Angel of Death

However, even the role of the angel carries a more ominous symbolism – as the angel of death, governing over transcendental experiences on the borderline between life and death.

> Exorcised from public life, denied the pleasures (though not the pains) of sensual existence, the Victorian angel in the house was allowed to hold sway over at least one realm beyond her own household: the kingdom of the dead. But if, as nurse and comforter, spirit-guide and mystical messenger, a woman ruled the dying and the dead, might not even her admirers sometimes fear that, besides dying or easing death, she could *bring* death? As Welsh puts it, "the power of an angel to save implies, even while it denies, the power of death." [...]
> If as death angel the woman suggests a providentially selfless mother, delivering the male soul from one realm to another, the same woman's maternal power implies, too, the fearful bondage of mortality into which every mother delivers her children.[133]

The delivery of the male soul from one realm to another is a leitmotif both in *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* and *The Woman of Rome* (even though Adriana is also the representative of female monstrosity). In the former novel, Feride's parents die when she is only a child: first her mother, whom she remembers only vaguely; and several years later her father too, an event she

[131]Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 24.

[132] Ibid., p. 79.

[133] Ibid., p. 26.

recalls vividly, i.e. the day she receives the news: "I understood. I tried to say something. But like the Mother Superior, I too was tongue-tied. I turned my head; I looked at the trees opposite through the open window. Swallows were flying above the sun-kissed tops of the trees. Suddenly I felt as full of life as they. 'I understand, Mother', I said, 'don't grieve. What can we do? We must all die.'"[134]

Although she faces death at such an early age (and takes both her parents' deaths in stride), she finally fathoms the reality of it – its imminence and definiteness – many years later, when she fills in the position of an elementary school teacher in the village of Zeyniler, with the school (also her lodging) situated at a dreary dervish cemetery: "We went into the cemetery from the back door of the school and began to walk through the gravestones. On the eves of certain feasts and Ramazans (the Moslem month of fasting) my aunts used to take me to the family cemetery in Eyüp. But it was in this dark Zeyniler cemetery that I felt for the first time that death was a melancholy and terrifying."[135]

The whole aura of Zeyniler (including its inhabitants) emanates death – even her young students play a "corpse game" during the school breaks; and there are cypresses all over the place: "The cypress symbolizes death, because once cut, it never sprouts anew. […] On Kula prayer rugs, of the type popularly referred to as 'cemetery rugs' or *mezarliks*, one may find tiny cypress trees with tombs underneath incorporated into the design."[136]

Feride tries to keep a low profile wherever she goes and to attract as little (male) attention as possible, but she has numerous suitors, one of which is Sheikh Yusuf Efendi (the music teacher and a renowned composer in Bursa), a man sick of tuberculosis who quietly suffers for her, and his last wish is to see her by his deathbed, where she most obviously plays the role of an angel of death: "As though I were performing some pious rite, I bent over the sick man, and touched his

[134] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 24
[135] Ibid., 149.
[136] Noble Ross Reat. "The Tree Symbol in Islam", *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Summer 1975), p. 11.

eyes with my lips. They seemed to flicker with the last vestige of life. So it happened that I was to give my first kiss to the eyes of a dying man."[137]

Even though she does not bring bad luck to all the men she is involved with one way or the other (she does, nonetheless, crush their egos with her unyielding rejection of their advances), there is one more man in her life who dies by her side – her husband Hayrullah Bey with whom she only has a formal marriage and a father-daughter relationship. Before he dies – and even before they get married (out of convenience) – he tries to comfort her as she loses her adopted daughter Munise: "We can't help it, Doctor Bey; don't worry. It was God's wish, and it had to happen so", I answered. He looked at me sadly. "My poor child; do you know why I really feel sorry for you? When you're in trouble, you forget that it's yourself that needs consoling, and you begin to console others."[138] – when she regains her fatalistic approach to death and composure in the face of it.

However, when it comes to the only man that she loves – her ex fiancé Kāmran – she morbidly thinks that having a dead fiancé is better than having a treacherous fiancé, when she lies to her old school friend Christine that Kāmran had died:

> "How tragic! I'm very sorry for you, Feride: I think there is no greater disaster for a young girl than to see the death of the fiancé she loves."
> When you said it, I lowered my eyes and closed them, and said: "You are quite right." In the circumstances, what else *could* I say? I told you a lie, Christine. I know a tragedy still greater for a young girl. Young girls who see their lovers die are not so much to be pitied as you believe. They have one great consolation; after months and years have passed, when they are alone at night in a dark, cold room in some unknown place, they can still call their lover's face to mind. They have the right to say: "The last glance from those pitiful eyes was mine." They can kiss the face of his image in their hearts. But I am denied that right, Christine.[139]

As for Adriana, death is also present in a repetitive pattern in her family history, with her mother being a widow (and possibly becoming as resentful as she is partially because of that): "A family

[137] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 233.
[138] Ibid., p. 296.
[139] Ibid., p. 207.

for mother had meant poverty, slavery, and a few infrequent pleasures which came to an abrupt end with the death of her husband."[140] Adriana too is quite the femme fatale by indirectly sending two of her clients to an early grave: Astarita (her most loyal lover – who gets killed by Sonzogno because he tries to defend her from him) and Sonzogno (the supposed father of her child – who gets shot dead by the police after he throws Astarita down a well of stairs); and even more importantly, Mino – the love of her life – commits suicide (his premature death is not caused by her either directly or indirectly, but rather by his inner demons, identity crisis, and guilty conscience). In accordance with the level of affection she feels (or does not feel) for them, she is shaken only by the disappearance (and as she later discovers: suicide) of her boyfriend.

> Any form of occupation, distraction, or even meditation, which was unconnected with Mino filled me with nausea, and at the same time the thought of Mino caused me unbearable anguish. Two or three times I happened to think of Astarita, and as I remembered his love for me and his melancholy, I experienced a strong feeling of helpless pity for him and told myself that if I had not been so anxious on Mino's account, I would have wept for him and prayed for his soul, which had never been gladdened by any light and had been cut off from his body in such a barbarous and unexpected fashion.[141]

All three deaths of the three key men in her life symbolically coincide (she learns about the murders of Astarita and Sonzogno while she expects news from the disappeared – by then already dead – Mino), as if they only serve as *termes évanouissants*,[142] so that once their role in her life is done (they serve as catalysts in the process of her metamorphosis from an innocent girl to a prostitute, and then from a prostitute to a mother), they become redundant and vanish into the nothingness of death.

Albeit she does not wish for the permanent disappearance of any of her men, Adriana romanticizes death – in particular, a joint suicide with Mino – and regrets that he is not willing to die with/for her (judging from his behavior); like Feride, who believes that having a dead fiancé

[140] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 12.

[141] Ibid., pp. 427–428.

[142] Vanishing mediators mediate between two opposing concepts and disappear as soon as the first concept is replaced by the second.

is better than having an adulterous one, she prefers a dead Mino over an indifferent, unloving Mino, and yearns for a Romeo and Juliet-esque conclusion of their liaison:

> Sonzogno was raving mad; if he found Mino with me, he would not hesitate to kill us both. I must confess that the idea of dying with Mino was curiously attractive. […] But I thought that being killed by the same murderer at the same moment would not be as wonderful as committing suicide together. A suicide pact seems a worthy conclusion to a passionate love affair. […] I had often pondered over this kind of suicide, which interrupts the passage of time before it can corrupt and spoil love, and is deliberately planned through an excess of joy, rather than through an inability to bear suffering. […] But I had never mentioned it to him, because I knew that if two people commit suicide together they have to be in love to the same degree. And Mino did not love me; or if he loved me, not so much that he wanted to die with me.[143]

3.3. Princess vs. Wicked witch

In continuation of the symbolism of the chasm between the angel and the monster, I would also refer to the stock characters of the princess and the wicked witch, who is in most scenarios the evil stepmother of the motherless maiden. The psychoanalytic view of this dualism suggests that its root is in the splitting of the parental imago. According to the Austrian-American psychologist Bruno Bettelheim, children have a coping mechanism for the realization that their beloved parental figure can be both good and bad – they externalize the "bad" traits to another person or being, which is often exemplified in folk- and fairy-tales, most notably the transformation of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother into the big bad wolf:

> To the child, grandma is no longer the same person she was just a moment before; she has become an ogre. How can someone who was so very kind, who brought presents and was more understanding and tolerant and uncritical than even his own mommy, suddenly act in such a radically different fashion? Unable to see any congruence between the different manifestations, the child truly experiences Grandma as two separate entities – the loving and the threatening. […] By dividing her up, so to speak, the child can preserve his image of the good grandmother. If she changes into a wolf – well, that's certainly scary, but he need not compromise his vision of Grandma's benevolence.[144]

[143] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, pp. 395–396.

[144] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 73.

This splitting of the imago is even more common in mother-child relationships, both in fairy tales and in real life alike, because young children are unable to imagine the mother figure as anything but the ultimate protectress.

3.3.1. Snow White vs. Evil Queen

One of the most popular variations on the "princess vs. wicked witch" theme is the story of Snow White, popularized both by the Grimm brothers – as their recount of a Middle Age European (German) folk tale, and Walt Disney Productions in more recent times – as its first animated feature film. The tale opens with the first Queen (Snow White's mother), but eventually she dies, or rather she herself transmogrifies into her evil alter ego – the Evil Queen – who starts feeling threatened by the beauty of her (step)daughter, and thus tries to eliminate her. In Gilbert's and Gubar's analysis, the key dynamics in the story arise from the relationship between the vainglorious, wily Queen and her sweet, passive stepdaughter.

> When we first encounter this "new" wife, she is framed in a magic looking glass, just as her predecessor – that is, her earlier self – had been framed in a window. To be caught and trapped in a mirror rather than a window, however, is to be driven inward, obsessively studying self-images as if seeking a viable self. The first Queen seems still to have had prospects; not yet fallen into sexuality, she looked outward, if only upon the snow. The second Queen is doomed to the inward search that psychoanalysts like Bruno Bettelheim censoriously define as "narcissism". […]
> The Queen's husband and Snow White's father (for whose attentions, according to Bettelheim, the two women are battling in a feminized Oedipal struggle) never actually appears in this story at all, a fact that emphasizes the almost stifling intensity with which the tale concentrates on the conflict in the mirror between mother and daughter, woman and woman, self and self.[145]

The most significant trope in Grimm's tale is the Queen's mirror, and it is, as such, present in Güntekin's work: "One of the child's characteristics was her delight in dress: she was very vain. I have never liked girls of that nature, but Munise's way of dressing in front of a mirror and smiling at herself with pleasure was not without its charm."[146] In the first half of the novel, Feride is (or acts as if she is) entirely oblivious to her physical charms; hence, she attributes vanity to

[145] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 37.

[146] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 177.

her stepdaughter Munise, unlike in the tale, where the stepmother owns the mirror. But soon enough, Feride finally acknowledges her beauty for the first time, slyly blaming the child for this newly discovered narcissism of hers: "Why should I conceal it? No one will read this diary but myself. I found myself prettier than I'd realized, and felt inclined to concede the truth to those who told me: 'Feride, there's something about you that's different from anyone else.' What am I saying? Oh, that little girl! – while I'm trying to bring her up to be a sensible child, she'll make me as vain as she is herself."[147] This self-love (for which she, luckily, is not punished) culminates in a Narcissus-like episode, when she literally kisses her reflection while pondering on her features:

> I looked at her a little shyly, as though I were looking at a stranger. After all no one else will read my diary, so why shouldn't I tell it everything? I found her beautiful, with a beauty that entranced me; the eyes were eyes that shone like stars; the eyes of the happy, carefree Çalıkuşu whom I had known in Istanbul. But when they began to laugh it was all changed – a pity there were all those delicate lines in a face that was beautiful enough to make me want to cry. I saw something likeable even in its faulsts. [...] How disconcerted and amazed I used to be at B. when they called me "Silkworm"; and now at Ç. it was "Gülbeşeker". All the same I could give those very names to the girl in the mirror – to this creature bright as morning, lovely as April roses touched with hoar-frost. For a moment I looked round in fear of being observed, and then I leaned towards the looking glass and kissed myself – my eyes, my cheeks, my chin. My heart beat like a small bird's: my moist lips trembled.
> What a pity these mirrors are only invented by man! However hard you try, you can't kiss your hair or your eyes. No matter what you do, you're confined to kissing your lips and your mouth.[148]

Feride's recollection of her adulatory nicknames (Silkworm and *Gülbeşeker* – rose jam) resonates with Weininger's opinion of women's exceptional memory for compliments: "Compliments are something that can confer value on women only because they have no natural standard of value and do not feel that they have within them any absolute value that spurns everything apart from itself."[149] In the context of the patriarchal gaze, Weininger believes that all women – no matter how pretty or ugly objectively (or according to the objective opinion of men?) – are vain enough to consider themselves beautiful when looking at the mirror, however: "It is the thought of the

[147] Ibid., p. 178.

[148] Ibid., p. 244.

[149] Weininger, *Sex and Character*, p. 176.

man to whom these charms will one day belong that asserts itself with full force and a most exciting sense of anticipation, thus proving once more that woman can be alone, but never lonely."[150]

Adriana experiences a similar delighted revelation – basking in the vicarious pleasure of a potential male spectator – when she examines her body after she comes to terms with her new profession:

> That morning was the first time I looked on my body as a very convenient means for achieving the aims which hard work and honesty had not enabled me to attain. [...]
> I looked at myself naked in the mirror, and for the first time understood my mother's pride when she said to the artist, "Look at her bosom! Her legs – her hips." I thought of Astarita whose whole character, even his manner and voice, was changed by his desire for my bosom, my legs, my hips, and I told myself I would certainly find other men who would give me as much money and even more than he did, if they could have pleasure from me.[151]

It is the same with Queen's magic mirror – she receives criticism (no matter if it is positive or negative) by the King personified in it: "There is clearly at least one way in which the King *is* present. His, surely, is the voice of the looking glass, the patriarchal voice of judgment that rules the Queen's – and every woman's – self-evaluation. […] The woman has internalized the King's rules: his voice resides now in her own mirror, her own mind."[152]

What is more, if we take a step back from the fictional universes of Feride and Adriana and see them for what they truly are – fiction, we grasp the hypocrisy of the authors who depict them, especially as they cast their male gaze onto the heroines they contrive for their own (and their readers') pleasure. John Berger sums up in the following way: "You painted a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her, you put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting *Vanity*, thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had depicted for your own pleasure."[153]

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[150] Ibid., p. 174.

[151] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 123.

[152] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, pp. 37–38.

[153] Berger et al., *Ways of Seeing*, p. 51.

One of the main themes in the tale about Snow White is female rivalry in competition for the attention of men. Nevertheless, it is Adriana's mother who instills consciousness in her about the worth of (her) beauty, which sets the tone in the opening sentence of the novel: "At sixteen years of age, I was a real beauty. [...] Mother said that although my face was beautiful, my figure was a hundred times more so; she said that there was not a figure like mine in all Rome."[154] Although she is not competitive or resentful towards her daughter's beauty, there is a very overt ambition to earn money from it, and subsequently frustration by the inability to acquire the amount of wealth she thinks Adriana deserves:

> I felt ashamed, not so much at having to undress in front of a man for the first time in my life, as at the things I guessed mother would say to persuade him to employ me. And, in fact, after she had helped me to slip my clothes over my head and had made me stand naked in the middle of the room, she began to talk enthusiastically to the artist. "Just look what a bosom! What hips! Look at her legs! Where else will you find legs and hips and a bosom like these?" And as she said these things, she kept on prodding me, just like they prod animals to persuade people to buy them in the market. The painter was laughing; I grew ashamed and since it was winter I felt very cold. But I realized mother was not talking in this way out of spite but that she was proud of my beauty because she was my mother and, if I was beautiful, I owed it all to her.[155]

One cannot really say that Adriana progresses (or regresses) from the naïve Snow White to the Evil Queen, because no matter how much her character evolves (or devolves), or how she learns to manipulate people with her looks for her own causes, she retains a purity of heart, and being as forgiving as she is, she successfully casts off thoughts of jealousy and rivalry – especially towards her coworker Gisella, who viciously thrusts her into the world of prostitution.

But Feride, on the other hand, oscillates between the roles of Snow White and the Evil Queen. With her dark hair and unique complexion that everyone comments on, she is the epitome of Snow White.

> Feride remains until the very end an ideal type of femininity, esthetically rendered. The alternative names she is given in different places, reminiscent as they are of softness, kindness, a patriarchal woman's attributes and qualities, sustain this ideal. […]

[154] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 3.

[155] Ibid., p. 4.

> Notwithstanding her successive ordeals, she is the woman who preserves her natural beauty, breathes sexuality, yet her virtue, virginality and virginity remain untouched until the moment comes for her to assume the role of a wife and future biological mother. Significantly, Munise, her adopted daughter, is not allowed to live, so that in the end the heroine is free to marry the man she has loved all along and have *his* children.[156]

On the inside Feride fights against her innocent self that wants to be reconciled and to settle down with Kāmran, a self that is later on externalized and materialized in the character of Munise – a poor little girl she adopts, who is her dream realized – the girl she wants to, but could not be: a lovable, docile, angelic creature with simple desires – and literally dematerialized[157] as soon as Feride accepts that feminine side of herself and becomes the woman that Kāmran is finally capable of loving. So even though Munise ends up in a coffin – like Snow White – as soon as the Prince arrives she wakes up from her comatose state not as Munise, but as Feride, with her dormant instincts for submission and domesticity unleashed by the reappearance of Kāmran and all the years spent without him. In the context of the relationship between Snow White and the Evil Queen,

> [w]hat began in the Brothers Grimm's *Snow White* as the Queen's narcissistic desire to prolong her beauty by living vicariously through her stepdaughter is now transformed into a rivalry between stepmother and stepdaughter to outperform each other in their social and familial setting. Instead of being happy to see her stepdaughter's beauty flourish as hers withers, the Queen, in an act of self-preservation, refuses to accept her imminent aging. [...]
> This dialectic of competition between two females is set up within the patriarchal mold of the 'older' woman being replaced by the younger more fertile woman. This is not a rivalry created by the women but by the socio-cultural context in which they live, as symbolized by the mirror.[158]

[156] Adriana Luminița Răducanu, "Outer Mobility, Inner Becoming in *Jane Eyre* and *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*", *Gender Studies*, No. 6 (2007), p. 45.

[157] It is interesting how both Feride's adopted daughter and Kāmran's wife die in order to clear the way for their romance to be resumed, but (luckily) not Kāmran's biological children. I see it as an indication of the different expectations from men and women – even for a widower with children, an adequate match would be a young and childless woman (in the case of Feride, a virgin).

[158] Cristina Santos, "Evil Is in the Eye of the Beholder: Snow White and the Evil Queen", eds. Mark Chekares and Márcia Heloisa Amarante Gonçalves, *The Monster Stares Back: How Human We Remain through Horror's Looking Glass* (Oxfordshire, UK: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2015), p. 129.

In a similar fashion, even though Feride and Munise do not (and because of their age difference cannot) compete over men, Feride clutches onto her as her beacon of meaningfulness in life, and on the night that she celebrates her "festival of liberty" (the first anniversary of her "escape from her cage") with her dear friend Hadji Kalfa and his family, she imagines a future when Munise will probably find a purpose of her own and she'll be left all alone: "I have a strong body that can stand up uncomplainingly to cold and suffering and pain. Maybe I shall live another forty of fifty years. Perhaps it will take almost fifty years to celebrate the anniversary of this sad victory. Oh how long life is, how long! Probably even Munise won't be left to me. Slowly my hair will turn white",[159] in a way revealing her secret fear of becoming a childless old maid.

When Munise is just about fourteen, Feride makes her wear a çarşaf (like the Queen who wants to eliminate Snow White as a rival in beauty): "I'm aware too, that she's very young for it, but am I to do? I'm afraid. Some of my friends tell me: 'Feride Hanım, you will lose the child; she'll get married, and you'll be a mother-in-law before your time.' That puts me into a great state of delight and anxiety. It's not without a reason that people say that mothers-in-law are particular."[160] On the one hand she does not want to get married, and on the other hand, she does not want Munise to get married either; so in a sense, both women are confined by the image refracted by the mirror.

> Snow White can also be perceived as the Queen's narcissistic extension of herself, where her monstrousness is constructed vis-à-vis the 'behaviors and feelings that are unmodified, uncontrolled, unsublimated' by the established heteronormative patriarchal discourse.
> In the role of stepmother the Queen is expected to take the place of the mother and, as a result, sacrifice her sexuality to be the 'good mother', yet the fact that the Queen is not ready to do so emphasizes that she can never be a good mother. For the Queen, within the traditional patriarchal context of the fairy tale, there is no other conclusion for feminine sexuality other than death or perversity.[161]

Feride adamantly sacrifices her sexuality, and the outcome of it is Munise's death (not hers). Even though Feride goes through a grueling ordeal that seemingly changes her entirely as a

[159] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 228.
[160] Ibid., p. 294.
[161] Santos, "Evil Is in the Eye of the Beholder", p. 133.

person, she goes full circle and becomes a mother without a child, a wife without a husband; in other words, she starts as being the exact opposite of obedient, silent, immobile, and passive (as is required by the ideal of female beauty in Islam, according to Mernissi), but ends up realizing that she has been running away from herself (her true self yearning to be reunited with Kāmran) all the time, and at long last she succumbs to love and settles down (thus, eventually conforming to the Islamic female beauty standards). Even Kāmran himself in his letter (in the closing lines of the novel) confesses that he could not handle her old self, but that he finally loves her as he should, after the ugly duckling has turned into a beautiful swan (i.e. after Çalıkuşu has metamorphosed into Gülbeşeker):

> When I began to love you, you were a perverse, uncertain little girl, who could do nothing but laugh and amuse herself. You were a Çalıkuşu – a little wren, as elusive to the touch as light or sound. I felt a deep tenderness towards you. Every morning, when I awoke, I found that the love in my heart had grown a little more. That tenderness made me feel ashamed, and it frightened me too. At times, your looks and your words were such as to give my heart some hope; but you used to change so quickly. In your language, mischievous child's eyes, the sensitive spirit of a woman would suddenly reveal itself, but only to disappear the same moment. "It's impossible that such a child should understand me; she'll ruin my life", I used to say. I couldn't believe that you'd ever know what it was to dedicate your life and heart to me with real fidelity. And you, perhaps, ran away at the sight of me, to hide your fleeting color, and those lovely lips as they began to tremble. I put all that down to the fickleness of a Çalıkuşu, and it was very nearly destroying me. Tell me, Feride: in what part of your little Çalıkuşu's breast did you conceal so deep a loyalty and so sensitive a spirit?
> [...] You will tell me that Çalıkuşu is dead, and for ever. What does that matter? I've given all my love for Çalıkuşu to someone else: to Gülbeşeker.[162]

To sum it all up, in the beginning Kāmran feels tenderness towards her (like the kind of affection one feels towards a naughty child that needs to be disciplined), and not love – because he cannot predict and control her behavior. According to him, his doubt in her ability to fully dedicate herself to him is what caused him to distrust her (and cheat on her), but judging from his actions, he is the one who could not dedicate his life and heart to her – or any woman, for that matter – with real fidelity. Regardless, Feride changes from a self-governing and outspoken Queen to a submissive and diffident Snow White; from a monster-girl to an angel-woman – and that is the reason she finally deserves her "happy ending".

[162] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, pp. 327–328.

> In "The Juniper Tree", a version of "Little Snow White" in which a *boy's* mother tries to kill him (for different reasons, of course) the dead boy is transformed not into a silent art object but into a furious golden bird who sings a song of vengeance against his murderess and finally crushes her to death with a millstone. The male child's progress toward adulthood is a growth toward both self-assertion and self-articulation, "The Juniper Tree" implies, a development of the *powers* of speech. But the girl child must learn the arts of silence either as herself a silent image invented and defined by the magic looking glass of the male-authored text.[163]

The discussed male writers, with their phallogocentric mindset, create characters that reach their self-actualization in marriage (Feride) or motherhood (Adriana), and finally deserve to be loved only after they learn to be subordinate.

3.4. Mary vs. Eve and Cuckold Anxiety

Another perspective on the Madonna/whore dichotomy is offered by Vladimir Tumanov, who puts it in the context of evolutionary biology; he postulates that these two polar opposites stem from paternal uncertainty:

> Because the male is potentially always at risk of unwittingly raising the offspring of another male, two (often complementary) male sexual strategies have evolved to counter this genetic threat: mate guarding and promiscuity. The Virgin Mary is the mythological expression of the mate guarding strategy. Mary is an eternal virgin, symbolically allaying all fear of paternal uncertainty. Mary makes it possible for the male psyche to have its reproductive cake and eat it too: she gives birth (so reproduction takes place) and yet requires no mate guarding effort or jealousy. Eve, the inventor of female sexuality, is repeatedly viewed by the church fathers, e.g., Augustine and Origen, as Mary's opposite. Thus, Eve becomes the embodiment of the whore: both attractive in the context of the promiscuity strategy and repulsive in terms of paternal uncertainty.[164]

The two antagonistic images[165] are, in fact, results of the two coping mechanisms or sexual strategies a man can undertake – mate guarding (reducing his partner's chances to mate with

[163] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, pp. 42–43.

[164] Tumanov, "Mary Versus Eve", p. 2.

[165] Regarding motherhood and sexuality, the Dutch cultural theorist Mieke Bal finds the unrealistic expectations Christian morality imposes on women sadistically personified in Mary: "Mary was supposed to correct Eve, in that she was the 'pure' mother, but the very notion is self-contradictory. According to her image, woman is bad in spite of motherhood, because she cannot but fail to limit herself to it. Eve, Mary's presumably negative counterpart, had in

someone else) and promiscuity (maximizing his chances of reproduction by mating with as many women as possible) – in order to deal with paternal uncertainty, or cuckold anxiety,[166] and Tumanov explores how this phenomenon manifests itself in Christian discourse.

> In the Old Testament the jealousy bias is expressed by the legal meaning of the Decalogue's seventh commandment: "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). This interdiction pertains to women's behavior, i.e., adultery is only extra-pair mating by a woman since it increases paternal uncertainty. A married man who has sex with another man's wife is not seen as harming his own wife, but rather as undermining the genetic survival of the adulteress' husband. So a man can technically commit adultery to be sure, but it is still about the effect of this act on *another man's* reproductive potential.[167]

The jealousy bias was typical for monotheistic religions as there was a tendency for the believers to slip back to polytheistic practices, analogous to extra-pair copulation in terms of biology: "The most common interpretation of the Song of Songs is as a metaphor for the relationship between the god of Israel and his people, i.e., the form is that of marriage and marital fidelity."[168] As for the sexual strategies to deal with this jealousy and anxiety, "Mate guarding expresses itself in veiling, chaperoning, purdah, and the literal incarceration of women [which] are common social institutions of patrilineal societies"[169] (but also the practice of celibacy, which I will move onto later on), and Tumanov further concludes that "sexual control through domestic confinement was the norm in the Middle Ages, and even liberal thinkers saw nothing wrong with it."[170]

Speaking of veiling as a mate guarding technique, and putting it in the context of Kemalist Turkey – which is the ideological setting of *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* – it is worth

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fact a better start, representing both sexuality and motherhood. The man, however, fails to appreciate that: after his celebration of love, now forgotten, he exclusively stresses the other side of woman: motherhood. Thus Eve, starting in wholeness, is now condemned to predict Mary." See Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 128.

[166] Tumanov defines cuckold anxiety as the risk of genetic extinction by raising the offspring of a reproductive competitor. I believe he uses precisely that term because of the imagery it evokes: cuckold originates from the onomatopoeic word cuckoo – a bird "associated with marital infidelity because it sometimes lays its eggs in the nest of another bird, which will then raise the baby cuckoos as its own." See Morton, *The Lover's Tongue*, p. 222.

[167] Tumanov, "Mary Versus Eve", p. 5.

[168] Ibid., p. 5.

[169] Ibid., p.4.

[170] Ibid., p. 21.

mentioning that, even though Western attire became all-pervasive as part of the secular pillars Mustafa Kemal Atatürk set as the founder of modern Turkey, there was a similar control over female sexuality (veil or no veil).This combination of puritan and Islamic morality stemmed as a necessity in view of the increased female participation in the public sphere and the desegregation of the genders: "Kemalist modernization kept intact the culture that perceived women as the symbol of honor – of family and nation. The *namus* (honor) of a family depends on, and thus can be damaged by, the behavior of women (especially regarding her sexual conduct and virginity), but it has to be protected by men, who are in charge of the family."[171] This behavioral code (epitomized in Feride's character) comports with the stigmatization of sexuality[172] that Tumanov addresses:

> Given that denial and punishment offer only a partially satisfying solution to the approach-avoidance conflict within the male psyche, another idea is the attempt to "seal the womb", so to speak, by emphasizing virginity and condemning sexuality as a whole. This notion does not gather true momentum until the advent of Christianity, but in pre-Christian societies we do observe certain precursors. Thus, sexuality is viewed with suspicion and even condemnation by Plato, Aristotle and Hippocrates, as well as the Stoic philosophers, Pliny the Elder, the Gnostics and the Essenes.[173]

Feride mothers Munise without actually giving birth to her, and becomes Hayrullah's wife without ever consummating the marriage – something addressed by Tumanov as a Josephite

[171] Zehra F. Arat, "Introduction: Politics of Representation and Identity", ed. Zehra F. Arat, *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 27.

[172] Betsy Merideth takes this stigmatization a step further in her comparison of two main female characters in the Biblical stories of *Samson and Delilah* and *Judith and Holofernes*. Both Delilah and Judith seduce a man in order to destroy him; however, betrayal is generally attributed to the former, and not the latter, who is, in fact, regarded as a Jewish patriotic heroine. Commentators "find it necessary to point out that while Judith uses 'a woman's weapons', that is, her body and sexuality, to perform her heroic deed, she still is able to remain chaste, and it is precisely this latter point that allows her to be the heroine of the story. This double standard – that she must be beautiful and sexual and yet chaste and untouched – reflects profound male ambivalence toward women's sexuality: that it is simultaneously desirable and dangerous." However, no matter how positive Judith's character is in the context of the story, the main point is that beauty and deceit are complementary, integral aspects of female nature, present in both wicked and honorable women alike, which proves that not just negative, but positive female representations too, carry anti-woman ideologies. See Betsy Merideth, "Desire and Danger: The Drama of Betrayal in Judges and Judith", Mieke Bal (ed.), *Anti-covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield, UK: Almond Press, 1989), pp. 75.

[173] Tumanov, "Mary Versus Eve", p. 8.

marriage[174] in reference to the celibate marriage of spiritual companionship between Virgin Mary and Joseph, and the "prelapsarian state where life was like that of the angels, who multiply without marriage and sexual reproduction";[175] on their wedding night Feride goes to Hayrullah's bedroom begrudgingly in order to do what (she thinks) is expected of her, but luckily to his surprise and shock:

> That is the story of my bridal night. My little Doctor's feeling had been so honest, and his heart so true, that he had not even seen the necessity of telling me that our marriage was to be one in name only. Compared with him, how frivolous and worldly I had been! Oh, dear. He had been able to forget, in our unworldly companionship, that he was a man: but I had not forgotten that I was a woman.[176]

Just as men have mixed feelings towards Eve (both attractive and repulsive in terms of the two strategies – promiscuity and mate guarding, respectively), Mino is ambivalent towards Adriana, and it takes long for her to lure him in bed (and even then, he is distant and contradictory). "Because she is the first one to disobey the divine interdiction, Eve represents not just female sexuality but specifically *female sexual choice* – the real source of masculine anxiety. The female under complete male control is an ideal toward which the male psyche strives because only such a sexual monopoly can alleviate paternal uncertainty."[177]

There is another aspect of Eve which makes her relatable not only to Adriana, but to Feride too – which depicts her as an independent seeker of knowledge: "The only woman within the Western corpus of beliefs who sought knowledge directly without the intermediary of a man, the figure who could be the prototype of the feminine rite of passage, is Eve. But part of her postlapsarian punishment is that her desire shall be to her husband, and ever after husbands have been intermediaries."[178] Feride falls from her personal Eden also because of her curiosity, and later on

[174] "St. Augustine viewed original sin as something passed on from generation to generation through the sexual act and therefore pleaded for the so-called Josephite marriage, that is, total continence in marriage, as reflected in many lives of saints. [...] In Augustine's eyes virginity is morally higher than marriage with sex." See ibid., pp. 8–9.

[175] Ibid., p. 9.

[176] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 323.

[177] Tumanov, "Mary Versus Eve", p. 10.

[178] Hoffman Baruch, *Women, Love, and Power*, p. 141.

bitterly regrets her decision to speak to the woman who spills the venom of Kāmran's dalliances in her mind.

Tumanov makes a similar observation like Gilbert and Gubar regarding the self-perpetuating model of extreme portrayals (angel vs. monster) both in male- and (more surprisingly in) female-written fiction, because not only heroines, but their female creators too are trapped in this restricting dichotomy typical for patriarchal texts:

> In the case of Russian fiction, according to Rosalind Marsh, "male writers in nineteenth-century Russia often chose to portray two contrasting types of female characters, who can be loosely interpreted in terms of the age-old opposition of *Madonna and whore*". [...]
> A similar opposition exists between Elizabeth and Lydia Bennet in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). With respect to the last example, it is interesting that the author is a woman, and yet, to quote Janet Garton, "the tendency of male writing and mythology to divide women into two kinds, the 'bad' (monster, witch, whore) and the 'good' (angel, princess, Madonna) has been perpetuated by women writers such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë". This demonstrates the polarizing power of the Madonna/whore dichotomy in Western cultural discourse – a notion that perpetuates itself regardless of the speaker's gender.[179]

3.4.1. Lilith

On top of the duality between Virgin Mary and Eve, there is another religious figure to form a triad with them – Lilith – present only in Jewish materials and Christian apocrypha.

> Created not from Adam's rib but, like him, from the dust, Lilith was Adam's first wife, according to apocryphal Jewish lore. Because she considered herself his equal, she objected to lying beneath him, so that when he tried to force her submission, she became enraged and, speaking the Ineffable Name, flew away to the edge of the Red Sea to reside with demons. Threatened by God's angelic emissaries, told that she must return or daily lose a hundred of her demon children to death, Lilith preferred punishment to patriarchal marriage. [...] Excluded from the human community, even from the semi-divine communal chronicles of the Bible, the figure of Lilith represents the price women have been told they must pay for attempting to define themselves. And it is a terrible price: cursed both because she is a character who "got away" and because she dared to usurp the essentially literary authority implied by the act of naming, Lilith is locked into

[179]Tumanov, "Mary Versus Eve", pp. 18–19.

> a vengeance (child-killing) which can only bring her more suffering (the killing of her own children). And even the nature of her one-woman revolution emphasizes her helplessness and her isolation, for her protest takes the form of a refusal and a departure, a flight of escape rather than an active rebellion like, say, Satan's.[180]

Like Lilith, Feride is incensed when Kāmran does not treat her as an equal, and goes into hiding to faraway places instead of confronting him; furthermore, she does not literally kill Munise, but Munise's death is part (or a "karmic" consequence) of the life she leads as punishment for jilting the role of an obedient and forgiving wife that is expected from her. Moreover, when deciding to adopt Munise, Feride laments over her unborn (or dead – like Lilith's) children with Kāmran: "Once, I was mad enough to hope that for other children; but they died, those other children; they died, one evening, in each other's arms, in my heart. But now I have made peace with life again, and everything delights me. Kāmran, it was you, one evening, who destroyed those unhappy children that I'd kept buried in my heart."[181]

Both Lilith and the Evil Queen personify the monster: "Myths and fairy tales often both state and enforce culture's sentences with greater accuracy than more sophisticated literary texts. If Lilith's story summarizes the genesis of the female monster in a single useful parable, the Grimm tale of 'Little Snow White' dramatizes the essential but equivocal relationship between the angel-woman and the monster-woman."[182] All female roles are regulated by the bearer's virginality and/or sexuality:

> As early as the Biblical Eve, female sexuality has been linked to "evilness" and, later in history, to witches. The connection between the Queen's sexuality and her depiction as evil is prevalent throughout many versions of the fairy tale in both its traditional form and its contemporary renderings. Interestingly, it is her loss of social placement and/or standing that instigates her "witchhood": "A woman usually becomes a witch after the initial failure of her life as a woman, often frustrated or illegitimate love affairs have left her with a sense of impotence or disgrace." As such, menstruating, barren and menopausal women all have the potential of being witches: "[a]ll women could be witches – their sexuality and fecundity made it so". That is, despite her stage of sexual development (except for virginal) women's sexuality is socially regulated.[183]

[180] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 35.

[181] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 174.

[182] Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, p. 36.

[183] Santos, "Evil Is in the Eye of the Beholder", p. 132.

3.5. Woman as *Fitna*

The idea of the danger lurking from the dark continent of female sexuality (hence, the need of its social regulation) is present in other worldviews too. The Islamic concept of *fitna* also perpetuates the necessity of locking women away from the outer world, which would otherwise instigate their inner wickedness. *Fitna* is the potential of every honorable and respectable woman to turn into a prostitute, monster, witch, etc.; hence, she always tiptoes on that thin line while society tries to prevent her from deviating. The most straightforward definition – or a denotation – of *fitna* is rebellion, anarchy in society; on the other hand, its connotation has to do with the potential chaos and destruction caused by unleashed female seductive powers.

> Life could only follow its normal steady and uninterrupted course, and society could only avoid any potential menace to its stability and structure, or any disruption of the social order, if men continued to satisfy the sexual needs of their women, kept them happy, and protected their honor. If this was not ensured a *fitna* could easily be let loose, since the honor of women would be in doubt, and as a result uneasiness and trouble could erupt at any moment. The virtue of women had to be ensured if peace was to reign among men, not an easy task in view of the *fitna* (seductiveness) of women. [...]
> Woman was therefore considered by the Arabs as a menace to man and society, and the only way to avoid the harm she could do was to isolate her in the home, where she could have no contact with either one or the other.[184]

The Turkish academic Deniz Kandiyoti talks about female sexuality in the Turkish context where women, despite being emancipated outwardly, still remain entangled in old patterns of behavior and dependent on men in the stubbornly patriarchal society:

> The corporate control over female sexuality becomes strikingly evident in the large number of different individuals who see themselves as immediately responsible for ensuring women's appropriate sexual conduct. Parents, siblings, near and distant relatives, and even neighbors closely monitor the movements of the post-pubescent girl, firmly imprinting the notion that her sexuality is not hers to give or withhold. This is clearly apparent at the critical juncture of the choice of a marriage partner. [...]
> Women are vested with immense negative power because any misbehavior on their part can bring shame and dishonor to the male members of a whole community, lineage, or family.[185]

[184] Nawāl El-Saadāwi, *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*, trans. Hetata Sherif (London, UK: Zed Books, 1991), pp. 136–137.

In the case of Feride, she seems to be liberated from the above-mentioned ties because she cannot blacken her family's name due to her anonymity and self-imposed ostracism, but the notions of *namus* and *fitna* are deeply ingrained both in her personality (she constantly worries about her reputation and what people think) and society – there is always a well-meaning neighbor or acquaintance to remind her of her priorities: "There's a woman teacher here, named Arife. She's gotten engaged, now, to a High Court Judge, and lives in the land of milk and honey. May your fate be the same. Was it on account of her beauty? Oh no; it was because of her morals – because she was serious-minded. Man hasn't a thing in the world more precious than honor."[186] The concept of *fitna* is embodied in Aisha; and thus it makes sense why Feride, after embarking on a journey after her rebellion, finally finds peace under the protection of a male guardian (the marriage with Hayrullah, even though on paper only, both provides financial security and guards off ungentlemanly attention).

> Aishah has been interpreted as a symbol for women by several Muslim thinkers. Generally the Sunnis have had a more favorable opinion about Aishah than the Shiite Muslims. The Sunnis' stories about Aishah have mostly been stories that praise Aishah's virtues and show Aishah as an ideal woman that other women should emulate, or they are used to show her as an example of why women should not be in politics. [...]
> The idea that Aishah's story serves as an example of why women should not be involved with politics may owe something to the idea of *fitna*. *Fitna* is the idea that women have some primordial association with chaos; *fitna* also means civil war. Considering Aishah's role in the Uthman controversy, linking Aishah to *fitna* may be a logical jump for some Shiite Muslims. Associating Aishah, and women in general, with *fitna* may have been a big issue for some early Muslim converts that had a preexisting belief in the inherent impure and chaotic nature of women.[187]

To recapitulate the concept of *fitna* – it is the destructive aspect of female sexuality (more precisely, its power over men), hence the urge in Islamicate cultures to control it; in order to rationalize the methods of control, women are further on ascribed childlike incompetence, inconstancy, contrariness, deceitfulness...

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[185] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case", *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer 1987), pp. 325–326.

[186] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, pp. 125–126.

[187] Jacob Rogers, "Aishah as a Symbol for Women in Islam", *Study of World Religions*, http://studyofworldreligions.blogspot.com.tr/2008/05/aishah-as-symbol-for-women-in-islam.html, 24.05.2008.

4. OTHER FEMALE ARCHETYPES

I am not trying to reduce this Italian/Turkish dichotomy solely to Christian vs. Muslim traditions (or generalizations made by gynophobes from those two cultures – like Weininger and Al-Aqqād); I am also exploring the pagan archetypes underlying those traditions that are present in the narratives of the afore-mentioned works – in fact, there is a myriad of female archetypes in both works, sometimes only implied, and often overtly stated.

4.1. Apollonian vs. Dionysian

Opening a whole new outlook, the American anthropologist Ruth Benedict describes the cultural configurations of the Southwest Pueblos and the American Indians as a whole (to which the former belong, but also differ from) as Apollonian and Dionysian, respectively; and in a similar vein, I will use the same Nietzschean distinction to illustrate the psychological configurations of the female characters, but also the social milieus they emerge in. In the case of Feride, there are obviously only Apollonian (or dare I say, Artemisian) traits: reason, enlightenment, order, control, and individuality; while Adriana is an entirely Dionysian character: emotions, instincts, chaos, mysticism, and collective unity – indeed, she willingly throws herself into the throes of promiscuity and bacchanalian chaos.

Juxtaposed to Kemalist Turkey, Atatürk, and Feride, fascist Italy, Mussolini, and Adriana provide a perfect counterbalance on the Apollonian-Dionysian scales. Unquestionably, both countries face similar challenges after World War I; both leaders had a remarkable magnetism and striking presence, and ascended to power in an unexpected, rather forceful fashion, creating a fundamental shift in Turkish and Italian politics; and both fictional characters deal with almost identical life circumstances, but in an entirely different way due to their Apollonian and Dionysian nature.

4.2. Feride from *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*

Feride's character (in contradistinction to the shape-shifting Dionysus) is quite fixed and static – in spite of her hectic physical journey – even in the symbolism she is associated with (which goes in line with Güntekin's lyricism-romanticism).

> In Güntekin's novel the *woman* character is depicted as the stable, morally elevated presence, of great spiritual value. Geographically, Feride travels a lot, so much so that this liberty appears somehow forced and inauthentic, fabricated to sustain an ideal with little if any grasp of the social realities and the opportunities for women. Affectively, she is immutable, rock-like, forever anchored in an absolute kind of love.[188]

Ruth Benedict applies the concepts of Apollonian and Dionysian to whole civilizations, and in my opinion, the Turkish Republic in its early days was "a civilization whose forms are dictated by the typical choices of the Apollonian, all of whose delight is in formality and whose way of life is the way of measure and of sobriety."[189] Indeed, the Republican reforms reinforced intrinsically Apollonian values, especially in contrast with the Dionysian character of the last decades of the crumbling Ottoman Empire, filled with turmoil and loose morals. It is easy to imagine that such a scenery (a shift from Dionysian to Apollonian) would foster characters like Feride.

4.2.1. Artemis

Artemis is an archetype that can be applied to Feride, and it also falls in the Apollonian category because she – Artemis – is very similar to her twin brother Apollo. She is an Amazonian type of woman (and also she "was a patron goddess of Amazons"[190] – there is even a legend that they founded Ephesus, housing the Temple of Artemis). Apart from hunt, Artemis is also, paradoxically, the goddess of childbirth, midwifery, *and* virginity: "The idea that Artemis's

[188] Răducanu, "Outer Mobility, Inner Becoming in *Jane Eyre* and *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*", p. 43.

[189] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York, NY: New American Library of World Literature, Mentor Book, 1960), p. 120.

[190] Marguerite Rigoglioso, *Virgin Mother Goddesses of Antiquity* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), p. 57.

priestesses at Ephesus and elsewhere may have been women who attempted virgin motherhood resolves the seeming paradox of Artemis's embrace of women's birthing process but rejection of their sexual activity."[191] On another level, the chastity (exemplified both in Artemis and Feride) is empowering:

> This chastity is a metaphor for power, freedom, and audacity. It descends from the Great Mother's renewable virginity, signifying independence from males. The postclassical era has personified chastity in softer, more ingratiating forms – modest maidens, silent nuns, or blushing children, like Dickens' Little Dorritt. Judeo-Christian chastity is devout self-sacrifice. But the Greeks saw chastity as an armed goddess of brazen ego. An Orphic hymn calls Artemis *arsenomorphe*, "masculine in form or look". [...] Artemis is pre-Christian purity without spirituality. Like Nefertiti, she is a visionary materialist. She is western personality as *thing*, matter cleansed of the chthonian.
> As a woman, Artemis has a heroic glamour. She has nerve, fire, arrogance, force.[192]

Artemis bears resemblance to Ziya Gökalp's description: "The ancient Turkish women were all amazons and they, as well as Turkish men, were noted for their horsemanship, skill in use of arms, and feats of heroism. Women could become rulers, fortress commanders, governors and ambassadors in their own right."[193]

4.2.2. Aisyt

Gökalp himself – as one of the strongest proponents of the Kemalist national mythos[194] – emphasizes the idea of the ancient Turks as both feminist and democratic: "As a matter of fact, democratic societies are usually feminist. Another reason why the Turks were feminist is that Ancient Turkish shamanism was based on the sacred power believed to reside in women."[195] He also links chastity with motherhood and fertility – not unlike the cult of Artemis – and in that sense, the archetype of the goddess Aisyt is present in *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*:

[191] Ibid., p. 63.

[192] Paglia. *Sexual Personae*, p. 80.

[193] Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, trans. Robert Devereaux (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1968), p. 113.

[194] In accordance with this mythos, Feride can also be described as a Kemalist ideal woman, but I will dwell on that archetype in more detail in the following chapter dealing with the historical background of the novel.

[195] Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, p. 111.

> Very high were the sexual morals of the ancient Turks. The Yakuts, for example, had a goddess of fertility, Aisyt, comparable to the Venus of the Greeks, who would come to the aid of a woman at the time of childbirth and help her to deliver easily. After staying with the woman for three days, she, together with the fairies of the streams, fields, trees and flowers, who composed her retinue, would return to her palace on the third level of heaven. Aisyt had one rule that she would never break. She would not come to the aid of women who had not guarded their chastity regardless of their supplications or their valuable sacrifices and gifts.[196]

Another crucial point about the ancient Turkish women that Gökalp makes is their industriousness – especially in housekeeping and the traditionally feminine domestic crafts – which he illustrates with a vignette from the book *Akhlâq-i 'Alâî*, (meaning *The Morals of 'Ali*), where a Seljuk princess ruling in Qazvin has the following monologue when she is seen knitting:

> All Iranians who see me do hand work are astonished. However, all the women in my family, like me, always keep busy with hand work. If we rulers do not do likewise, with what shall we occupy ourselves? With frivolities? Such a thing would not be becoming to my *soy*. After we finish with our governmental affairs, we keep busy with hand work and household chores, just like poor women, so as not to be idle. Our *soy* feels that this activity is not a disgrace, but a great honor.[197]

Feride, not a princess but an educated young lady accustomed to being served, confirms the cliché that women find housework therapeutic after her separation from Kāmran, and is undaunted by her abrupt change in status: "Until now, I'd always had my food being prepared for me. I had never even cooked an egg. All that would have to change. Where was I going to find a cook or a servant from now on? This was the moment, with Gülmisal Kalfa at hand, when it was my duty to learn from her how to cook, how to wash up, and launder my clothes."[198] She makes other useful acquaintances on her journey: "The good lady from Samatya knew how to make beautiful jams and sweets. This was surely a far more profitable science than my knowledge of the History of the Prophets. I got from her jam recipes that were both cheap and easy to make, and I wrote them down with scrupulous care in a notebook in which I'd already put the recipes of

[196] Ibid., p. 113.

[197] Ibid., p. 114.

[198] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, pp. 106–107.

Gülmisal Kalfa's dishes."[199] When people wonder why she does not want to get married into a wealthy family, especially in view of her singular beauty and charisma, she answers: "There might be some harmless fellow who would be glad to have me. But I prefer to earn my living by the sweat of my brow – one needn't be ashamed to work."[200]

4.2.3. Shahmaran

As an element of Ancient Turkish shamanism, there is a direct reference to the mythical creature Shahmaran, when Feride notices that Hatije Hanım – an extremely devout Muslim who serves as a school janitress in Zeyniler Köyü (and previously as a teacher, in the lack of qualified personnel) – believes that the scientific charts in the classroom have an occult purpose, e.g. that the chart of a serpent actually represents Shahmaran: "By inscribing the names of sick villagers on the serpent's stomach, you help to cure them."[201] Feride's character bears striking resemblance to this Anatolian-Kurdish folkloric deity:

> In numerous legends and stories that are preserved in the oral tradition in the Middle East (Iraq), India, Turkey (Central, South, and East Anatolia), and Iran, Shahmaran represents a good and benign mythical being that possesses a huge wisdom, knows humanity's secrets, and is immortal. This being has the ability to enchant her listener with her riveting narration, much like Shahrazad from *One Thousand and One Night*. In the legendary stories – even though there are some variations – Shahmaran is depicted as a woman that unconditionally loves a certain mortal who betrays her. The fact that describes her nature the best is that in every version of the legend, Shahmaran is benevolent, selfless, and kindhearted to such an extent that she forgives her loved one. Her only weakness is that others can easily deceive and betray her. It was also believed that Shahmaran lives at a mysterious location, hidden from the rest of the world.[202]

As per the description of Shahmaran above, Feride too is a gifted storyteller in her engrossing diary, knowledgeable, endlessly loyal and forgiving to the man who betrays her, and hides in the most remote Anatolian villages. She also takes upon herself the duty of a nurse when the

[199] Ibid., p. 134.

[200] Ibid., p. 246.

[201] Ibid., p. 159.

[202] Ana Stjelja, "Šahmaran, kraljica zmija: Mitološko biće kao čuvar kulturne tradicije [Shahmaran, the Queen of Serpents: A Mythological Creature as a Keeper of Cultural Tradition]", *Nur*, Vol. 30, No. 73 (2016), p. 88; translation mine.

occasion calls for it (at the beginning of the war, when she is reunited with a former acquaintance – doctor Hayrullah, who needs an assistant), and thus fills in Shahmaran's role of a healer[203] too, as it was believed that whoever eats a piece of her head will inherit her percipience: "Tahmasp acquires all the secrets and wisdom of Shahmaran and becomes the Lokman Hekim, the mythical doctor and pharmacist to whom the plants and trees sing and talk revealing their medicine." [204]

4.2.4. 'Aishah

Even though during the Republican era the ideology of Turkish nationalism shifted from Islamic culture to the Central Asian heritage of the Turks, there are many aspects of Islam that remained present (as they served the Kemalist purpose – for instance, the idea of *fitna* that remained as a key guideline for women's commendable behavior), and as such we have the archetype of 'Aisha, whose persona corresponds with Feride's. Best known as Muhammad's indisputably favorite wife[205], she is also the only virgin he marries; Kāmran – Feride's fiancé – coincidentally happens to mingle only with widows and divorcées. Feride, in spite of being much younger than Kāmran (around six years, but still a child when she meets him for the first time), constantly challenges his views and patience ("Perhaps it would have been a good idea to marry Kāmran; because we were gradually growing up, and the opportunities of having rows with him were getting more remote. Even if it were only for a moment, let there be a real battle; and then, to have my revenge, there'd be nothing for it but marriage."[206]), and she is against him philandering with other women ("I called Kāmran an imbecile now, out of irritation. [...] Whether I was

[203] The amalgamation of narratives from different cultures is evident from the association of Tahmasp – Shahmaran's star-crossed lover – with Luqmān al-Hakīm, but also with Asclepius – the Greek god of medicine – whose famous rod features a serpent (the "asklepian" is an international symbol of healing and medicine, and the logo of the World Health Organization).

[204] Simin Uysal, "The Queen of Serpents and the Mythical Doctor", *Anatolian Stories*, http://anatolianstories.blogspot.mk/2014/06/the-queen-of-serpents-and-mythical.html, 24.06.2014.

[205] "Aisha herself, despite her young age, was a living example of how prominent Arab women stood firm on many issues in those days. She was well known for her strong will, versatile and incisive logic and eloquence. She wielded a powerful intelligence which sometimes was even a match for the inspired and gifted Prophet of Allah. She had no hesitation in opposing or contradicting him whose word was all powerful among the Muslims. [...]
She would differ with him and give vent to her anger whenever he married another wife. She would rebel against him and sometimes even incite his other wives to rebellion. She even went as far as to challenge him in relation to some of the Koranic verses which descended upon him from Heaven." See El-Saadāwi, *The Hidden Face of Eve*, p. 131.

[206] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p, 27.

romping about with the children, or skipping by myself, or lying on the ground telling fortunes with cards, my eyes were always on him. Wherever my cousin might be, it would be somewhere near that woman."[207]). But the similarities do not stop here: "'Aisha became, and remained Muhammad's undisputed favorite, even when he had added beautiful, sought-after women to his harem. Her most recent scholarly biographer, Nabia Abbott, stresses Muhammad's tender care and patience with her; he joined even in her games with dolls."[208] When Kāmran notices Feride's feminine potential, he becomes lavish in his gifts and melts her hostile façade: "Every time he went down to Istanbul, he brought me presents – a colored Japanese sunshade, silk handkerchiefs, silk stockings, a heart-shaped mirror, a chic hand-bag. What was the point of him giving me these things which were more suitable for a grown-up girl than an uncouth child like me?"[209]

4.2.5. Virgin Mary

Another manifestation of religious imagery present in the Autobiography of a Turkish Girl is the peculiar mise-en-scène in the first lines of the nove, which represents the multicultural Istanbulite setting and Westernizing spirit of the era: "The cuckoo clock which hung under the colored picture of the Virgin on the wall went on ticking, but I procrastinated."[210] From the age of nine Feride attends a French Catholic boarding school in Istanbul – *Notre Dame de Sion* (where three of Atatürk's adoptive children were educated), so the motif of Virgin Mary is present from the very beginning, only to be embodied later on in Feride's character (when she becomes a mother by pure serendipity, and her child is symbolically sacrified for the greater good).

4.2.6. Peter Pan

Lastly, the childishness and whimsicality attributed to Feride are her unique charms which make people love her instantly, or, as she herself admits: "It seems to me that I am still a child – a light-

[207] Ibid., p. 34.
[208] Leila Ahmed, *Women and the Rise of Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 51.
[209] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 39.
[210] Ibid., p. 8

minded and inattentive child, all too easily carried away by the life going on around her."[211] It is, however, this Peter Pan syndrome (or *puer aeternus* complex; in the case of Feride: *puella aeterna,* also indicating her unpracticed sexuality) that prevents her from assuming the role(s: of a future wife, daughter-in-law, mother) that society expects from her. Kāmran's mother expresses her sentiments in the following way:

> "Feride, I think it's about time you gave up your childish ways; I'm not only your aunt now, but your mother as well... I needn't say, need I, how glad I am of that. You're very much better for Kāmran than any other strange girl would be, about whose character we'd know nothing. Only... only you're just a bit too harum-scarum. In a child it would be harmless. But you are gradually growing up; and as you get older, you should, of course, become more serious and sensible. There are still about four years before you will leave school and get married. It's a very long time. All the same, you're engaged now. I don't quite know what it is I am trying to say, but you do understand? You must be more serious in mind and in behavior. You must stop this childishness, this mischievousness, this obstinacy. You know how sensitive and refined in feeling Kāmran is..."[212]

As for Feride's attitude towards her own infantile behavior – it is expressed on multiple occasions – when she starts socializing: "Every day we were invited to some party or some house or someone's vineyard. They told me I was now a grown-up girl, and that if I played the fool I should disgrace myself; so it was necessary to walk circumspectly. As I paid my respects to strange ladies and tried to give them serious and polite replies, I couldn't help thinking of the way small children play at 'visitors'",[213] when she becomes a teacher: "The mischief that I'd had, perforce, to suppress in me for five months began to bubble up in me again. As Sister Alexei always said, it doesn't do to give me any encouragement. I get spoilt at once, and play the fool, mincing and slurring my words as small children do."[214] , and most importantly, when she explains the origin of her nickname: "My real name Feride remained an official one, used on special occasion, like clothes that one wears on feast-days. I liked Çalıkuşu, and it served my purpose. When they complained about some impropriety, I would shrug my shoulders helplessly

[211] Ibid., p. 9.
[212] Ibid., p. 76.
[213] Ibid., p. 55.
[214] Ibid., p. 184.

and say: 'What can I do? What can you expect from a *Çalıkuşu*'?"[215] This indicates that Feride herself deems (and enjoys the fact) that she has no moral agency because of a nickname she was given as a child.

4.3. Adriana from *The Woman of Rome*

Dionysus is a real epitome of contrasts, personifying the Hindu Trimūrti in that, upon entering a city, he triggers destruction and subsequently creation (of a new community); the Dionysian myth is "complex and ambiguous, indeed ambivalent, with a dark side as well as a joyous one."[216] Benedict labels some cultures (specifically, the American Indians in general) as Dionysian: "They valued all violent experience, all means by which human beings may break through the usual sensory routine, and to all such experiences they attributed the highest value."[217] Similarly, Italian fascism has elements of unbridled enthusiasm, rampant violence, and lack of rational judgment; but, above all, the key feature of the Italian national mythos is virility:

> Many Italians were convinced that their dignity could not be restored without the recovery of masculinity and martial ardor. Vittorio Alfieri, the Piedmontese poet-prophet of unity who wrote 'An exhortation to free Italy from the barbarians', was especially concerned with the question of virility, a recurrent concern for future builders or rebuilders of the nation up to and including Mussolini. When, according to Alfieri, Italians recovered the virility of their ancient ancestors and discarded the manners of the cosmopolitan present, they would again be able to lead Europe.[218]

Benito Mussolini himself was a Dionysian persona: dramatic, chameleon-like (transforming from a socialist comrade to a fascist dictator), and contradictory – simultaneously endorsing killings and pronatalist measures. Reviewing Mussolini's biography *Il Duce and His Women*, the British historian and biographer David Gilmour notes that sex was central to Mussolini's myth: "it was indeed at the centre of his life, though unaccompanied by any semblance of love or romance.

[215] Ibid., p. 21.

[216] Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 351.

[217] Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 81.

[218] David Gilmour, *The Pursuit of Italy: A History of a Land, its Regions, and Their Peoples* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2011), pp. 126–127.

Fascism, as its anthem 'Giovinezza' proclaimed, exalted youth, and with it both virility and violence. Mussolini's carefully nurtured masculine image helped him to power, just as power enabled him to have as varied a sex life as he wanted."[219]

In a similar fashion, sex and ferocity are key aspects of Adriana's life. "The great god Dionysus is the barbarism and brutality of mother nature. [...] Dionysus liberates by destroying. He is not pleasure but pleasure-pain, the tormenting bondage of our life in the body. For each gift he exacts a price. Dionysian orgy ended in mutilation and dismemberment."[220] For her, the dangerous lifestyle of a prostitute dealing with reprobates and criminals means constant tiptoeing on the border between the moral and immoral, legal and illegal, life and death – even in respect to her own potential death, she starts feeling indifferent and blithe, with a touch of masochism: "I felt a kind of voluptuous delight, in fact, in letting myself sink to the depths of what I imagined must be the last stage of despair. I felt protected, in a sense, by the excess of my misfortune; and I found a certain pleasure in the thought that nothing worse could happen to me except death, which I no longer feared."[221]

Adriana undergoes a great change – from an average suburban girl with prosaic white-picket-fence dreams and moral principles to a wanton woman who lies and steals (albeit retaining a certain purity of heart and unyielding benevolence) – which goes in line with Dionysus's role as a liberator: "the god who by very simple means, or by other means not so simple, enables you for a short time to stop being yourself, and thereby set you free... The aim of his cult was *ecstasies* – which could mean anything from 'taking you out of yourself' to a profound alteration of personality."[222] Comparably, Feride's dreams of a happy family life are crushed by Kāmran, but that makes her eve more morally upright and altruistic.

Even though Gino's betrayal prompts Adriana to take up the profession of prostitution, her first venture in that world happens on a double-date when an admirer of hers rapes her, and becomes

[219] David Gilmour, "A Cult of Virility and Violence", *The Spectator*, https://www.spectator.co.uk/2011/11/a-cult-of-virility-and-violence, 19.11.2011.

[220] Paglia, *Sexual Personae*, p. 94.

[221] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 307.

[222] Paglia, *Sexual Personae*, p. 97.

her first customer when he gives her money afterwards (money that she accepts). The Dionysian transcendence of her physical (or duality of physical and psychological) self is evident in the following:

> All of a sudden, Astarita, who had not moved until then, content to have one arm round my waist, began to kiss me breathlessly on my neck, bosom and cheeks. I did not protest this time, first because I was too tipsy to struggle and then because he seemed to be kissing another person, so little did I participate in his outburst, but kept as still and as stiff as a statue. In my state of intoxication I had the impression that I was standing outside myself, in some corner of the room, looking on indifferently, merely as a curious spectator, at Astarita's wild passion.[223]

Quite befittingly – as Dionysus's main symbol is wine – she is initiated in prostitution with wine as a medium – she (in fact Astarita) uses drunkenness to enter the realm of the unknown and forbidden; or, as Benedict states: "The desire of the Dionysian, in personal experience or in ritual, is to press through it toward a certain psychological state, to achieve excess. The closest analogy to the emotions he seeks is drunkenness, and he values the illuminations of frenzy."[224] Adriana's instinct to panic is numbed by the good food and wine paid by her rapist, and the hedonist she is, she succumbs to the pressure and blackmail of the people with her, little by little.

This is strikingly different from Feride, who, when unknowingly and unwillingly put in the same double-date situation by Nazmiye – an acquaintance of hers (like Adriana's "friend" Gisella), panics, faints, and flees the scene at the first sign of trouble:

> He bent over me still further, and I felt his warm breath on my cheek. "This won't do you any harm, young lady; it's the world's finest and most harmless liquor. Isn't it, Nazmiye Hanım?"
> Nazmiye nodded. "Don't insist, Burhaneddin Bey – Feride must be treated as if she were in our home here. Let her do as she likes."
> Up to that moment, Burhaneddin, with his graying hair and his courtly manner, had inspired me with a vague confidence, but now I was beginning to be afraid of him too. What was happening to me? What sort of a place had I fallen upon? How was I to save myself?[225]

[223] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, pp. 79–80.

[224] Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, p. 79.

[225] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 259.

Feride, in a truly Apollonian fashion tries to preserve her sobriety and is shocked when she is offered liquor, but also the difference in the outcome of those two unfortunate episodes is the thoughtfulness of the matchmaker – in Feride's case, Nazmiye remains her ally, even though she does set her up against her will; in Adriana's case, Gisella actively enables Astarita to rape her:

> But perhaps he would not have succeeded in kissing me, if Gisella had not come to his aid. Suddenly, with a triumphant squeal, she got up, ran behind me, grasped my arms and pulled them backwards. I did not see her but I felt her dogged determination in the way her nails buried themselves in my flesh and in her voice which kept on repeating between bursts of laughter, in an excited, cruel and jerky way, "Quick, quick, Astarita! Now's your chance!"[226]

4.3.1. Danaë

Outside of the Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomy, the female archetypes associated with Adriana are richer and more heterogeneous than Feride's (which is expected, bearing in mind that Moravia is an epic ventriloquist, unlike Güntekin). Even in the opening pages of the novel, she is compared to the Greek goddess Danaë:

> When mother had come to an end of my praises, the painter, without saying a word, went over to a heap of papers piled up on a chair. After having looked through them, he pulled out a colored print and showed it to mother. "There's your daughter", he said in an undertone. I moved over from the stove to look at the print. It showed a naked woman lying on a bed covered with magnificent stuffs. A velvet curtain hung behind the bed and two winged cherubs, like two little angels, floated in the air in the folds of the curtain. The woman really did resemble me; only, although she was naked, the stuffs and the rings she was wearing on her fingers showed clearly that she must have been a queen, or someone important, whereas I was only a common girl. At first mother did not understand and stared in consternation at the print. Then suddenly she seemed to see the resemblance. "She's exactly like that! It's Adriana! You see how right I was? Who is this woman?" she exclaimed excitedly.
> "It's Danaë", replied the artist with a smile.
> "Danaë who?"
> "Danaë – a pagan goddess."[227]

[226] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 78.

[227] Ibid., p. 5.

On one of her escapades that ensue after her life takes a different turn, she strikes a similar pose when stripping for a client, and regrets her long-lost innocence: "I do not know why, but I remembered this was the position of the pagan goddess who resembled me in the colored print the stout painter had given mother; and suddenly I felt resentfully angry at the thought of the great change in my life since that day."[228]

Danaë, like Virgin Mary, is the symbol of the immaculate conception: she is impregnated by Zeus in the form of golden rain (even though incarcerated in an underground chamber by her father in order to prevent an ominous prophecy), and the result of this semi-divine union is Perseus; in the same way that Jesus is raised by his non-biological father Joseph – the carpenter, Perseus is raised by the Dictys (meaning "of the nets", or "Mr. Net") – the fisherman, who caught him and Danaë in his fishing net; and ichthys (an emblem in the shape of a fish) is a prominent symbol of Christ, the Christians, and Christianity.

4.3.1.1. Virgin Mary

As already stated previously, while Güntekin keeps his protagonist as Madonna-like as possible, Moravia allows his to heroine to go full circle from Madonna (the virgin before the conception) to prostitute and back (to Madonna, the virginal mother), as if purified by true love – e.g. although Adriana does not conceive immaculately, she tries to pass of a client's inopportune bastard (a client who rapes her – to be precise – which is comparable to how Danaë's and Virgin Mary's pregnancies happen without their consent or awareness) as her boyfriend's love child, much like Virgin Mary in a way cuckolds Joseph:

> Sonzogno was the only one of all the many men who had loved me who had really possessed me in the darkest and most secret depths of my being. The fact that he horrified and frightened me and that I was persuaded to give myself to him against my will did not alter the fact that his possession of me had been complete and profound; it confirmed it, rather. Neither Gino nor Astarita nor even Mino, for whom I felt quite a different kind of passion, had aroused in me the sensation of such a legitimate possession, even though I loathed it. All this seemed strange and terrifying; but so it was. Feelings are the only things one cannot reject or deny or even analyze, in a certain

[228] Ibid., p. 143.

> sense. I came to the conclusion that some men are made for love and some for procreation; and if it was only right that I should have a child by Sonzogno, it was no less right for me to detest him and flee from him and to love Mino, as I really did.[229]

The Marial imagery is conspicuous in other parts of the novel, as her mother likens her to Virgin Mary, but Adriana too addresses all her prayers to the Madonna, and she is very forgiving, like her favorite saint, the "mother of mercy":

> I had been dedicated to the Virgin ever since the day of my birth. Indeed, mother always used to say that I looked like her, with my regular features and large, dark, gentle eyes. [...] I often thought to myself that the Madonna, who had so many sorrows, was the only one who could understand my own sorrows, and as a child I used to pray to her alone, as the only one who could understand me.[230]

4.3.2. Juno

In addition to the similarity to Danaë (and consequently – Virgin Mary), there is also a clear reference to Juno – another ancient (this time – Roman) goddess (in fact, the patron goddess of Rome and the Roman Empire), again, made by the first artist she poses for: "The artist, too, had said to me: 'Adriana, you ought to have been born four centuries ago! They had women like you then. It's fashionable nowadays to be thin, you're a fish out of water. In four or five years' time you'll be a Juno.' He was mistaken there, though, because today, five years later, I am no stouter or more Junoesque than before."[231] Soon afterwards, when she auditions for a dancer (despite her lack of talent, but on her mother's insisting), she is also mockingly advised by the producer of the show to become a wet nurse, which also falls under the realm of Juno, who rules over marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth, and foreshadows Adriana's impending motherhood.

[229] Ibid., p. 399.
[230] Ibid., p. 94.
[231] Ibid., p. 15.

4.3.3. Mary Magdalene

The most obvious archetype in *The Woman of Rome*, also one of the most ubiquitous fictional tropes, is "the hooker with the heart of gold": sensual, wanton, submissive, and sinful, but kind-hearted – present in almost all cultures – and in this case most prominent as Mary Magdalene, who is cleansed by Jesus of her seven demons (Adriana is also transformed by the love she feels for Mino and starts aspiring to higher goals), or the sinful woman who washes Jesus' feet with her tears, wipes them with her hair, kisses them and pours perfume on them (upon which she is granted forgiveness) from the story "Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman" in the New Testament. There is a matching vignette in *The Woman of Rome* when Adriana is so bedazzled by her overpowering feelings for Mino that she performs a similar ritual:

> I knelt down and taking his foot onto my lap, like a shoemaker, I pulled off his shoes and socks and kissed his feet. I had begun slowly and methodically, but, little by little, as I removed his clothes, a kind of frenzy of humility and adoration grew upon me. Perhaps it was the same feeling I had when I knelt down in church, but this was the first time I had ever felt it for a man and I was happy, because I was sure that this was pure love, far-removed from all sensuality and vice.[232]

Even after becoming a prostitute, Adriana does not lose her faith and she goes to church whenever she has something to confess, or right a wrong that she thinks has been caused by her.[233] For Adriana, who is a woman of many contradictions herself, the church is a place for both spirituality *and* sexuality:

> I could not help wondering what impression my story would make on him. He was unlike most priests and his unusual appearance, as of a man of the world, set me thinking with curiosity what reasons could have led him to become one. It may seem strange that, after the extraordinary emotion my prayer to the Madonna had roused in me, I should be distracted to the point of asking myself questions about my confessor, but I do not think myself that there was any contradiction between my emotion and my

[232] Ibid., p. 206.

[233] Although the sexual relations she engages in are not linked to religious worship whatsoever (as in sacred prostitution), she can be identified with the Sumerian goddess Inanna and her Akkadian/Babylonian counterpart Ishtar, as they are patron goddesses of prostitutes and stand for fertility, sexuality (often depicted fully nude), and warfare (Adriana causes quite a turmoil which is fatal for some of the most important men in her life – who die if not *for* her, then *because of* her).

> curiosity. Both came from the bottom of my heart, where devotion and coquetry, sorrow and lust were inextricably mixed.[234]

She is so mesmerized by one of the priests[235] that for a moment she contemplates expressing her feelings after a confession: "I thought he was even handsomer than ever and a thousand crazy ideas passed through my mind. I imagined I might quite easily have fallen in love with him and wondered how I could manage to let him understand that I liked him"[236] and later on: "I had really lost my head at that moment and almost hoped he would show me by some gesture or word that he was not indifferent to me."[237] Interestingly, these improper thoughts occur *before* she becomes a prostitute, *while* being engaged to Gino.

4.3.4. *Meretrix*

The prostitute is present in the context of Ancient Rome as *meretrix*, comparable to the Ancient Greek *hetaira* (professional courtesan). *Meretrices* appear as stock characters in Roman comedy, and the American classicist Anne Duncan differentiates between two types:

> Whether she is a good, sincere courtesan who is truly in love with her young man – the proverbial "hooker with a heart of gold" – or a bad, self-serving, conniving whore, all *meretrices* in Roman comedy display an ability to seduce, charm, and deceive, and all of them display an awareness that they have to take certain measures to ensure their own financial security (something that the old *lena*, or madam, one of the most consistently vilified characters in Roman comedy, is always urging her to do).[238]

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[234] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 96.

[235] The otherworldly nature of this encounter is confirmed when Adriana finds out that her confessor is not who he claimed to be: "I was sorry I had not asked the real Father Elia for news of him. But I was half afraid he might have told me he knew nothing of him, and this would have emphasized the phantom character the young monk had for me. There really was something of the phantom about him, both because he was so utterly different from other priests and because of the way he had appeared in my life and had then vanished. I actually began to doubt whether I had ever seen him; or, rather, whether I had ever seen him in the flesh, and I imagined I might have had a hallucination, because I now discovered that he undoubtedly resembled Christ himself, as he is portrayed in sacred paintings."See ibid., p. 306.

[236] Ibid., p. 99.

[237] Ibid., p. 100.

[238] Anne Duncan, *Performance and Identity in the Classical World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 138.

Duncan recognizes that "the split of the character into 'good faith' and 'bad faith' *meretrices* suggests a desire on the part of the audience to have the character's essential duplicity clarified, to have some level of control, through audience expectation, over the *meretrix*'s mendaciousness"[239] and even though I can classify Adriana essentially as a "good faith" meretrix, she is similar to the "baddest of the 'bad faith' *meretrices* in Plautus' extant corpus [who] proves to be a master of clever intrigue as she plays three lovers off against each other, using each one in turn to leverage gifts and cash out of the other two"[240] in that she uses Sonzogno to get rid of Gino, then Astarita to get rid of Sonzogno, then Astarita to save Mino. Adriana's mother is the accompanying stock character of the procuress – *lena*.[241]

4.3.5. Little Mermaid

The last fictional character – from more recent history – with which Adriana can easily be identified, is Hans Christian Andersen's sea maid, internationally renowned as the little mermaid. In this particular passage, imagery from Andersen's tale is evoked when Adriana fantasizes about her own death (following rejection from Mino) which, strangely enough, fills her with pleasurable serenity rather than dread:

> I turned towards him as if I wanted to embrace him, but he pushed me away wordlessly and curled himself up on the edge of the bed with his back to me. This gesture filled me with bitterness and I, too, huddled myself up, awaiting sleep with my spirit mourning. But I began to think about the sea again and was overcome by the longing to drown myself. I imagined it would be only a moment's suffering, and then my lifeless body would float from wave to wave beneath the sun for ages. The gulls would peck my eyes, the sun would bum my breast and my belly, the fish would gnaw my back. [...] I liked the idea of being dragged to the bottom of the sea by my hair. I liked the idea of being reduced to a little heap of bones one day, without human shape, among the smooth stones of a shore. And perhaps someone without noticing it would walk on my bones and crush them to white powder. With these sad, voluptuous thoughts I fell asleep.[242]

[239] Ibid., p. 156.

[240] Ibid., p. 147.

[241] "She is the old, worn out, tough and cynical, wine-drinking, rapacious madam who gives worldly advice to a young daughter or pupil. She knows nothing of love, only money, and she commands the young *meretrices* to think of themselves, not their lovers, and to use their assets while they can to achieve financial security." See Ann R. Raia, "Women's Roles in Plautine Comedy", paper delivered at the *Fourth Conference on Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* (01.10.1983.).

[242] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 407–408.

In the classic fairy tale, after her Prince marries another woman, the Little Mermaid becomes foam on the crest of the waves, but instead of dying, the "daughters of the air" (whom she joins) promise her an immortal soul after three hundred years:

> Once more she looked with half-extinguished eyes upon the Prince; then she threw herself from the ship into the sea, and felt her frame dissolving into foam.
> Now the sun rose up out of the sea. The rays fell mild and warm upon the cold sea foam, and the little sea maid felt nothing of death. She saw the bright sun, and over her head sailed thousands of glorious ethereal beings.[243]

Here again, there is a reference to Christianity, and Andersen uses his tale as a parable promoting Christian ideas: self-sacrifice (after the rejection from her loved one like Song Liling – the main character from Hwang's play *M. Butterfly* for Gallimard, as well as Cio-Cio San for Pinkerton from the original libretto of *Madama Butterfly*), and death as resurrection in another form (dying "happily ever after"). Indeed, both the little mermaid and Adriana stand for women's selflessness and mutilated power:

> The little mermaid inherits timeless magic, but she forfeits her birthright for love of a callow Prince. She renounces her flexible tail to dance for him on bleeding feet; she allows her tongue to be amputated and her unearthly song to be lost. […] Were she to kill the Prince, her wounds would be healed and her native magic restored; but like many actual women, she refrains from this murderous self-restoration.[244]

Unlike the little mermaid, Adriana ultimately does not (in fact cannot) choose her death over her prince's death; nonetheless, her prince Mino does eventually die, and she ends up pregnant with the prospect of living off his family's inheritance (hence, healed and restored, to his detriment).

[243] Hans Christian Andersen, *The Complete Illustrated Works of Hans Christian Andersen* (London, UK: Octopus Publishing Group, Bounty Books, 2009), p. 559.

[244] Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 8.

5. HISTORICAL REALITIES BEHIND THE TWO NOVELS

5.1. Implied Author

The analysis of the socio-political setting of a story requires pinpointing the author's position within the given context. In order to do that I will look for the link in the narrative chain between the flesh-and-blood author and the fictional narrator, which is embodied in the abstract entity of the implied author, as coined in 1961 by the American literary critic Wayne C. Booth, who asserts that however impersonal the author "may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner – and of course that official scribe will never be neutral toward all values."[245] This official scribe is the author's second self – the implied author who is, in fact, a construct manufactured by the reader about the ideological and moral views of the biographical writer.

The term faces disapproval by some critics who rightfully claim that each reader imagines a different implied author. Mieke Bal sees the implied author as "the *result* of the investigation of the meaning of a text, and not the *source* of that meaning. Only after interpreting the text on the basis of a text description can the 'implied author' be inferred and discussed."[246] However, the concept became "popular because it promised to account for the ideology of the text. This would have made it possible to condemn a text without condemning its author and vice versa."[247]

Bal's criticism goes in line with Roland Barthes's proclamation of the death of the author in 1967. Barthes urges readers not to analyze texts in the context of their authors' lives, because even though a text can evoke a certain author, the author is not represented by it. In lieu of Booth's implied author or scribe, he defines a scriptor, who "is born *at the same time* as his text; he is not furnished with a being which precedes or exceeds his writing, he is not the subject of which his book would be the predicate; there is no time other than the speech-act, and every text

[245] Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 70–71.

[246] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, trans. Christine Van Boheemen (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 17.

[247] Mieke Bal, "Notes on Narrative Embedding", *Poetics Today*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Winter 1981), p. 42.

is written eternally *here* and *now*."[248] The opening paragraph of Barthes's revolutionary essay ponders a similar conundrum as my thesis topic:

> In his tale Sarrasine, Balzac, speaking of a castrato disguised as a woman writes this sentence: 'She was a Woman, with her sudden fears, her inexplicable whims, her instinctive fears, her meaningless bravado, her defiance, and her delicious delicacy of feeling.' Who speaks in this way? Is it the hero of the tale, who would prefer not to recognize the castrato hidden beneath the 'woman'? Is it Balzac the man, whose personal experience has provided him with a philosophy of Woman? Is it Balzac the author, professing certain 'literary' ideas about femininity? Is it universal wisdom? Romantic psychology? We can never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, every origin. Writing is the neuter, the composite.[249]

Barthes might insist on severing the umbilical cord between the text and its author, but I believe that creators should be held accountable for what they bring into being, and that it is worth examining the motives behind texts that follow a very predictable pattern and potentially harm an already vulnerable demographic. I will look into the worldviews of the official scribes of the two novels, fully aware that I will create my own individual interpretations and conjectures of "what the author meant" (regardless of the authorial intent).

Güntekin's implied author is more easily discernible than Moravia's, and we can get a glimpse of him through the words of M. Pierre Fort, Feride's French classmate's journalist husband (who only shows up just to voice the gist of the novel's ideology).

> "The conclusion I draw from this is that there is in Istanbul a set of modern young girls who have had a good European education: they belong to an entirely different generation from the generation which destroyed itself with useless melancholy, like 'Les désenchantées' of Pierre Loti. They prefer action to empty dreams, and they'll give up their prosperity and happiness in Istanbul, to come and arouse Anatolia, on their own initiative. What a beautiful and lofty example of renunciation! – and for me, what an exceptionally good subject for an article! I shall, with your permission, mention your name in connection with 'the awakening of the Turks', Mlle. Feride Çalıkuşu!"[250]

[248] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1986), p. 52.

[249] Ibid., p. 49.

[250] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, pp. 205–206.

Another character who seems to vocalize the implied author's views is Hayrullah Bey (Feride's protector, a doctor who is virtually the only man in the novel that has a purely platonic fatherly love for her, as opposed to the rest who shamelessly pursue her against all odds to win her heart), who is presumably even the idealized self-image of the real author (a so-called Gary Stu – the male counterpart of a Mary Sue character). Booth emphasizes that every novel evokes "an implicit picture of an author who stands behind the scenes, whether as stage manager, as puppeteer, or as an indifferent God, silently paring his fingernails. This implied author is always distinct from the 'real man' – whatever we may take him to be – who creates a superior version of himself, a 'second self', as he creates his work"[251] and in accordance with this, Hayrullah Bey pulls the strings behind the curtain of Feride's life, by performing a Deus ex machina (with him being the God) from Feride's perspective, as she knows nothing of the machinations that he puts to work posthumously (by making it his dying wish for her to deliver a package containing her diary he had previously stolen from her – to Kāmran) in order to reunite the star-crossed lovers.
As for the wish-fulfillment part present both in Mary Sue and Gary Stu characters, Güntekin does not only design Feride as the perfect woman, but he also offers a toned-down representation of men by the delicate balance of depicting almost all men as reprobates, and Hayrullah Bey as a moral exemplar – which Feride herself admits in the concluding part of her diary: "It's true that most men are very sinful, very brutal; and it's true too, that women are for the most part good, and the victims of their brutality. But there is a small – a very small – number of men who live simply with their hearts and minds, and whose single-mindedness is of a quality not to be found in any woman."[252]

Moravia's stance towards the events of his era is more ambiguous, firstly – because of his complex identity, and secondly – because of his neutral, nonjudgmental tone in the depiction of a mixed bag of characters. Unlike Güntekin, whose ideology was aligned with the system he lived in,[253] Moravia was an anti-fascist – according to most sources; other sources, however, claim that he was cajoling the ruling government into funding his work, only to denounce it after its fall.[254]

[251] Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, p. 151.

[252] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 323.

[253] The fact that Atatürk himself has read and enjoyed *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* attests how congruent the novel with the Kemalist principles of the time: "He talked of the great writer fondly, '…(After) falling from my horse on the front line and injuring myself, I spent time reading your *Çalıkuşu* novel. As the novel progressed, I

His religious identity was fluid too – born a Jew, but later on baptized as a Catholic Christian, only to proclaim himself agnostic in his interview-autobiography "Life of Moravia" at the end of his life. One cannot infer his political allegations or moral standpoint just based on this novel because he seems equaly understanding of both fascists (like Astarita) and anti-fascists (like Mino), both prostitutes and non-prostitutes, portraying all of them as victims of disillusionment. Still, it is indicative of the time period that men are unstable and have disfunctional relationships with women, who are on the margins of politics.

Even though there is not one specific character who acts as a mouthpiece for the implied author, Mino's misanthropic views seem indicative of the disillusionment of the era:

> "[T]he whole of mankind could very well be wiped out. It's only an ugly excrescence on the face of the earth, a wart. The world would be far more beautiful without mankind, their cities, streets, ports, all their little arrangements. Think how beautiful it would be if there were nothing but sky, sea, trees, earth, animals. [...] Mankind", he continued, "has neither a beginning nor an end – therefore it's something decidedly negative. The history of mankind is nothing but one long yawn of sheer boredom. What need is there of it? Speaking for myself – I'd have done very well without it."[255]

Similar to Güntekin's aforementioned remark that justifies and eulogizes (certain rare) men, Moravia ventriloquizes a homoaesthetic description of male bodies, ending on a sexist-ageist note: "I liked all men, for one reason or another. […] I liked the muscular arms, the broad chests, the indefinable weight and power in the shoulders, abdomen and legs of virile men in their prime; I even liked old men because men are different from women in that they are not limited by age, and even in old age keep their charm or acquire a new one of a particular kind."[256]

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began to forget my pain.'" See Ülkü Burhan, "On the Way to Anatolia: Reşat Nuri Güntekin", *AnadoluJet Magazine*, https://www.anadolujet.com/en/corporate/anadolujet-magazine/2016/12/on-the-way-to-anatolia-resat-nuri-guntekin, December 2016.

[254] "Several members of the left-wing intelligentsia after the Second World War had been avid supplicants for fascist funds, a fact they later tried very hard to conceal. [...] Alberto Moravia, the novelist and a future MEP on the Communist Party list, was so eager for state money and assistance that he sent groveling letters to Count Ciano (Mussolini's son-in-law), whom he hailed as a role model for Italian youth, and to the Duce himself, to whom he shamelessly lauded the achievements of the regime and its 'exemplary and extraordinary' leader. It was difficult for Moravia to be critical of a state while he was begging it to give him $500 in order to travel to the East and write about China." See Gilmour, *The Pursuit of Italy*, p. 248.

[255] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, pp. 336–337.

[256] Ibid., p. 166.

Unsurprisingly, Moravia uses the adjective "virile", and as I noted in the fourth chapter, virility was a key element of fascist rhetoric.[257]

5.2. Atatürk's Turkey: the Kemalist Woman

Even though Güntekin would be roughly (if not wrongly) classified as an Eastern (implying Oriental, Islamicate) writer, Turkey is a special case with its indigenous culture, which unifies many authentic aspects and foreign influences; especially "the woman question was fought out in an uneasy triangle involving Islam, Westernism, and nationalism."[258] Taking into account that *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* was first published in 1922 (the story is set in the years before Atatürk's rise to power), it is marked with a distinct ideology of the Turkish national movement which culminated with the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, a year after the book's publication. Needless to say, Feride is exactly the role model designed for all women to follow – both attractive and asexual, both a virgin and a mother, balancing between modernity and modesty, carrying the double burden of a career and a home; "[i]n that sense, it is tempting to describe Turkish women as emancipated but unliberated."[259] Feride represents the ideal woman of Kemalist discourse:

> The ideal type of woman for the nationalist ruling elite was clearly explained in the very popular novel of the early republican era: *Çalıkuşu* (gold crest kinglet/the nickname of

[257] "While linguistic and literary studies accept virilization as unremarkable, psychological studies read the fascist obsession with virility as pathological. […]
The association of sexual 'aberration' with historical aberration has been perpetuated in various narrative forms, among them cinema. One might think, for example, of Roberto Rossellini's film *Open City*, where the Italian collaborator with Nazism is not only wanton but a lesbian to boot, or of the more recent Bertolucci film *1900*, in which the fascist is not only sadistic but portrayed as sexually perverted. These two approaches – that of the linguistic tic and that of pathological aberration – represent the Scylla and Charybdis of approaches to fascism: trivialization and demonization."See Barbara Spackman, *Fascist Virilities: Rhetoric, Ideology, and Social Fantasy in Italy* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 4. Sexual perversion as an indicator of historical aberration is present in *The Woman of Rome* too, especially in Adriana's sadomasochistic relationships with Astarita, Mino, and Sonzogno; interestingly, Adriana is occasionally the sadist only in her relationship with Astarita, the only fascist of the three men, who is intimidatingly dominant in his governmental office, but shockingly submissive to Adriana: "What had struck me most during Astarita's brief appearance had been the difference in his manner from what it had been on the Viterbo trip. Then I had seen him looking awkward, convulsed, dumb, and half crazed; now he seemed entirely master of himself, easy-mannered but precise, exuding an indefinable sense of discreet though authoritative superiority. Even his voice had changed." See ibid., p. 114.

[258] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Slave Girls, Temptresses, and Comrades: Images of Women in the Turkish Novel" in *Feminist Issues* (Spring 1988), p. 36.

[259] Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated?", p. 324.

> the heroine) written by Reşat Nuri Güntekin. [...] The story is quite explanatory in various aspects: she is a high school teacher (a nationalist metaphor teaching tomorrow's adults); she is a devoted monogamist who keeps on being in love with "the right man"; and she can easily conceal her sexuality when it is necessary.
> This *asexual* image of women was a crucial myth of Turkish official nationalism. A good Turkish woman should never forget that she was in the service of her nation first of all, as the teacher/virtuous role model of the nation.[260]

The Turkish political scientist Zehra F. Arat summarizes what were the prospects of becoming a teacher based on interviews with thirty women who attended secondary school during the late Ottoman and early Republican rule:

> Some women's desires to be a teacher or to pursue higher education were rejected by fathers who did not want to send "a girl far away to a boarding school", especially if they did not have relatives who lived close enough to the school to "keep an eye on her". Others were barred from occupational training or higher education due to a concern over what would happen afterward: "If you are appointed to a village or a remote town, who will accompany you?" they were asked. [...] [T]he few who had to go to remote villages or towns to work described the local people as "extremely accommodating", "willing to accept their city ways" (such as not using a head scarf), "tolerant", "understanding", and "friendly and helpful".[261]

The unwillingness to work in the provinces is stressed by Güntekin numerous times, especially in the form of shocked reactions to Feride's bravery and idealism in the Ministry of Education: "That's the first time I've ever come across a woman teacher who wanted to go up to Anatolia of her own sweet will! We have the devil of a job to get out teachers to leave Istanbul."[262] As for the willingness of the local people to accept Feride's city ways, especially regarding the veil, there is not much flexibility. Sometimes she gets remarks in the form of fatherly advice: "As they passed alongside of us, they said good evening to the jarvey, and looked closely at me. Hadji Kalfa had said: 'The roads, thanks God, are safe enough, but whatever happens, draw down your veil; yours

[260] İştar Gözaydın, "Adding Injury To Injury: The Case of Rape and Prostitution in Turkey", ed. John T. Parry, *Evil, Law and the State: Perspectives on State Power and Violence* (Amsterdam and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 61–62.

[261] Zehra F. Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", Zehra F. Arat (ed.), *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998). pp. 166–167.

[262] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 113.

is not the kind of face to go uncovered in that sort of country'"[263] and other times the veil seems to be a prerequisite even for teaching in elementary school:

> Hatije Hanım told them to stay outside for a while; and then, rather diffidently, she suggested: "I think you must have forgotten your veil, my dear."
> "Is it necessary?"
> "Oh, indeed it is. I won't interfere, of course, but isn't it a sin to teach with your head bare?"
> I was ashamed to say "I don't know", so I said with some irritation "I forgot to bring my veil when I came", and told a lie.[264]

Following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the practice of veiling was discouraged, and this resonates in the novel too. The fear of appearing outdated and unsophisticated to Westerners seems to bother the Westernized native Orientals who see themselves through the prism of Orientalists (similar to the outraged calls for abolishing the *nandan* in Republican China). This kind self-Orientalism is palpable in Atatürk's speeches, especially in his opinion of women who cover themselves: "What are the meaning and sense of this behavior? Gentlemen, can the mothers and daughters of a civilized nation adopt this strange manner, this barbarous posture? It is a spectacle that makes the nation an object of ridicule. It must be remedied at once."[265]

This zealous modernization was, however, only superficial, because the core values (and the ideas of *namus* and *fitna*) remained the same – veil or no veil:

> The women who became products of the early republican reforms were similar to the *noblesse de robe* (nobility by virtue of dress) in pre-revolutionary France, who joined the ranks of the nobility by purchasing offices and putting on aristocratic clothes. These women of twentieth-century Turkish history became *modernes de robe*, who wore modern clothes and adopted certain Western codes of conduct, but nevertheless remained traditional, especially regarding relations with men and their self-perceptions within the confines of the family. They became simulated images of modernity.[266]

[263] Ibid., p. 144.

[264] Ibid., p. 156.

[265] Atatürk's speech at Kastamonu (1925), quoted in Ahmed, *Women and the Rise of Islam*, p. 164.

[266] Ayşe Kadıoğlu, "Women's Subordination in Turkey: Is Islam Really the Villain?", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Autumn 1994), pp. 652–653.

Kandiyoti eloquently notes that "the Kemalist reforms emancipating and literally unveiling women required compensatory symbolism, and a new veil – that of sexual repression."[267] Arat's survey further on proves this point: "The women in the study described school uniforms and other dress codes in secondary schools as 'tight and rigid'. Their hair had to be either short or pulled back in braids or ponytails. Short hair was preferred because it fit well into the officially promoted hygienic image of the 'modern woman'."[268] Feride naturally fits in this mold: "I don't like long hair: when I'd become a teacher, I couldn't leave my hair as it was. For the last month, although I'd begun to let my hair grow, it had so far only gotten to my shoulders."[269] The study reported that "the uniforms were plain with long hemlines and included stockings that had to be thick and of a dark color such as black or brown. [...] Any reflection of femininity was scrutinized and often resulted in a scolding or an insult, if not punishment."[270] Feride continues with her demure style guidelines: "I'd thought a dress for myself, after becoming a school teacher. In my opinion, a teacher shouldn't be dressed like other women while she's at work; my invention was very simple, a black silk tunic down to the knees, a leather belt round the waist, and below the belt two little pockets for a handkerchief and notebook."[271]

As for make-up, Arat reports that at least five interviewees "remembered an incident when either herself or a friend who happened to have 'colorful cheeks' was accused by a teacher or the principal of wearing make-up and asked to wipe her face. This humiliating experience seems to have ended usually with the humiliation of the teacher, who would be proven wrong."[272] Güntekin must have been well-informed of these incidents, because he describes an identical episode with Feride and when the director of the Teachers' College in Bursa mistakes Feride's complexion for make-up[273]:

[267] Kandiyoti, "Slave Girls, Temptresses, and Comrades", p. 47.

[268] Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", p. 168.

[269] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 157.

[270] Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", p. 169.

[271] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 157.

[272] Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", p. 170.

[273] Not just Feride, but Adriana too does not enhance her beauty artificially (Moravia too has created her naturally perfect), despite make-up being the standard for prostitutes: "I have never understood why so many women in my profession plaster their faces so thickly and go about the street looking as if they were wearing carnival masks. Perhaps it is because, with the life they lead, they would otherwise look too pale; or perhaps because they are afraid that if they did not paint so crudely, they would not attract men's attention and would not be able to show them that

> "Come on, dear. Let me present you to the students. But go and give your face a good wash first." The Director pronounced the words with some embarrassment, and lowered his voice. I was thoroughly taken aback. Was there a smudge on my face, I wondered? The Assistant Teacher and I exchanged glances. She was as much surprised as I was.
> "Is there something on my face, sir?", I asked.
> "I tell you as a daughter, my dear: indulgence in finery and ornament is innate in womanfolk. But for teachers in particular, it isn't seemly that they should go into a classroom with their eyes and faces painted. I'm warning you today in a fatherly spirit."
> I was more embarrassed than him. "But I never paint, Director. I'm one of the last people in the world to paint my face."
> Rejep Efendi was looking at my complexion obstinately. "But you've done so; you've certainly done so", he insisted.
> I suddenly understood, and couldn't help laughing. "Director", I said, "I object to that paint too; but what can I do? God put it on. There's no hope of getting it off with water."[274]

If the reality of female teachers was bleak, that of female students was even bleaker, because "the state failed to enforce the 'mandatory primary education rule', especially for girls. Some school administrators did not take girls' education seriously. For example, a report on the village institutes in the 1940s noted that since the laundry was done by female students, they tended to 'miss their classes and lag behind'."[275] The exploitation of girls does not go unnoticed in the novel either: "Munise didn't come to school every day. When I asked her why, she used to give some reason such as that her elder sister had made her do the washing, or scrub the floor, or gather firewood for her from the mountain."[276]

No matter how much Atatürk insisted on good education for girls, it was not intended to be a means of liberation, but rather a way to elevate the quality of child-rearing (in accordance with modern standards), which seems to be, ultimately, the main purpose of women.[277] On the one hand, he continually addressed the topic of women's emancipation and equal rights, but on the

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they are approachable. However tired I may be and however much I overdo it, I never lose my healthy, bronzed look, and I can say, without blushing, that my looks, without the aid of too much make-up, have always been enough to make men turn their heads to stare at me when I pass down the street." See Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 132.

[274] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, pp. 209–210.

[275] Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", p. 160.

[276] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 164.

[277] Ironically, Mary Wollstonecraft – the famous English 18th century women's rights advocate – shared this opinion: "Even in Mary Wollstonecraft's revolutionary *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a basic argument for equal education for women is that it will make them good mothers and faithful wives." See Hoffman Baruch, *Women, Love, and Power*, p. 123.

other hand, he kept stressing that motherhood is women's primary purpose and "that if Turkey was to become a strong modern nation, the education of women was necessary since children receive their first lessons from their mothers: 'hence, our women have the obligation to be more enlightened, more civilized and wiser even than the men'."[278]

The role of woman as mother of the nation highlighted her biological function, and "[t]his image of a 'biological woman' could perhaps be considered as the guarantee of the womanliness of the Kemalist woman. A new understanding of female beauty as linked with was an underlined theme especially for the upbringing of new generations."[279] Young men and women in sportswear were participating in parades on national holidays, and in 1930 Turkey started participating in beauty pageants; as a newspaper article from that year states, beauty is not a disgraceful thing ("Güzellik Ayıp Birşey Değildir"), and the stigma of female beauty (and its maintenance with sports and good diet) was lifted because it became synonymous with reproductive health.

On the surface it seems that the main polarization in the issue of "women" in the Republican (in fact, ever since the Tanzimat) period has been between the Western/modern and Muslim/traditional, but on the inner level of Turkish society this "polarization has been extended to the 'rural vs. urban' dichotomization. Thus appear two distinct images: the underdeveloped, uneducated, religious, 'traditional' village woman – oppressed and repressed at different levels – and the Westernized, educated, secular, 'modern' city woman, whose situation is categorically different."[280] Feride, as an urban (but virtuous) Istanbulite encounters all sorts of rural women which are portrayed in a derogatory manner, the most extreme example of which is the devout Hatije Hanım (who was also the village teacher before Feride took over), so devout that her way of worship is eery: "When I opened the door of the vault-like room that smelt of mildew the sight which met my eyes was a thousand times more dreadful than the howling of any jackals. The old woman, swathed in white from head to foot, was on her prayer mat, reading something or other in a hoarse voice as though she had passed beyond herself, and swaying from side to side as she told

[278] Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London, UK: Verso, 2010), p. 36.

[279] Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", ed. Zehra F. Arat, *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 144.

[280] Emine Onaran İncirlioğlu, "Images of Village Women in Turkey: Models and Anomalies", ed. Zehra F. Arat, *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), p. 218.

her beads."[281] Not only is Hatije Hanım scary in her worship, but also at school (which she considers a sacred place) with her draconian measures: "After Hatije Hanım's freshly cut stick, which hissed down like a snake in the classroom, my voice made very little impression on them."[282] Moreover, she is "responsible to some extent for the children being so heavy and joyless. The good woman believed it was a teacher's duty to extinguish in the heart all worldly desires. At every opportunity she brought the little things face to face with death."[283]

Provincial religious women are not just Turkish like Hatije Hanım, but of different nationalities as well; however, they are equally lacking self-respect in relation to their husbands. For instance, in Çanakkale the young Circassian wife of Kurban Efendi, a regimental padre in his fifties, pleads with Feride to marry her husband: "My dear, my husband has fallen in love with you; and he wants to divorce me. I begged and implored him, and said: 'It doesn't matter; take this other woman; only don't divorce me. We'll get on very well together. I'll cook your food and I'll be your servant.' My dear friend, have pity on me!"[284] Another example is the Rumelian woman who has followed her husband to Bursa to win him back:

> Finally, one day, she got news that her husband was at B., and had married one of the local women. "Ah yes; that happens according to our religious law. They can marry four wives." My poor neighbor was very distressed; after she'd wept a little, she took her three children and came here. Her husband, I may say, was not at all pleased with that. Nothing would make him see his wife he had married after so much importunity, nor even his children, the darlings of his heart; but he insisted on sending them back to Monastir, without more ado. She threw herself at his feet and groveled like a dog: "don't torture me like this when I've been your wife all these years"; but nothing would induce him to have her leave.[285]

But it is not just the rural religious women who look up to men for approval. Arat brings attention to a dialogue between Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and a female teacher-candidate in Izmir, 1925, in which she asks him what the Turkish woman should be like, and he responds in detail ("the most

[281] Güntekin, *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*, p. 161.
[282] Ibid., p. 158.
[283] Ibid., p. 159.
[284] Ibid., pp. 251–252.
[285] Ibid., pp. 128–129.

enlightened, most virtuous, and most reserved woman of the world"[286], etc.). Arat considers this exchange relevant "not only because it displays the attemp to push women into an idealized prototype but also because it shows the willingness of women (at least some of them) to accept and participate in the construction of their gender. It also reflects prevalent power relations; being aware of their subordinate condition, women look up to and seek guidance from men."[287]

Even though *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* seemingly tries to shrug off patriarchal labels, in accordance with the abovementioned Kemalist views, Feride, who adamantly tries *not* to act like a damsel in distress despite the calamities that befall her (her life path is governed by the dictates of the men she encounters on her journey who either assign her as a teacher in far-away places, or she herself escapes to far-away places because of incidents caused by men), ultimately finds happiness in marriage. Güntekin turns the story upside down, resulting in a cautionary tale for women who fight their feminine nature.

A good example of this is the article "Outer Mobility, Inner Becoming in *Jane Eyre* and *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*" by the Romanian literary scholar Adriana Luminiţa Răducanu.

> The writers' feminism, far from defiant, refers to the fact that the femininity and identity of the two female protagonists as possible behavioral models are obliged to exist within given discourses and ideologies.
> Thus, this type of feminism starts in a liberal tone only to end in a conservative one. In this respect, the evolution of the protagonists from promoters of equal opportunities for men and women (in terms of education, profession, etc.) is tamed into a refusal of a male model of careerism and public achievements as female goals, which denies the patriarchal women's need for intimacy, family and children. Gender-equality is not the answer that the novels provide, since gender-sameness is but utopia. Jane Eyre and Feride Nizamettin at the end of their peregrinations, learn, or better said *feel*, that a woman, regardless of how suffocating and oppressive her condition may be, created as such to serve patriarchy, should nevertheless be able *not* to discard her female behavior, in exchange for a *male* one.[288]

[286] Arat, "Introduction: Politics of Representation and Identity", p. 1.

[287] Ibid., p. 2.

[288] Răducanu, "Outer Mobility, Inner Becoming in *Jane Eyre* and *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*", pp. 37–38.

At first glance the feminine and masculine bildungsroman are similar – "Like the male hero of the bildungsroman, she grows by going out into the world on her own, but the ultimate aim of her development is not life within the larger community as it is for the male hero, but rather marriage with the partner of her choice"[289] – but the most striking characteristic that distinguishes the former from the latter (in which men occasionally gain love *after* achievement) is the fact that it "takes place in or on the periphery of marriage"[290] (women gain achievement *through* love[291]).

5.3. Mussolini's Italy: the Fascist Woman

Like Atatürk, Mussolini was a reformist regarding women, but even "if Italian Fascism had not started as an anti-feminist movement, by the late 1920s it had become one. The regime's turn towards a campaign to raise the birth-rate combined with concern over rising male unemployment shaped the nature of its policy towards women."[292] Although "propagandists boasted that fascism's treatment of women was both 'modern' and 'traditional'"[293], in reality (and very much like their Turkish sisters who were only *modernes de robe*), women's public presence and involvement in politics were fallacious signs of progress. The Fascist government and the Vatican joined forces to pursue mutual interests to the detriment of women, while promoting strict patriarchy and conservativism. The image of the ideal fascist woman "conformed with the traditional Catholic notion of woman, which claimed femininity as the true essence of womanhood, defined in terms of patriarchal morality. […] The project's explicit aim was to 'moralize women' who had lost their morality in the struggle for emancipation."[294] One of the female fascist ideologues, Teresa Labriola, illuminated the core of femininity and the role of women: "to be the symbols of patriarchal values and, at the same time, the social agents of the

[289] Hoffman Baruch, *Women, Love, and Power*, p. 127.

[290] Ibid., p. 122.

[291] Regarding Feride and Jane Eyre, Răducanu notes: "Materially comfortably situated, each of them in different ways (although via *male* protection), they employ their newly gained independence to care for and love a husband." See Răducanu, "Outer Mobility, Inner Becoming in *Jane Eyre* and *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*", p. 46.

[292] Martin Durham, *Women and Fascism* (London, UK: Routledge, 1998), p. 10.

[293] Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1920–1945* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), p. 14.

[294] Mariolina Graziosi, "Gender Struggle and the Social Manipulation and the Ideological Use of Gender Identity in the Interwar Years", Robin Pickering-Iazzi (ed.), *Mothers of Invention: Women, Italian Fascism, and Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), p. 32.

patriarchal morality that emphasized subjection to male authority within the family and in society at large."[295] Bearing a striking resemblance to the Turkish case, the Italian women's most sacred duties were to be mothers of the nation's children and moralizers of society (that is, to reeducate other women and "convince them of their real need to be at home, to see themselves suited only for specific jobs, to endorse the patriarchal values that the Fascist state represented."[296])

During WWI there was an influx of women in the work force, but after the war, as the hopes for a rapid economic growth plummeted, persistent attempts to expel women from their work places (and segregate them in "female" vocations, in fact – mainly housework and housekeeping) ensued, in order to create more jobs for the veterans. The hostility to female employment peaked with "slogans as 'Women's employment is causing men's unemployment' and 'Women go home, because home is the place where you really belong'."[297] One of Mussolini's articles too, "Machine and Woman" emphasized "that women's work was a 'major aspect of the thorny problem of unemployment' and of the problem of population. Work, he claimed, distracted from reproduction, encouraging independence and 'habits that are incompatible with childbearing'. (As for the man, 'unemployed in every sense of the word', he would give up on family life.)"[298]

The gender struggle for white-collar jobs[299] persisted even for teaching positions (typically held by women): "Giovanni Gentile, the minister of education, attempted to limit women teachers in predominantly male schools with the excuse that 'women do not have, nor will they ever have, either the moral or mental vigor to teach in those schools which formed the ruling class of the country'."[300] Gentile created a "project for a *liceo femminile*, which would either be a useless duplication of male schools or an inferior institution, teaching 'only the most useless and

[295] Ibid., p. 35.

[296] Ibid., p. 40.

[297] Ibid., p. 28.

[298] Durham, *Women and Fascism*, p. 11.

[299] "The magazine *Il giornale della donna* reported that not one day went by without magazines of varying persuasions receiving letters from men that accused white-collar women of not knowing grammar, spelling, and typing. On these grounds, they claimed, women had to be fired. But the most popular and effective arguments emphasized men's role as the heads of families. Unemployment among men hurt those who depended upon them, whereas women, some insisted, worked only to satisfy their frivolous attitudes." See Graziosi, "Gender Struggle and the Social Manipulation and the Ideological Use of Gender Identity in the Interwar Years", pp. 29–30.

[300] Alexander de Grand, "Women under Italian Fascism", *Historical Journal*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1976), p. 953.

superficial subjects: music and dance, which will serve solely for the preparation of nice little ornaments for sitting rooms'."[301]

Adriana's mother works as a seamstress, and Adriana – aside from helping her – poses nude and once auditions for a dancing part in a variety company before becoming a prostitute; all professions are typcally female. Bearing in mind the restrictions imposed on female techers too, even with a diploma like Feride's, it would be almost impossible to find a job in those political circumstances.

In line with Mussolini's self-proclaimed and much flaunted sexual prowess,[302] his politics on prolificity (intended to create cheap labor and justify his desired imperialist expansion) gave rise to a myriad of pronatalist measures: "Already in 1926 the sale of contraceptives had been banned as an offence against public decency, a move that was taken further in 1931 with the creation of a crime of inciting others to prevent births. (Abortion too was covered under both these measures, in the latter case punishing any woman who had consented to her abortion with up to five years' penal servitude.)"[303] In addition to this, maternity centers were set up in order to improve pre-natal and post-natal care, especially for unmarried women, and prostitution was decriminalized. The rationale behind the legalization of prostitution lied in drawing a line between good and bad women, and more importantly, keeping illicit sex out of the public eye. With this purpose state-run brothels (so-called *case chiuse*) were created where "women were required to submit to obligatory medical check-ups, police surveillance, and vexatious laws like that which imposed six-month prison terms for soliciting from the windows and a year for hosting dances or serving liquor."[304]

[301] Ibid., p. 954.

[302] Regarding the erotic surface of extreme right-wing movements (as opposed to the asexuality and possibly impotence of left-wing movements), Susan Sontag reckons that: "A clue lies in the predilections of the fascist leaders for highly sexual metaphors. (Like Nietzsche and Wagner, Hitler regarded leadership as sexual mastery of the 'feminine' masses, as rape.) […] A utopian aesthetics (identity as a biological given) implies an ideal eroticism (sexuality converted into the magnetism of leaders and the joy of followers). The fascist ideal is to transform sexual energy into a 'spiritual' force, for the benefit of the community." See Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism", The *New York Review of Books*, http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1975/02/06/fascinating-fascism, 06.02.1975.

[303] Durham, *Women and Fascism*, p. 10.

[304] De Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women*, p. 44.

Adriana undergoes regular medical check-ups (although it is not explicitly stated that they are mandatory), but on the other hand – she is a streetwalker, which means that the novel is set in the later years of Mussolini's rule, when those laws were probably loosened.

Despite being a well-seasoned prostitute, she does not give up on her childhood dreams to be a wife and a mother (indicating that the line between a good wife and a prostitute is thin), but also she does not want to realize those dreams with a customer (hence she avoids becoming attached to one lover): "What I wanted, in fact, was to keep the profession I had chosen completely separate from my earlier ambitions, without any contacts or compromises, since I felt I was equally well cut out to be a good wife and a good harlot, but was quite incapable of maintaining a cautious and hypocritical middle way between the two."[305] Her self-proclaimed propensity for both marriage and prostitution (in both scenarios she is controlled by men) deeply resonates with what the American philosopher Martha Nussbaum thinks about those two concepts – that they are two sides of the same coin[306], two aspects of male rule over female sexuality:

> People committed to gender hierarcy, and determined to ensure that the dangerous sexuality of women is controlled by men, frequently have viewed the prostitute, a sexually active woman, as a threat to male control of women. They therefore become determined either to repress the occupation itself by criminalization or, if they also think that male sexuality needs such an outlet and that this outlet ultimately defends marriage by giving male desire a safely debased outlet, to keep it within bounds by close regulation. (Criminalization and regulation are not straighforwardly opposed; they can be closely related strategies. In a similar manner, prostitution is generally conceived as not the enemy but the ally of marriage: the two are complementary ways of controlling women's sexuality.)[307]

The father of criminology, Cesare Lombroso, whose criminological and characterological work was influential until the 1970s not just in Italy but worldwide too, asserted "that female 'born criminals' – that is, women who had inherited a biological and psychological propensity to

[305] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 153.

[306] Similar to Tumanov's two coping mechanisms for dealing with paternal uncertainty: mate guarding (epitomized in marriage) and promiscuity (epitomized in prostitution) in the third chapter.

[307] Nussbaum, "'Whether from Reason or Prejudice'", p. 708.

deviancy – were more terrible and monstrous than their male counterparts"[308] and that the most common female criminal type was the prostitute, driven both by her sexuality (the menstrual cycles, pregnancy etc. interfere with female psychological balance and rationality) and her so-called "moral insanity"[309].

In line with Lombroso's observations, after Adriana enters the world of prostitution, she engages in criminal acts of other kinds too, and the logic behind her deeds is explained in the following kleptomaniac incident:

> I had a feeling of discovery, rather than of temptation – now I could do anything, even steal. I opened my bag and put the compact into it; being heavy it slipped right down into the bottom among my loose change and keys. In taking it, I felt a kind of sensual pleasure, not unlike the sensation accepting money from my lovers caused me. As a matter of fact, I did not have any use for such a valuable compact, it did not match my clothes or the kind of life I led. I was sure I would never use it. But in stealing it, I seemed to be obeying the logic which now governed the course of my life. I thought I might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.[310]

Lombroso believes that although prostitutes are repelled by the idea of motherhood (which is not true about Adriana), they manifest "positive emotional traits including kindness, religiosity, love and fondness for animals. But Lombroso found each of these characteristics to be distorted in born prostitutes: their kindness was intermittent, their religiosity bordered on superstition."[311] Similarly, Adriana resorts to faith during existential crises: "I used to throw myself onto my knees so violently that my legs hurt for some days afterwards and used to pray aloud in a voice filled with despair, saying, 'Christ, have mercy upon me', just these few words. It was not really a prayer but a magic formula which I thought might dispel my anguish and bring me back to

[308] Mary Gibson, "Labeling Women Deviant: Heterosexual Women, Prostitutes and Lesbians in Early Criminological Discourse", Perry Willson (ed.), *Gender, Family and Sexuality: The Private Sphere in Italy, 1860–1945* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 89.

[309] "Borrowed from English and French theorists, moral insanity was a category applied to persons who were able to act rationally and sometimes even with intelligence but who were unable to distinguish right from wrong. According to 'his own careful studies', Lombroso found moral insanity to be 'a defining characteristic' of born prostitutes and one that, much more than lust, explained why certain women were attracted to the trade. Greedy and slothful, they wanted financial gain without the fatigue of honest work." See ibid., p. 94.

[310] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 162.

[311] Gibson, "Labeling Women Deviant", p. 95.

reality."[312] The hypocrisy of her religious practice is expressed in her views on her one-year non-platonic relationship with her fiancé Gino (before finding out about his dishonesty), all the while she consciously avoids going to confession: "I had known all along that I could go at any time, and that had been enough for me. I had given up going to confession when I kissed Gino for the first time. I realized that, according to the church, my relations with Gino were a sin, but since I knew we were going to get married, I did not feel any remorse and meant to get absolution once and for all before my wedding."[313]

Adriana considers changing her ways (modeling profession) to appease Gino who disapproves of her showing herself naked to other men, and in her subservience to her man she personifies the ideal Fascist woman: "I'm not going to be a model any more. I'll stay at home all day and keep it clean and tidy for you and cook for you – mother says that means I'll be your servant – but if you love someone, even being a servant can be a pleasure."[314] Chastity, a defining trait of the exemplary Italian woman is one of the central themes in *The Woman of Rome* too, but as something that's irrevocably devalued in the very beginning by an inopportune series of events in Adriana's life, and later on desperately and woefully sought, because it is praised by Mino as the highest virtue (which she, obviously, lacks), as sexuality – according to him – serves only to desensitize people to the wretchedness and banality of this world:

> Chastity was another of his obsessions, all the more singular in that he did not try to practice it and the idea served only to spoil his pleasure. He sang its praises continually, especially just after we had made love, as if out of pique. He used to say love-making was only the silliest and easiest way of shelving all questions, by forcing them out below, secretly, without anyone noticing, like embarrassing guests shown out by the back door. "Then, when the operation has been performed, you go out for a stroll with your accomplice – wife or mistress as the case may be – wondrously disposed to accept the world as it is – even the worst of all possible worlds."[315]

On several occasions Moravia emphasizes how the loss of chastity changes the relationship dynamics: "For the first time I realized that by giving herself to a man, a woman places herself in

[312] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 180.
[313] Ibid., p. 93.
[314] Ibid., p. 46.
[315] Ibid., p. 337.

his hands and no longer has any means of forcing him to behave as she wishes."[316] He correlates it to the loss of dignity both in men and women, namely when the government official Astarita tells Adriana "that every time he succeeded in persuading an accused man to confess or break down, he felt a peculiar kind of satisfaction, like the satisfaction of possession in love. 'An accused man's like a woman', he used to say, 'as long as she resists she can hold her head up... But as soon as she has given way she's a rag and you can have her again how and when you like.'"[317]

Moravia's novel is a dystopian portrayal of the Italian society at large. He depicts the banality of evil long before Hannah Arendt[318] using the same imagery for Astarita: "Although he formed part of the political police force, he declared he knew nothing about politics. 'I'm a cog in a wheel', he said to me another time. 'What they say, I do.'"[319] Just like in Turkey, arranged marriages were commonplace, and the cause of bitter disappointment; Moravia takes on a compassionate tone while depicting Astarita: "'We are legally separated', he said, pulling a face. 'I was only a boy when I got married. The marriage was arranged by my mother. You know how they do these things – a girl of good family, with a handsome dowry. The parents fix everything up and it's the children who have to get married. Live with my wife? Would you live with a woman like this?'"[320] Moravia weaves a general sense of weltschmerz in all male characters, no matter how corrupt and villainous:

> At a certain moment he requested me to sit naked in an armchair. He knelt down in front of me and put his head in my lap, crushing his face against my belly and remaining

[316] Ibid., p. 53.

[317] Ibid., p. 177.

[318] Eichmann's trial took place twelve years after the publication of *The Woman of Rome*: "We heard the protestations of the defense that Eichmann was after all only a 'tiny cog' in the machinery of the Final Solution, and of the prosecution, which believed it had discovered in Eichmann the actual motor. I myself attributed no more importance to both theories than did the Jerusalem court, since the whole cog theory is legally pointless and therefore it does not matter at all what order of magnitude is assigned to the 'cog' named Eichmann. In its judgment the court naturally conceded that such a crime could be committed only by a giant bureaucracy using the resources of government. But insofar as it remains a crime – and that, of course, is the premise for a trial – all the cogs in the machinery, no matter how insignificant, are in court forthwith transformed back into perpetrators, that is to say, into human beings." See Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1964), p. 289.

[319] Moravia, *The Woman of Rome*, p. 178.

[320] Ibid., p. 71.

> motionless like this for some time. Meanwhile I had to stroke his head again and again with a light, incessant caress of the hand. This was not the first time he had obliged me to perform a kind of mimicry of love; but he seemed more desperate that day than usual. He pressed his head violently into my lap as if he wanted to enter into me and be swallowed up, and groaned occasionally. At such times he no longer seemed like a lover, but rather a baby seeking the warmth and darkness of his mother's lap. And the thought occurred to me that many men would have preferred never to have been born.[321]

Apart from Astarita, Adriana uses her beauty to manipulate other men in power too (unlike Feride, who is always unaware that men like her), like the police commissioner who questions her: "I had known him for some time – and although he was the father of a family and over fifty years old, I had sensed much earlier that his feelings for me were more than friendly. [...] I noticed that his restless, worried eyes were examining my figure rather than my face, and I understood that, despite himself, his professional sense of duty had been overcome by his desire for me"[322] and the handsome doctor from her neighborhood: "I often went to him to have myself examined, at least once a fortnight, and once or twice I had let him make love to me, out of gratitude because he did not make me pay him a fee, on the same couch where he had examined me. […] He gave me advice, and I think he was a little hit in love with me in his own way."[323]

Another representation of prostitution – in Emile Zola's *Nana* – "has a historical dimension: the rotten corpse of Nana is symbolically analogous to the rotten body of Imperial France, about to enter the disastrous war against Bismarck's Germany."[324] The prostitute symbolizes the nation[325] – her body is a metaphor for the society, and unlike Nana who is found dead – ravaged by smallpox, Adriana ends up pregnant, which indicates hope for revival of the country; or, if I focus on the fact that the offspring is mothered by a prostitute and fathered by a murderer, there might be repetition of the same destructive pattern.

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[321] Ibid., p. 341.

[322] Ibid., pp. 393–394.

[323] Ibid., pp. 398–399.

[324] Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute: Representing Prostitution in Nineteenth-Century France*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press (1989), p. 213.

[325] In fact, women in general, especially Italian women represent the nation – they "became the signifier of the Fascist ideology of life and death, of rebirth and war, and the social agents of the parallel moralizing-normalizing process. Men were the warriors and the heroes, whereas women formed the troop deployed to enforce the patriarchal values of war and duty as Fascist imperatives." See Graziosi, "Gender Struggle and the Social Manipulation and the Ideological Use of Gender Identity in the Interwar Years", p. 45.

6. FORM AND POPULARITY

6.1. Stories' Emotional Arcs

An important aspect of these two narratives is their quality as bestsellers, which makes whatever impact they have on their audiences more far-reaching and influential. In order to find a pattern in the plot structure that possibly makes them so widely appealing to the readers, I will use the coordinate system devised by Kurt Vonnegut, whose greatest contribution to culture (according to himself) is a master's thesis in anthropology which was "rejected because it was so simple and looked like too much fun",[326] as he explains in his autobiography. The key feature of his thesis is a graph tracing not merely the plotline, but also its emotional highs and lows related to the wellbeing of the protagonist,[327] with the X-axis representing the chronology of the story and the Y-axis the experience, oscillating between good to ill fortune or vice versa:

> Vonnegut had mapped stories by hand, but in 2016, with sophisticated computing power, natural language processing, and reams of digitized text, it's possible to map the narrative patterns in a huge corpus of literature. It's also possible to ask a computer to identify the shapes of stories for you.
> That's what a group of researchers, from the University of Vermont and the University of Adelaide, set out to do. They collected computer-generated story arcs for nearly 2,000 works of fiction, classifying each into one of six core types of narratives (based on what happens to the protagonist): 1. Rags to Riches (rise), 2. Riches to Rags (fall), 3. Man in a Hole (fall then rise) 4. Icarus (rise then fall), 5. Cinderella (rise then fall then rise) 6. Oedipus (fall then rise then fall).[328]

[326] Kurt Vonnegut, *Palm Sunday: An Autobiographical Collage* (New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 1981), p. 285.

[327] Admittedly, there have been other studies attempting to reduce all stories to their most fundamental plotlines, maybe most notably Christopher Booker's seven basic plots, but I used Vonnegut's coordinate system precisely because his categories are quantifiable – words designating positive or negative experiences can be fed into computers and generate emotional arcs, which was used in a popularity meter computer analysis conducted by a group of Australian computer scientists and mathematicians – see Andrew J. Reagan, Lewis Mitchell, Dilan Kiley, Christopher M. Danforth, and Peter Sheridan Dodds, "The Emotional Arcs of Stories are Dominated by Six Basic Shapes", *EPJ Data Science*, Vol. 5, No. 31 (2016), taken from http://www.uvm.edu/~cdanfort/research/2016-reagan-epj.pdf. Speaking of Booker's plots, although they are more detailed and comprehensive, it seems that Vonnegut defined his story arcs long before him – Booker published his study in 2004 (even though it was the result of 34 years of work), and Vonnegut popularized his failed MA thesis (which was rejected in the late 1940s) in the early 1990s. See Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London, UK: Continuum, 2004).

[328] Adrienne Lafrance, "The Six Main Arcs in Storytelling, as Identified by an A.I.", *The Atlantic*, http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/07/the-six-main-arcs-in-storytelling-identified-by-a-computer/490733, 12.07.2016.

Approximately one-fifth of the analyzed works follows the "Rags to Riches" curve, making it the most popular among authors. But when it comes to the most popular emotional arc among readers, "'Rags to Riches' is eclipsed by 'Oedipus', 'Man in a Hole' and, perhaps not surprisingly, 'Cinderella', all of which were more popular."[329]

Both Güntekin and Moravia follow the most popular storylines (popular among the readers, that is): Feride fits into the category of "Cinderella" – likewise, her story starts way down on the Y axis as her mother dies, and subsequently lives as an orphan in a Catholic convent school, then she rises high up when she unites with her prince because of the prospect of a very bright future, the discovery of Kāmran's betrayal pushes her back to her state of misery (the clock ticking midnight in Cinderella's story), and after a period of struggle she reunites with the prince and gets her "happily ever after"; whereas Adriana, like Oedipus, falls from a neutral position – changes her lifestyle of a mediocre girl to the life of a prostitute (comparatively, the oracle prophecies that Oedipus will murder his father and marry his mother), rises when she falls in love with Mino causing her conventional dreams of family life to be reignited, (Oedipus becomes a king), then falls again after some intricate plot twists ending with Mino dead and her impregnated by a murderous criminal (Oedipus finds out who he is and blinds himself). Apropos, all the other protagonists from similar works (that I have previously mentioned in the context of male writers in drag), namely: the chaste Amna (from Hussein's *Call of the Curlew*), and the unchaste Maria (from Coelho's *Eleven Minutes*) and Sayuri (from Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*) quite expectedly, follow the Cinderella plot line. These examples of transvestite ventriloquism naturally, almost intuitively follow storylines that readers love the most.

6.2. Diary Format Facilitating Transvestite Ventriloquism

Another aspect of the novels contributing to them being well-received among the readers is the form they are written in. *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* is an epistolary novel – a diary with entries written by Feride recalling her childhood all the way through the early twenties, ending with three letters: the first one from Feride to her cousin Müjgan, the second one written by Hayrullah and addressed to Kāmran (a man-to-man conversation in which Hayrullah advises

[329] Ibid.

Kāmran what to do with Feride, which makes for a plot twist that the reader anticipates, but does not get to read about), and the last one (with which the book ends) is written by Kāmran for Feride, chronicling the development of his feelings for her. It is ironic how in a first-person female narrative two men get to have the last word – and even more so, the two men that Feride has trusted the most (but end up betraying her trust).

The Woman of Rome is a memoir in which Adriana recounts the start of her working life as a model (from sixteen years of age), all the way to her present state of a well-seasoned prostitute, leaving the novel ending inconclusive (she is pregnant and alone), but right before the end of her narration she inserts Mino's farewell letter (suicide note) addressed to her, instructing her how to rear her child with the financial support from his family. Yet again, the plot of the novel resolves with a man untangling the web the protagonist-narrator has put herself into (thus giving a glimpse to the reader of what will happen next in the story line, although in both novels the plot resolution is implied rather than explicitly stated).

Speaking of diaries and journals, the American literary scholar Cinthia Gannett recognizes that there are "different journal-writing practices, with criticisms of the journal clustering around the seemingly synonymous, but vaguely feminine, or 'feminized', term *diary*, which has somehow become a magnet for nebulous, negative perceptions."[330] With the assumption that behavior is partially determined by sex-role expectations, women "might be more likely to keep diaries than men are. Diary-keeping is a reflective and relatively passive activity. The characteristics of passivity and reflectiveness would seem to fit the sex-role stereotype for women and run counter to the stereotype for men."[331] The journal-keeping tradition is cultivated primarily by women, and not only is the author of a journal most probably a woman, "but she is also the one who finds it more functional, more valuable. She connects with the 'life in the text' of the journal."[332] Women being the producers and consumers of diaries and similar formats explains why female readers

[330] Cinthia Gannett, *Gender and the Journal: Diaries and Academic Discourse* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 99–100.

[331] Charles P. Thompson, "Diary-Keeping as a Sex-Role Behavior", *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society* (1982), Vol. 20, No. 1 (1982), p. 11.

[332] Gannett, *Gender and the Journal*, p.102.

identify more readily with a "transvestite text" written in the form of a diary, hence, cannot see the man behind the text.

Furthermore, what matters equally as the form is the content. The Australian journalist and historian Patricia Clarke uses women's letters and diaries as sources for her historical writings, noting that they "portray not worldly achievements but private aspects of life, such as the subtleties of family, relationships, personal adjustments to the challenges of pioneering life, the drudgery of repetitive house and farm work, and the dangers and problems of childbirth and childrearing. These records were so little values in the past that they were often lost or destroyed."[333] The Hungarian-born renowned curator at New York's Library fetching original manuscripts from all over the world, Lola L. Szladits acknowledged "that women are better diarists than men. I know it sounds like a gender thing, but women do communicate more intimately in their diaries. They're less inhibited. Men concentrate on facts and subjects more than on themselves. Women are more observant of the small detail of life."[334]

Even though it seems like a leisurely (even futile, egocentric) activity, diaries are important because, among other things, thanks to famous women-diarists (some of them became famous because of their diaries) we have a better insight into some historical events (Anne Frank's diary about German-occupied Amsterdam during WWII), the personal lives of political figures (Clara Petacci's diary about her lover Mussolini, Eva Braun's about Hitler), renowned women-authors (Mary Shelley, Anaïs Nin, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath), etc. Again, there are even many more critically acclaimed male diarists who were already among the literary elite (as in the case of Shelley, Nin, Woolf, Plath...), but men's journals are mainly written for the public and literary sphere (written with the awareness or even goal of others reading them) or in the form of working journals with freewriting daybook-type entries, while women's are private and therapeutic, as an intimate record of life and emotional outlet.

[333] Patricia Clarke, "Writing Women into History", Rhonda Kerr (ed.), *Hidden Histories: National Capital Family History Seminar Papers* (Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra Inc., Canberra, 2004), p. 2.

[334] Herbert Mitgang, "Theory and Practice in Writing of Diaries", *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/1989/01/21/books/theory-and-practice-in-writing-of-diaries.html, 21.01.1989.

Yet again, there are feminine (*écriture féminine*) metaphors related to the practice of journal-keeping further cementing the idea that women need diaries. The American literature professor Trudelle Thomas likens the role of a diary to that of a midwife:

> Belenky et al. observe that often women in a particular stage of intellectual development (what they call the "subjectivists") use a private diary or journal to discover a personal "voice" that expresses their individual vision of the world. In place of the metaphor of "discovering a voice", I would like to suggest that the diary is a kind of midwife to the diarist, an assistant that can facilitate all stages of her growth. The role of the midwife is to be a calm and encouraging presence as the woman gives herself over to the powerful process of birth. She offers knowledge, comfort, guidance, and encouragement. [...] As I interviewed women of various ages and backgrounds, again and again they spoke of the diary as an aid to "giving birth to the self", to "coming into my own", to "becoming a whole person". Often their personal diaries serve as a coach and as a source of comfort and security as they progress through many stages of growth and "birthing".[335]

In the case of *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* and *The Woman of Rome*, not only are the authors disguised under the veil of female narrators, but also their novels are disguised as women's most private ruminations – in other words, the appropriation of the female voice is even more convincing and wily.

[335] Trudelle H. Thomas, "The Diary as Creative Midwife: Interviews with Three Writers", eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia Anne Huff, *Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), pp. 169–170.

CONCLUSION

There are many studies confirming what we already know intuitively: that fiction is a force to be reckoned with. When it comes to the difference between non-fictional and fictional narratives at molding people's opinions, American literary scholar Jonathan Gottschall notes that non-fiction is designed to persuade through logical arguments, whereas non-fiction does not overtly try, and that's why it does a better job at it: "When we read nonfiction, we read with our shields up. We are critical and skeptical. But when we are absorbed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard. We are moved emotionally, and this seems to leave us defenseless."[336] Still, I would say it is inconclusive whether people are influenced by the books they read, or they turn to them only to confirm what they already believe and bolster their worldview with its own set of biases. On a related note, it is equally questionable whether literature reflects or affects society (or both), as "literature is a reflection and reflector of society, a cyclical entity perpetuating ideas. Ideas are written into literature as justification for ideas already in existence, and later taken from literature as further justification for upholding the status quo; literary ideas are heavily ingrained in both literature, and in society."[337] Oftentimes novels serve as propaganda, when the authors explicitly or implicitly lionize and stigmatize certain groups of people, creating heroes and villains in accordance with the ideology they endorse.

No matter how l'art pour l'artistic a novel seems to be, it can always be interpreted as *littérature engagée* regardless of the authors' original intentions. As an engaged writer, Güntekin fulfills his social role by setting an ideal for Turkish women, and Moravia depicts an anti-heroine against the backdrop of the dystopian Italy of his age. Children's literature and required readings in school (like *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl*) are especially influential because children and adolescents are malleable; hence, those texts shape the adults they grow into.

Even though *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* was written almost a century ago and got its film version in 1966, it is still such a popular novel that it recently (in 2013) got a second TV

[336] Jonathan Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (2012), pp. 249–250.

[337] Carrillo-Rush, "Suffocating under a Sealed Bell Jar", p 1.

series adaptation (after the first one from 1986) that acquired an even wider audience (and subsequently, more readership of the novel on which the screenplay is based). Similarly, *The Woman of Rome* was first screened as a feature film in 1954, and later on televised in 1988. The availability of these texts in different media widens and intensifies their impact.

Not only are readers subliminally influenced by fiction (in whichever form), but also fiction and reality are sometimes indistinguishable and interchangeable, which is especially evident when people attribute characteristics to actors based on the characters they play. Even though, while consuming fiction, on a conscious level one knows that it is not real, an unconscious, so-called "alief" mechanism is triggered, causing overly emotional responses to fictional narratives.[338] As a result, even though a woman who has read or watched *Çalıkuşu* or *La Romana* believes that Feride and Adriana are merely fictional characters, her inner identification with one (or both) of them makes her alieve that women's personality ranges from a mother/virgin to a prostitute, and if not at the extremes, then it belongs somewhere in-between.

The Slovenian anthropologist and author Karmen Špiljak acknowledges that the consequences of this stereotypical representation of women can be viewed as a causality dilemma because after so much time those stereotypes become self-perpetuating.

> Popular representations of women are based on variations upon two basic identifying models, or upon the typical soap opera roles: the positive and the negative character. While the positive character allows the female public to passively identify themselves with heroic narrations that give a woman a role in the family, the negative one loses and therefore shows the fate of a woman who chooses to act against the rules of the patriarchal system. [...]

[338] "That otherwise intelligent, college-going young people would confuse fiction and reality in this way would be laughable if only it wasn't another one in the line of anecdotes of people confusing fictional characters with their real world counterparts. [...] The confusion may also come from our 'alief' system. The philosopher Tamar Gendler proposes that we have two cognitive systems at work when we engage in fiction: 'belief', where we know the fiction to be false, and 'alief', where there is an unconscious process that causes us to believe TV actors are doctors, or to have an emotional reaction to fictional characters breaking up in a book." See Thalia R. Goldstein, "Do Fictional Characters Affect Our Real Life?", *Psychology Today*, https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-mind-stage/201211/do-fictional-characters-affect-our-real-life, 29.11.2012.

> The forced identification pattern promotes patriarchal representation patterns: it leads to gender trauma, expressed in schizophrenic female identity expressed through the typical representations of the crazy/seductive destroyer and the mother/virgin.[339]

To go back to transvestite ventriloquism, Elizabeth Harvey believes that the cultural silence (and silencing) of women enables male ventriloquizations of their voices, and that this is problematic not because of some essentialist or epistemological belief that "only women can legitimately speak for themselves, because only they have access to their own experience"[340]; but because of the ethics and politics of the male appropriation of female voices: "Even while we recognize the constructed nature of gender, we can still adhere to a conviction that women and (and their respective voices) are not politically interchangeable."[341] She argues "that transvestite ventriloquism is asymmetrically disposed in relation to the sexes: it is different for a man to ventriloquize a woman's voice than for a woman to speak in a masculine voice, since gender itself is asymmetrically constructed in relation to power."[342]

In light of my hypothesis that male authors are able to take on a female voice only in the two binary opposites of a mother and a prostitute (thereby turning them into burlesque ventriloquist dummies), I would go even further to claim that literary transvestite ventriloquism by men is, in fact, overwriting women's reality, hence: gaslighting; this technique used in brainwashing and indoctrination has various types, but it invariably has "two defining features: the first is an attempt to impair or destroy an individual's confidence in his or her psychic abilities; after this first aim has been achieved, the second aim is to attain control over the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of the victim"[343]). Needless to say, I am not implying that the occurrence of gaslighting in this form (through the veneer of literature and the seemingly well-intentioned yearning to understand women better) is malevolent, or even intentional scheming.

[339] Špiljak, Karmen (2012). "Gender and Gaze: Construction of Female Identity in Popular Culture with Special Focus on Comical Genres" (Doctoral Dissertation), p. 3.

[340] Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices*, p. 12.

[341] Ibid., p. 13.

[342] Ibid., p. 32.

[343] Dorpat, *Gaslighting, the Double Whammy, Interrogation and Other Methods of Covert Control in Psychotherapy and Analysis*, p. 7.

The submerged archetypes in the fiction we consume jump-start the conscious or subconscious process of identification which unleashes the archetypes' force within us, which is similar to the imposition of the victimizer's (or victimizers') ideology on the victim(s) via projective identification in gaslighting. Admittedly, both authors are apologetic and understanding of their protagonists, toning down the veneration inspired by the mother and the moral repulsion by the prostitute (avoiding the pitfalls of pedestalizing motherhood or stigmatizing prostitution), thus making their gaslighting even more subtle, making it pass under the radar of the unsuspecting female readership, eagerly waiting to be spoon-fed fictitious representations of femininity.

Bearing in mind that the antithetical figures of the virgin-mother and the prostitute are rooted in men's attraction to and fear of female sexuality (thus, mate guarding and promiscuity as male sexual strategies for coping with the ambivalent emotions), the medical advancement (contraceptive technology) should render them obsolete. Against all odds, they persevere and are continually reproduced, "and that is because they are rooted not simply in the social structure but in the unconscious as well. To put it another way, one might say that the social structure represents the particular historic manifestation of a 'timeless' psychological reality."[344] Freud reckoned that shining a bright light on the two figures would make them lose the power they have over our unconscious, but Jung, on the other hand, believed that the mind has an innate and indelible inclination toward dualism, so if he "is right, then no change in social structure or childrearing would seriously affect the typology of women; one would have to change the structure of the mind itself to do so."[345]

Nonetheless, women are not entirely powerless in the process of construction of these images. They can choose no longer to be the Other, the subaltern, but rather find a voice of their own: "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies – for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text – as into the world and into history – by her own movement.[346]

[344] Hoffman Baruch, *Women, Love, and Power*, p. 167.
[345] Ibid., 168.
[346] Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", p. 880.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Natasha Chevik

natasha.chevik@gmail.com

Education:

MA in Civilization Studies (2018) – Alliance of Civilizations Institute, Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, Turkey

BA in Oriental Philology (2011) – Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Seminars and Workshops:

Futures Workshop "Navigating Postnormal Turkey" (03/2017) – *CPPFS* and *IIIT*, Istanbul, Turkey

Futures Summer School "Decolonizing the Balkan Future" (08/2016) – *CPPFS* and *FOCIC*, Skopje and Mavrovo, Macedonia

Queer Studies (11/2012–06/2013) – Queer Studies Center and Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Women's Studies (11/2011–06/2012) – Women's Studies Center and Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade, Serbia

Publications:

Chevik, Natasha. "Civilizing the *Mission Civilisatrice*: Edward Said's Positionality", *Context: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 [forthcoming]

Chevik, Natasha. Review of *The Ultimate Star Wars and Philosophy*: You Must Unlearn What You Have Learned by Jason T. Eberl and Kevin S. Decker (eds.), *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2018): pp. 305–307

Chevik, Natasha. Translation of "Erkek İade Reyonu" by Nazlı Eray from Turkish to Macedonian, *Okno*, https://okno.mk/node/67935, 22.11.2017.