

T.R.
İSTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



THE DE(CON)STRUCTION OF THE MAN-MADE LANGUAGE AND
IDEOLOGY THROUGH FEMALE SEXUALITY AND TEXTUALITY IN
THE NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF AND ERENDİZ ATASÜ

PH.D THESIS

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Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Doktora Programı Y1112.620011 numaralı öğrencisi Muzaffer Derya SUBAŞI'nın "THE DE(CON)STRUCTION OF THE MAN-MADE LANGUAGE AND IDEOLOGY THROUGH FEMALE SEXUALITY AND TEXTUALITY IN THE NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF AND ERENDİZ ATASÜ" adlı doktora tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 25/10/2016 tarih ve 2016/22 sayılı kararı ile oluşturulan jüri tarafından aybırınca ile Doktora tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document, entitled “The De(con)struction of The Man-Made Language and Ideology Through Female Sexuality and Textuality in The Novels of Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü”, has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work. (28/10/2016)

Muzaffer Derya SUBAŞI





To my mum and son...



FOREWORD

Despite being carried out on an individual basis, writing a successful dissertation requires lots of guide, help, support and love of many people. Thus, I would like to express my sincerest appreciations to those people who have scholarly and spiritually guided me throughout this study. Without their time, effort and encouragement, this hard creative process would not have been possible.

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ABBREVIATIONS

TTL : To The Light House
O : Orlando
SSY : That Scorching Season of Youth
MD : A Midlife Dream



**VIRGINIA WOOLF VE ERENDİZ ATASÜ'NÜN ROMANLARINDA
ERKEK EGEMEN SÖYLEM VE İDEOLOJİSİNİN KADIN CİNSELLİĞİ
VE METİNSELLİĞİ YOLUYLA YIKILMASI VE YENİDEN
YAPILANDIRILMASI**

ÖZET

En basit haliyle, insanlar arasında iletişim kurmayı ve/ya düşüncelerini aktarmayı sağlayan ortak işaretler sistemi olarak tanımlanan dil, aslında, kadınların yaşam alanlarını sınırlamada ve onların itaatkâr bir hayat sürmelerini sağlamada etkin ve baskın bir rol oynamıştır. Bu sınırları çizilmiş hayat içerisinde tüm medeniyetler ataerkil olmuş, tarih hep erkekler tarafından belirlenmiş, edebiyat ise fallus merkezli erkek egemen dille yazılmıştır. Kadınlar, kendilerini erkeğin değersiz 'ötekisi' olarak tanımlayan bu kısır döngüden kurtulabilmek için, erkek egemen söylemin ve dilinin tüm sabit ve hiyerarşik yapılarını yıkmanın ve yeniden yapılandırmanın yollarını bulma arayışı içine girmiştir. Virginia Woolf ve Erendiz Atasü bu arayışın öncülerindedir ve onlara göre, mevcut olan tek yol, kadınların 'beden/akıl, kadın/erkek, ben/öteki' olarak belirlenmiş ataerkil sınırlandırmaların ötesine geçmeleridir. Bu da ancak 'kapsayan ve bütünleştiren dişil dil' ile oluşturulacak olan 'dişil yazın' ile mümkündür. Kadınların/kadın yazarların, ataerkil söylemleri kalıplaştıran ve normalleştiren erkek-egemen dil ile ilgili kaygıları göz önünde bulundurularak, bu çalışmada öncelikle, fallus merkezli ideolojilerin kadınları olumsuzlayan ve ötekileştiren yapısı ortaya konulmakta, ardından bu ideolojilerin kurmuş olduğu düzeni tersine çevirebilmenin bir yolu olarak kadın yazını değerlendirilmektedir. Bu amaçla, daha sonra, post-yapısalcı feminizm kuramları temel alınarak, farklı dönemlerin yanı sıra, felsefi, dini ve kültürel yapıları da birbirinden çok farklı toplumlarda yaşamış olan Woolf ve Atasü'nün dişil metinleri incelenmekte, tüm bu farklılıklara ve engellere rağmen ortak bir 'dişil dilin' varlığı sorusu üzerine odaklanılmaktadır. İki yazarın karşılaştırmalı analizi, dişil dilin, fallus tarafından yönetilen erkek egemen dil ve söylemini yıkabileceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Yazarlara göre bu yıkım ancak, akışkan, çok yönlü, farklı ve hiyerarşiden uzak kadın bedeninin zevklerini yazarak gerçekleşecektir. Kadın bedenini ve deneyimlerini, mevcut egemen söylem ve ideolojilerin kontrol ve otoritesinden özgür kılmayı başaran bu yeni şiirsel dil, 'beden ve akıl' arasındaki mesafeyi yok eder ve değişmez kabul edilen cinsel farklılıkların ötesine geçerek 'bütünlüğü' yakalar. Tüm zıtlıkları kapsayan ve bütünleştiren bu yeni oluşumla, Virginia Woolf ve Erendiz Atasü, farklılıklar ve kültürel çeşitlilik gerçeğine dayalı yeni bir dünya yaratılabileceğinin olasılığını göstermektedir. Dişil dil ve söylem ile yaratılmış bu dünyada, biyolojik ve toplumsal cinsiyetler ayırt edilmeksizin herkes eşit olacaktır. Sonuç olarak, 'dişil dilin' ataerkil ideolojiler ve söylemler çerçevesinde oluşturulmuş toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkilerini ve rollerini yeniden yapılandırarak, yalnızca kadınlar için değil, tüm insanlar için eşitlikçi ve hak temelli ortamlar sunacağı ortaya konulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Dişil Dil, Dişil Yazın, Kadın Bedeni ve Cinsellik, Erkek-Egemen Dil, Fallosentrik Söylem, Yapısöküm, Ataerkillik*

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ABSTRACT

Language, which is simply defined as the system of words or signs shared by a group of people to communicate and express thoughts, has always played an active and dominant role in creating a subjugated and subservient life for women. In this limited life, civilization is patriarchal, history is HIStory, literature is phallogentric and language is man-made. In order to break the chain of vicious circle, forcing them being the inferior ‘others’ of men, women seek the ways of de(con)structing all the fixed and hierarchical structures of male discourse and its man-made language. Among those women are Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü, who assert that women can transcend patriarchal boundaries between ‘body/mind, female/male and self/other’ through the ‘all-encompassing female language’, which enables a non-phallogentric ‘feminine writing’ practice. Depending on the similar concerns of women/women writers about the man-made language that constructs the rigid patriarchal norms, this study, first, puts forward how phallogentric ideology affects women and how it is challenged by women’s writing. Then, basing its argument on the theories of post-structuralist feminism, it analyzes the feminine texts written by Woolf and Atasü, who live in quite different periods and societies that have different philosophic, religious and cultural practices, in order to find out if the ‘female language’ shares common features despite all these boundaries. The comparative analysis of the two writers reveals that the female language challenges the speech governed by the phallus and brings down phallogentric discourse by writing the pleasures of female body, which are fluid, multiple, diverse and nonhierarchical. Thus, by liberating female body and experiences from the control and authority of the man-made language and ideologies, this new poetic language de(con)structs the distance between ‘body and mind’ and achieves ‘wholeness’ by moving beyond the fixed confines of sexual differences. With this all-encompassing unity, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü validate the possibility of creating a new world built on a true diversity and culture, where all sexes and genders will be equal. As a result, the ‘female language’ is proved to be offering an egalitarian basis for all humans, not just for women, by de(con)structing the patriarchally constructed gender roles.

Key Words: *Female Language, Feminine Writing, Female Body and Sexuality, Man-Made Language, Phallogentric Discourse, De(con)struction, Patriarchy*

1. INTRODUCTION

I see Galatea, recumbent, exquisitely silent, impeccably still. Pygmalion has rewarded his perfect beauty with a soft couch and with gem bracelets, pearl strands, and a laurel crown. What more could she want? She has his attention, too—the chisel she greets daily. Pygmalion finds live women contemptible—loudmouthed, blind to their own flaws and stupidly resistant to the perfecting touch. But Galatea is hollowed where hollowing is needed, rounded where rounding is needed, glassened by the sculptor’s loving rasp. What could be more generous? These improvements are his daily graces freely bestowed upon her. ... Pygmalion is to prop Galatea in the marketplace as an example to all women who love to roam about on their own, rather than staying put and yielding to improvements. For generations hence, each woman is granted an honorary chisel which she must carry on her person as a reminder of the price she must pay for love (Hallstead, 2013, p.1-2).

The story of *Pygmalion and Galatea*, having its roots in classical Greek legend, becomes well-known with Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, in which Pygmalion, a famous sculptor, carves a beautiful maiden out of ivory as he despises and hates all human women, except his inert creation. He carves and shapes it every day in order to make it flawless. Falling in love with his own creation, Pygmalion prays to Venus to make the statue come to life. Taking pity on him, Venus blesses the union of the sculptor and his creation by granting them a son, Paphos. This myth has become of interest to many artists and writers, consequently being re-presented in theatrical plays, movies, artistic paintings and literature through the centuries. Eventually, the modern concept of Pygmalion incarnates in George Bernard Shaw’s play, *Pygmalion*. In this variant of the myth, Henry Higgins, a phonetics professor, ‘shapes’ an uncultivated woman, Eliza Doolittle, into an educated creature.

Despite seeming simple and romantic, the myth of Pygmalion actually enforces the motif of ‘Man’, the supreme, ruling, judging, and life-giving male God, and gives rise to male-driven norms and stories by males for other males to read and to inspire. Appropriate masculine and feminine roles that exist in the content, language and illustrations in many of these myths, stories and tales serve to legitimize and support a patriarchal system, reinforcing the inferiority and subjugation of women in society. In this way, women internalize norms and adopt behaviors that ultimately affect their chances in life. They assent being portrayed and treated as weak, submissive, dependent, and self-sacrificing objects, who have no power to alter the events in their lives.

However, women can choose not to believe those myths and stories, and can adopt new consciousness by de(con)structing the patriarchal lie that the female of the species is inherently flawed. The damaging sources of negative female stereotypes and the

many socializing forces that have discouraged females from realizing their full human potential can be challenged. As a result of that challenge, “[the ending of these tales] tell[ing] us that happiness for a woman is to be passive, victimized, destroyed, or asleep” (Dworkin, 1974, 48-49) can be replaced with encouraging and promising ones for women. No matter how powerful Pygmalion’s voice is, women must remember the brave women characters within these male-driven stories who defy the male-imposed definitions, such as *Gretel* that successfully kills the witch and saves both herself and her brother, Chaucer’s *The Wife of Bath*, who defies male authority, or *Arachne*, who becomes an emblem of female rebellion silenced by patriarchy.

The myth of Arachne is also one of the most famous stories in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. According to the myth, a woman weaver named Arachne disrespects Athena, the Goddess of weaving, by claiming that her weaving talent is derived from her own power, not a gift from the Goddess. Thus, she challenges Athena to a weaving contest, where she weaves the gods and their improprieties with mortal women. The goddess does not deny Arachne’s skill as the resulting work is flawless. “Not Pallas, not Envy could pluck out a flaw in that work”, says Ovid (2004, Book 6, p.129-145). However, angered by her lack of respect, Athena destroys the tapestry and beats Arachne over the head with a shuttle, the shared emblem of their textile production. Feeling humiliated, Arachne tries to hang herself but Athena turns her into a spider, subjecting her and her descendants to spin forever in a crude imitation of the skills they once possessed as a curse for disrespecting the gods.

On the surface, the story of Arachne seems simply about a woman who has been punished because of her excessive pride that leads her to believe in the autonomy of her textile production. However, below the surface, it is Arachne’s protest against the immoral law of the gods, or more precisely, a challenge to the patriarchal ideology that denies women’s autonomy. Arachne, who weaves images of raped women, becomes the symbol of female rebellion silenced by the phallogentric patriarchy, because weaving constitutes the means whereby she may conduct herself as a free subject, rather than being a defined object of society’s gaze. Always keeping in mind her aim, Arachne accomplishes her textile so that her ‘rebel text’ may challenge the man-made script having been written for women by society. Nancy Miller, for instance, asserts that “against the classically theocentric balance of Athena’s tapestry, Arachne constructs feminocentric protest” (1986, p.273).

Read from this perspective, the myth of Arachne, especially with its association of textile production and female storytelling, is regarded as a literary representation of female text production. In this rereading practice, Arachne becomes an archetype of women’s writing that aims to challenge and reconstruct the phallogentric representation

of women. Arachne’s resolution to use her ‘tapestry/text’ to tell the truth about women’s abuse and oppression at the hands of male gods, representing patriarchy, has shaped and influenced the structures of feminist literary theory and later feminist readings. In fact, modern feminists have de(con)structed many mythological figures in order to find ‘a woman’s gaze’ and an appropriate ‘female language’ that empowers the voices of contemporary women. Being aware of the need for establishing a different way of thinking against all forms of oppression, including the feminine repression by the phallogentric structures, early feminist critics and scholars focused mainly on disrupting culturally essentialist binaries advocating gender equality in all domains of life. However, realizing that the language itself was the reason of the systematic deprivation of women, they centered their ideas on de(con)structing gender difference in language during the 1970s. Having those considerations in their minds, contemporary feminist theories have begun to examine “how and where women have been excluded and how to question and undo that conclusion” (Conley, 1984, p.1). Within this socio-political and historical perspective, feminist critics have raised critical questions about the fundamental role of language in constructing and representing gender and have strived to prove that language is one of the strategies used by men to fortify and perpetuate phallogentric patriarchal ideology. Through that ideological construction promoted by the man-made language, women are labeled as deviant and deficient.

In this context, Chapter 1 introduces a linguistic, historical and cultural background to the afore-mentioned othering process of women. It exemplifies how our means of understanding the world has been constructed and shaped through man-made language, thereby strengthening the phallogentric myths and their reinforced ideologies that define woman as “a disadvantaged little man” (Irigaray, 1985b, p.26), having no status of her own. This chapter is followed by conceptual sections that analyze the feminist challenges and the influence of post-structuralists on the feminist philosophy of language, illustrating the power of man-made language in the construction of gender. It is argued that the only way to break free from the phallogentric patriarchal discourse and its man-made language is to create their own ‘female language’, providing new space and opportunities that would allow women to participate in their own representation.

Chapter 2, thus, traces the emergence and progress of ‘écriture féminine’, which deals with “the inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text” (Showalter, 1981, p. 185). Though generally associated with French feminists, especially with Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, the theory of écriture féminine has actually been ‘the wild zone’ of all feminist critics and women writers who seek to oppose the phallogentric discourse and its man-made language. In addition to presenting possibilities for getting out of the ‘Dark Continent’, the patriarchal space where women have been captivated and silenced for ages, écriture féminine also

provides women with ‘white ink’, through which they can construct their own female language and feminine culture. Having those considerations in their minds, feminist critics engage in reinventing a language which cannot be “defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning” (Felman, 1975, p.10) in order to de(con)struct the oppressive phallogocentric structure that defines women as deviant and leaves them speechless. Despite important points of divergence in their methodologies, the primary concern of most feminists is the female body, sexuality and the assertion of women’s relation to language and writing. They claim that women must resist the discourse of ‘docile bodies’ and remember the power and the value of the female body, which is the source of pleasure, fertility and empowerment. Therefore, for feminist critics, writing from the female body is an influential way of opposing symbolic patterns ingrained in language, as Cixous states in the following:

A Woman’s Coming to Writing:
Who
 Invisible, foreign, secret, hidden, mysterious, black, forbidden
Am I ...
 Is this me, this no-body that is dressed up, wrapped in veils, carefully kept distant, pushed to the side of the History and change, nullified, kept out of the way, on the edge of the stage, on the kitchen side, the bedside?
For you?
 Is that me, a phantom doll, ...? (1986, p.69) (emphasis in original).

This ‘phantom doll’, having ‘no-body’, can only break the chains from restrictions of male supremacy and submission through writing in a female language, which will reconstitute her wrapped body and silenced voice. However, since having been demanded to stay silent so long by that disdainful and repressive society, she feels impotent to speak out, or more precisely, she feels defined by her feelings about words consolidating male privilege and supremacy. For her, the only way of salvation is to de(con)struct the man-made language that positions her ‘negative, Other and without subjectivity’. Therefore, a theory of uniquely female language emerges since “woman’s desire would not be expected to speak the same language as man’s” (Irigaray, 1985a, p.25). Despite admitting the difficulty of defining a female language and the unique difference of women’s writing with that new language, feminist critics and women writers have a common standpoint, which is to free the female body and sexuality that have been encoded in accordance with culturally determined components of male sexual desire. According to these critics and writers, if a woman reconnects with her body and her sexual pleasure, she will experience fluid, multiple, diverse and nonhierarchical state of happiness that helps her create a new feminine rhetoric, which is only possible through writing in female language as well as the reclamation of the female body. Thus, as Cixous states in the following lines, women must write their bodies:

Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it. I know why you haven’t written. (And why I didn’t write before the age of twenty-seven.) Because writing is at once too high, too great for you, it’s reserved for the great—that is, for “great men”; and it’s “silly.” ... Write, let no one hold you back, let nothing stop you (Cixous, 1976, p.877-878).

Chapter 3 carries this discussion forward to an argumentative level to examine the reflections of these issues in the literary works written by women writers who succeed in de(con)structing the belief that man is the “procreator and ... *his* pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1984, p. 6) (*italic is mine*). Despite the archaic and narcissistic structure of phallogocentric literary tradition that curses ‘the nymph Echo/the female artist’ to repeat the last words of her interlocutor rather than to find her own form, women writers put all of their efforts in violating Echo’s dependence on ‘Narcissus/the male artist’ and reconstituting the disembodied voice of her with their feminine works written in female language. Those writers, who believe that there is no need for a ‘pen(is)’ to write, explore the alternatives of rewriting female experience and undoing the gender binaries having been used to structure both women’s minds and bodies. Bearing all these in mind, they “deconstruct, displace, demystify the logocentric, ethnocentric, phallogocentric order of things” (Hassan, 1987, p.445) in order to write as women and achieve the true female authority. Among those women writers are Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü, both of whom speak out against being locked in by patriarchal dictations and the sexist and discriminatory man-made language. For Woolf and Atasü, women that have been sentenced to confinement and dispossession should sentence themselves to freedom now, which is the great responsibility of women writers. It is true that feminist works should not be limited to those which are merely produced by women writers. Throughout the history, though scarce in number, there have been also male authors writing about the hegemonic expectations and gender inequalities that lead to the oppression of women. However, women are the ones who have experienced the heart-breaking reality of being silenced and suppressed throughout human history and into the present. That is why, it is natural for a woman writer, claims Erendiz Atasü, to find the appropriate words to express the female experiences. She clarifies this point as in the following lines:

I know women have some sexual experiences that make them aghast and disillusioned. Yet, I can say that these are not confessed easily by women, and men have no idea about them. What prompts me to write about these unspoken areas is to make the experiences of females visible and clear through the help of a fictional work within the bounds of its own genre. Concerning these issues, in my opinion, women writers have a great responsibility and they should always be at the forefront, because sexuality is private. And it is so difficult to verbalize the sexual experiences. I think it is much easier for a writer to figure out the appropriate words. (Atasü, n.d., *The Author’s Ideas about Women Fiction*, erendizatasu.com).

The reason why I limit my focus to Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü, though there is an abundance of work on how women’s voices and language is perceived, is because of the influence of Virginia Woolf on women’s writing traditions. Still being regarded as a revered figure and a liberating force for modern women writers, Virginia Woolf also inspires the Turkish feminist writer, Erendiz Atasü, who honestly professes that “Woolf has made [her] get closer to the writer within [her]” (Atasü, 2012, p.vii). In spite of the fact that they have lived in quite different periods, places and cultures, the

narrative techniques and the figurative language they use in their works are so close to each other, as Oya Batum Menteşe points out: “Erendiz Atasü’s style is so close to Virginia Woolf’s poetic prose” (2014, p.78). The main reason of all these similarities, despite the passage of time, is the unchanging gender roles and the reflections of their common concerns into language. That is why, they both struggle hard to unveil the relation between textuality and sexuality.

Furthermore, aiming to create a female artist who can both speak and survive, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü have established a new, female-oriented literary tradition, providing women an organic structure that allows their silenced voices and ignored bodily experiences to be expressed and passed along to their targeted readers with efficacy and candor. In order to be more influential, both writers speak the same language in their works, which is the ‘female language’ that enables them to de(con)struct the transcendental signifier and its internalized beliefs and patriarchal modes of signification. Thereby, all categories, boundaries, hierarchies and binaries that have been patriarchally constructed are dissolved and the repressed, silenced or sometimes completely rejected voices of women are heard and welcomed in the works of Woolf and Atasü. As a consequence, chapter 3 deals with feminist readings of these texts, encompassing the features of female language, so as to show why the man-made language is “too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman’s use” (Woolf, 1979, p.48). The major strategy in this part is to illustrate an overall perspective by using the deconstructive critical approach, which plays an important role in explaining how the phallogentric patriarchal discourses are challenged and unsettled. Once they are challenged and weakened by alternative interpretations of feminine writing, “the necessary inerrability of words” (Ward, 1996, p.152) is always deferred and the meaning of one word ceaselessly creates other words, which demonstrates that there can be no universal and privileged meanings and values in literary traditions. By de(con)structing the masculine values and the man-made language, women realize that there are only multiple meanings and fluid identities, like the all-encompassing female state of existence. This new existence devours everything to become everything, as Cixous explains in the following:

[Women] are ... sea, sand, coral, sea-weed, beaches, tides, swimmers, children, waves. ... More or less wavy sea, earth, sky – what matter would rebuff us? We know how to speak them all. ... Heterogeneous, yes. ... [S]he does not cling to herself; she is dispersible, prodigious, stunning, desirous and capable of others, of the other woman that she will be, of the other woman she isn’t, of him, of you (Cixous, 1976, p.889-890).

Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü believe that signification can be released from the stronghold of the singularity of meaning through female language, which allows women to ‘speak all’. Eventually, freedom for all comes as the language does not restrict the signifier to one meaning. In order to pave the way for a better understanding about the

issues of female language and feminine culture, Woolf and Atasü create new spaces of existence and survival for women through their feminine texts and female characters, who get rid of their ‘docile bodies’ and achieve wholeness by de(con)structing the rigid boundaries between ‘body and mind, female and male, self and other’. In other words, these characters dephallogentricize the male power and knowledge and become the ‘subject-in-process’ (Kristeva, 1984), a multiple and fluid speaking subject that unravels the double-bind of the phallogentric patriarchy. Eventually, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü subvert the man made language, give voice to female experiences and redefine the world, where women can flourish and speak their female language through their writing.

Considering these facts, the last part of chapter 3 explores the parallels between Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü with an aim to demonstrate that both writers employ similar ways to articulate the unspoken taboos in regard to female body and experiences within man-made language. They both struggle for dissolving long-established notions of the mind-body dualism and emphasize the significance of writing the female body and sexuality through the female language. Knowing that such attempts are important to raise awareness about the discursively constructed female body and experiences, Woolf and Atasü keep on unshackling and dismantling the patriarchal institutions and values, handed down to women from past, through their works. Thus, the key to their emancipation is in their writing, a primary means of resistance to all that would violate the individual. In fact, speaking the unspoken and giving voice to muted ones with the required words and culture is quite difficult for a woman writer, as Virginia Woolf has already confessed: “I have the feeling of a woman, but I have only the language of men” (1979, p.67). In a similar way, Erendiz Atasü underlines the fact that women cannot articulate themselves through the man-made language due to its “insulting aspects of intonation” (2009, p.65) and ignorant attitude towards a female body and its sensual experiences. In such a world, survival may not always possible for women; however, Woolf and Atasü keep on speaking out and telling women’s stories despite all the obstacles. They assert that breaking silences through feminine works written in a female language is a necessary gesture of resistance, and it is also the central life transforming feature of feminist literary tradition. Therefore, Woolf and Atasü prove women that they have a choice to find alternative structures outside the phallogentric patriarchal system, rather than being destructed or assimilated. By speaking out their female experiences and writing their female bodies, women can create new space and philosophy that will allow, justify and acknowledge their female existence. Therefore, women must never renounce their right to speak, as Audre Lorde writes in *The Black Unicorn*:

... and when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid
So it is better to speak (1978, p. 31).

Therefore, speaking and writing the truth about a female body and its sensual experiences is the route to survival for women and women writers. If they achieve that, the internalized fear of rejection and inferiority ruling their lives can be de(con)structed and a new, female-oriented tradition can be established. During this process, women writers reach out to a muted and humiliated woman through their works and help her to move beyond the 'dark continent' to a point where she can build a new identity and survive her misfortunes. In fact, it is the primary concern of women writers to illustrate how one's way of thinking is shaped by historical and cultural representations reproduced by the phallogocentric discourse and its canonical works. That is why, writing, as a tool, not only does de(con)struct the repressive ideology of the patriarchy, but it also offers a new way of thinking for everyone, especially for women. This is the inevitable influence of women's writing tradition, through which all women speak the same language – the 'female language'.

In the conclusion part, these assertions are interpreted to illustrate how Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü have succeeded in breaking away from the mainstream novelistic tradition that forces women writers to articulate and internalize the masculine beliefs and values, and establishing a female-oriented literary tradition. What a particular gender, race, sexuality mean in one historical context, intellectual tradition or geographical locale may not mean the same in other places. However, that is not true for Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü, who both transgress gender roles, national identities and cultures through their writing, thereby creating female characters that become successful in translating "*inarticulate words* into art" (Williams, 2000, p.13-14) (emphasis in original) and turning women into the female speaking subjects from the silenced madwoman figure. As a result, despite the passage of time between the writers and despite the different cultural and social realities that Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü's novels describe, their literary works have worked together because they all aim to demonstrate the possible conclusions of the central question, put forth by Elaine Showalter: "What would history be like if it were seen through the eyes of women and ordered by values they define?" (1981, p.198).

2. THE POWER OF LANGUAGE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER

How hard it is for women to keep counsel! (Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 2007, 1.4:65).
Her voice was ever soft, /Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman (Shakespeare, *King Lear*, 2007, 5.3:15).
She has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman (Shakespeare, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 2007, 1.1:7).

Fictional utterances cannot be read directly or cannot be assumed as reflecting the view of the author. Of course, it would be misleading to claim that Shakespeare might have agreed with the representations expressed in these texts. Nonetheless, their articulation in these fictional texts is the proof of the long-running, traditional discursive practice of disparaging women's talk, and constitutes a recycling of this discourse.

Feminist research from the 1960s onwards has expressed a critical and interrogative stance towards gender as an analytical category. Furthermore, feminist thinkers have raised critical questions about the fundamental role of language in constructing and representing gender. One field of research has tried to find an answer to the question of whether women and men speak differently exploring the nature of femininity and masculinity, and focused on how their associated ideologies are expressed in language. Another has exemplified how language plays an active and dominant role in the symbolic positioning of women as inferior to men. No matter what claims they have – biological essentialism or social construction – it is an undeniable fact that language both constructs and eternalizes that reality, sometimes in subtle and invisible ways but often in obvious ways. Women are often defined as deviant and incompetent, or made invisible through a variety of linguistic and social practices exposing the ideological construction of 'man'.

Thus, through language, which is our means of classifying and ordering the world, a view has been constructed in which males continue to be seen as superior, and females continue to be seen as inferior, therefore strengthening the myth and reinforcing the justification for male power. That is, once made, these rules establish the rationale and the validation for male supremacy by arranging the objects and events of the world. As Mary Daly stated in *Gyn/Ecology*, "patriarchy appears to be everywhere" (1990, p.1), and the evidence can be found in many fields. For instance, as in the example of 'master and mistress', the female term has generally negative associations, whereas the male term is either neutral or positive. Another frequently used example is the so-called generic use of 'he' and 'man' to include women assuming that it is

gender-neutral. However, whatever the writer's intention is, the generic 'man' is not interpreted gender-neutrally. On the contrary, "people do tend to think male, and tend not to think female" (Miller & Swift, 1976, p.21). Such usages prove how women have been socially constructed as 'Other', and how femininity is misperceived as masculinity inverted. Women are the 'second sex' and the sexist language has played a crucial role in propagating the position of males and their control over the production of cultural forms.

As a result, language, which is a medium for everyone to verbalize even the simplest mental processes, places women in an awkward position in which they cannot articulate their self and woman identity with the limited words of the male-dominated language. This was made for centuries ago, and unfortunately, it has been deeply embedded in every aspect of our existence. Though it is not easy to eradicate because of its long-established tradition, this myth must be de(con)structed since, in Virginia Woolf's words, "... the very form of the sentence does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman's use" (Woolf, 1979, p.48).

So, what is the reason lying behind all of those misconceptions? Why is 'the language [we] speak made up of words that are killing [us]?' (Wittig, 1973, p.113-114).

2.1.The Construction of the Man-Made Language Through the Early Works: Cultural and Linguistic Beliefs, Gendered Metaphors and Proverbs

The history of society has been written from the male point of view since the beginning civilization. That is why it becomes 'HIStory' not 'HERstory.' In fact, this kind of labeling starts even before birth – from the moment when someone begins to be curious whether the expected child will be a boy or a girl. Then, it becomes a never-ending process that transforms an "it" into a "he" or "she" (Butler, 1990). From now on, they do not have the option of growing into just people, but into boys and girls.

Parents begin to approach infants more gently, and use more diminutives and inner state verbs when they learn that the baby, whose sex has not been certain before, will be female. They, especially fathers, choose different language patterns to call their daughters such as 'angel, bambi, honey, pumpkin, sugar, cutie pie, and daddy's little princess'. On the other hand, one can scarcely hear fathers' calling their sons with these terms since it is thought that it is not a manly thing to do. They prefer more direct and strong words like 'my man, king, champ, son, chef, buddy and monster face'. Gender is built into the very structure of the language, and kids learn to produce sex-differentiated behavior. Then, they gradually start to reproduce this cycle with its gender inequality and its man-made language. For instance, one cannot find any

biological reason for why women should behave coquettishly and men should behave boisterously, or why women should put make up and men should not. Thus, as Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) summarizes, naming someone as man or woman is constructed by the beliefs of that society about gender. It is not science, but the male-centered view of gender that provides its definition.

This reproduction of gender and gender-specific cultures creates two different domains as 'the world of girls' and 'the world of boys', in which they have to behave and speak in accordance with certain societal rules. In this world, girls basically learn that they should provide support, understand and give priority to the speech rights of others. Moreover, they all should know how to establish and maintain relationships of equality and closeness and criticize others with carefully selected words, and all in an acceptable way of speaking. On the contrary, for boys, speech is used for completely different reasons. These are for proving and certifying his position of dominance, and taking and maintaining the attention of the audience, particularly when other speakers have the floor (Maltz&Borker, 1982). Gradually, this asymmetry turns into strongly established binary oppositions, and then extends into many domains. One way or another, most boys and girls find out that the opinions and activities of men are highly esteemed, and they simply learn ways of being and doing things without considering any reasons behind them due to the power of convention – a convention which has been explicitly established relying on the grounds of male superiority.

There are countless patterns proving this superiority. For example, people automatically tend to say, 'Mr. and Mrs. Smith' or 'husband and wife' – not vice versa. The assumption of a man's name on marriage suggests that the woman is merely an extension of her husband or part of her husband's estate. Trying to keep the father's name seems to be a kind of protest against domination. However, it should not be forgotten that this also perpetuates an androcentric naming practice. Furthermore, when the word 'surname', the hereditary name passed from a man to his wife and children, is considered, one can easily realize that it is actually '*sir* name'. Even these few instances demonstrate that language about women is neither a neutral nor a trivial issue, but something deeply political. The male-female hierarchy is inherent in the words and language that ignore, demean and define women narrowly (Henley, 1987). Nonetheless, much less attention has been directed toward this issue since these masculine generic forms have been accepted as just grammatical conventions. On the contrary, they function to disadvantage women by making them seem invisible and unimportant. One of the most convincing proofs of this controversial issue is the use of 'neutral or generic he'.

Though used to be inclusive of both sexes, 'generic he' and 'generic man' may not be interpreted generically. It makes women feel shut out, an inferior species, or even a

nonexistent one. They are not a part of what is being described. There is considerable empirical evidence to suggest that the use of the generic man symbol is often accompanied, not surprisingly, by an image of a male. For example, Wood (1997) cited the experience of a mother having a 6-year-old daughter. When she asked her daughter why she called the stuffed animals 'he', her daughter immediately replied that there were 'more hes than shes'. Here, the use of generic expressions is seen to be preventing women from expressing and raising consciousness about their own experience.

Another indicator of perpetuating men's dominance and exploitative behavior is the universal consent that maleness is the norm, and women are somehow the deviant versions of men. The only perspective that makes sense is the male one, so this kind of encoding divides the world up in a way that is more natural for men than for women. Good examples of this come from the terms 'foreplay' and 'sex'. While 'sex' is usually uttered to refer to an act defined in terms of male orgasm, the sexual activities during which many women have their orgasms are relegated to secondary status, referred to by terms like 'foreplay'. There are also other words that are far more frequently sexualized when they are applied to women, as compared to when they are applied to men. Dale Spender, citing Lakoff (2004), analyzes the example of 'professional'. Comparing 'he's a professional' and 'she's a professional', Spender concludes that the latter is far more likely than the former to be taken to mean that the person in question is a prostitute. Since males have had far more power in the society, the language created and shaped by them "reflects sexist, male-centered attitudes that perpetuate trivialization, marginalization, and invisibility of female experience" (Sheldon, 1990, p. 4).

This sexism in language and the male control over the production of cultural forms have also enhanced the use of gendered-metaphors through which the thoughts and words of the patriarchal culture is reproduced. At first, metaphors appeared to be a phenomenon that occurs at the level of the word, but in fact, they are "better regarded as systems of belief than as individual things" (Ortony, 1993, p. 33). Thus, a metaphor can be accepted as one of the building blocks of one's thinking, at both the level of language acquisition and language use, rather than as a literary form or a deviation from some supposedly literal language (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). When women are called by these metaphors, not only are their genders socially constructed, but their agency and identity are denied as well with the words imposing the male power. Not surprisingly, words that are used to describe women, such as terms of immaturity (babe, doll, baby bear), animals (bird, chick, kitten), food (sweetie pie, peach, pancake) and clothing (blue stocking, bit of skirt), have no power of agency. This kind of metaphorizing of the female body is based on the old sperm-meets-egg story. The egg is always passive, waiting for rescue by the sperm. Gerald and Helen

Schatten relate the egg's role to that of *Sleeping Beauty*: "a dormant bride awaiting her mate's magic kiss, which instills the spirit that brings her to life" (1984, p.51). The idea that sperm has to carry out a 'perilous journey' into the 'warm darkness' shows how gendered metaphors and stereotypes can easily and irrevocably impair one's thought, ideology and sexual experiences (Martin, 1991).

In addition to all these revealing negative cultural and linguistic beliefs about women that define their position and language, proverbs also function to shape gender and limit women's speech in accordance with the male dominancy. There are various proverbs describing women's language to be inferior to that of men, and considering it as weak, uncertain and trivial: 'Men talk like books, women lose themselves in details' (China), 'Never listen to a woman's words' (China). 'The tongue is babbling, but the head knows nothing about it' (Russia). These are just a few examples of the patriarchal rules that Cameron (1995) refers as contributing to norms of 'verbal hygiene', teaching women and girls on how they have to speak. As well as proverbs, the opinions of the prominent figures in male-dominant fields, such as politics, literature, and art support and enhance the devaluation of women. Some of the most frequently quoted lines are those used to scoff at and insult women, such as these, by Samuel Johnson: "A woman's preaching is like a dog walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all" (qtd. in Boswell, 1966, p.214). And these of Winston Churchill, "A good speech should be like a woman's skirt; long enough to cover the subject and short enough to create interest" (Goodreads, 2011, *Quotable Quote*)).

To cut it short, these examples cannot be interpreted as the inevitable consequences of women's nature, but they are the deeply rooted social sanctions engraved through language. In other words, it is this seamless connection that makes language so important to gender since language cannot simply be regarded as reflecting pre-existing categories, but as part of what constructs and maintains these established categories. The speaking subject, and in this case woman, is bound to language, and since the language is ideologically constructed, the speaking subject is also an ideological subject shaped by male power. To be able to demolish the destructive and subversive effect of language, a new reality, more congenial to women, must be created. The only way to achieve this for women is to create their own language, either by de(con)structing the terms and concepts already in use, or by originating a new language, with new words and new rules. Only in this way will women be able to break free from the constraints of male language and male thought, and to be able to articulate what is impossible to articulate with male words. Only in this way will they be able to get rid of the danger of losing themselves in wordlessness.

2.2. The Feminist Challenges and the Feminist Philosophy of Language

As clarified in the previous sections, nearly the entire history of gender has been created and performed in accordance with the self-admiring, self-stimulating and self-congratulatory masculine point of view, or in popular discourse, with the phallogentric tradition. This tradition is indeed formed and internalized through language, which is man-made. Unfortunately, there is no getting beyond language or beyond the play of signifiers, because one thinks, feels and sees, or shortly exists, within the language into which s/he was born. That is, language governs and mediates one's experience of her/him and the world. To be able to change or de(con)struct it is really difficult, as the language is wholly ideological. No one can deny that it involves systems of values and beliefs full of the numerous conflicting and dynamic ideologies operating at any given point in time in any given culture. For instance, like the example of 'foreplay' and 'sex' stated in the previous section, the use of the word 'slut' for a woman sleeping with many men, and the word 'stud' for a man sleeping with many women reveals and perpetuates the cultural belief that sexual relations with multiple partners should be a source of shame for women, whereas, it is a source of pride for men. This is because men have always been in a position to construct the myth of male superiority and make it accepted due to their power. Thus, everything is arranged according to this established system, in which the masculine parts of the social environment influence the mind and self-mechanisms with the help of its most powerful vehicle: the 'man-made language'. In its structure and its use, women gradually enter into the meaning of patriarchal order and accept the inherently inaccurate reality. What is required is to change this reality and the language system through which women are deceived and misled.

However, since these sexist codes of language claiming the male supremacy have been so internalized that even if the change is made, will the new terms become accepted as natural and stop seeming awkward to remember? In fact, in terms of language and equality, some critics warn against using different titles for men's and women's jobs when there is no difference in the work, because it is clear that the 'female' item of a male-female 'pair' is derogated in one way or another, as in the examples of majorette, stewardess, and usherette, and fishwife with respect to the masculine major, steward, usher and fisherman. Moreover, political and ideological correctness has risen in recent years to find the gender pairs and replace them with more gender-neutral terms such as police officer, chairperson, fire fighter, etc. Unfortunately, these terms could be nothing more than recommendations, but solely used as alternatives rather than replacements. As sexist language cannot be identified, controlled, and replaced, it will continually emerge and re-emerge in a variety of guises and genres.

Nevertheless, some women have realized that male superiority is a myth, and they have decided to deal with this knowledge in numerous ways. They started a new movement, known as 'second wave' of the Women's movement, in the late 1960s focusing on language and gender study. Since they no longer wished to give substance to patriarchal order and its integral component – the superiority of males, especially created and enhanced by man-made language – they created different rules that were not based on the assumption that the proper human being is a male one, and that female one is the negative category. As 'sexist language' could influence both thought and behavior, they particularly focused on the controversial issue of language. The American feminist Robin Morgan claimed strongly in *Going Too Far* that "the very semantics of the language reflect [women's] condition. We do not even have our own names, but bear that of the father until we exchange it for that of the husband" (1977, p.106). Therefore, it was time they had started to construct a very different reality in which male superiority would no longer seem reasonable and the man-made language and its sexist codes would be seen as problematic, something to be eradicated as soon as possible, because gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do and perform (Butler, 1990). This reality can be realized through feminist literary criticism characterized by "a resistance to codification and refusal to have its parameters prematurely set" (Fetterley, 1978, p. viii). Unfortunately, women entering into the literary field have to deal with lots of problems caused by the man-made language, through which their identity, body and gender are shaped. This field, which is an uphill struggle, also encompasses the problem of displaying life in literature, the trouble of women's psyche. Therefore, the problem of women pursuing the art of creation is closely related with the dynamic ideas such as language, body, self, identity, society, culture and history.

As a result, by scrutinizing on these issues, many feminist language researchers and literary critics aim to prove that men's power has been manifested in language and literature in a number of complex ways. They try to find answers to the questions of whether men and women use language differently in terms of biology, socialization and culture; or most importantly, whether women can get rid of the inherently oppressive aspects and chains of man-made language by creating new languages of their own.

2.2.1. Elaine Showalter and *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness*

One of the founders of feminist literary criticism in United States academia, Elaine Showalter is credited with her authentic views on feminist criticism. She is known basically for her provocative and strongly held opinions, particularly related with women and their relationships with writing. By providing a new record of women writers, Showalter helps other women understand why "despite prejudice, despite guilt,

despite inhibition, women began to write” (1977, p. 36). In spite of the reasoning of John Stuart Mill, who said that women would always be imitators and never innovators since women lived in the same country with men and read their writings, Showalter insists on the self-awareness of the woman writer emerging through literature in every period. She accepts the fact that there has been a phase of ‘imitation and internalization’ of the long-established modes of the dominant tradition and its man-made language. This was followed by a period ‘protest’, demanding for autonomy against the social constructions. The last phase, ‘self-discovery’, is a new stage of self-awareness and a search for identity. Showalter assigns a systematic development to those three stages called “feminine, feminist and female” (ibid, p. 13), and this evaluation has become a milestone for the subsequent women writers to recognize a need for self-assertion, rather than self-sacrifice, to be able to create their own literary criticism and history, in which they will freely explain the experiences and ideas about the body through their female language.

This self-awareness is “more like a set of interchangeable strategies than any coherent school or shared goal orientation” (Kolodny, 1976, p. 420). Black critics focus on a black feminist aesthetic dealing not only with racial but also sexual politics to protest the ‘massive silence’ against black and Third-World women writers. Marxist feminists study the relationship between class and gender as a crucial determinant of literary production. While literary historians desire to uncover a lost tradition, critics trained in deconstructionist methodologies, like French feminists, wish to ‘synthesize a literary criticism that is both textual and feminist’. Moreover, there is psychoanalytic criticism, arising from the ideas of Freud, where Lacan theorizes about women’s relationship to language and signification (Showalter, 1981). This disunity seems to be an obstacle to construct a theoretical field for feminist criticism, but in fact, it shows the refusal of narcissism of male scholarship. It is a kind of confrontation against the linear and monotype canons and judgments created by the male authority with the help of its man-made language. It is one of the most important features of the feminist critical theory: ‘the playful pluralism’ (Kolodny, 1976), questioning the validity of accepted conceptual structures.

Apart from raising self-awareness and enhancing self-discovery among the women writers, another important contribution of Showalter is to create the concept and practice of ‘gynocriticism’, defining and exploring the study of women’s writing chiefly to learn what women have felt and experienced. According to Showalter, the feminist critic must realize that a text produced within the framework of gynocentric criticism occupies a totally different status from that of androcentric criticism:

One of the problems of the feminist critique is that it is male-oriented. If we study stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited roles women play in literary history, we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be (1979, p. 27).

Thus, gynocriticism has inaugurated a new period in the field of feminist literary theory trying to find an effective answer to the question of how women’s writing had been different and how womanhood shaped women’s creative expression (Spacks, 1976). In other words, it is the search of a ‘muted’ female culture to find her own voice, which is both womanly and powerful. Thenceforth, American, British and French feminist critics, though their ideas are totally different from each other in terms of biology, socialization or culture, have all turned their attention to the philosophical, linguistic and practical problems of women’s use of language. That is, this controversial issue over language has been one of the most exciting areas in gynocritics, as it is the language that “has trapped as well as liberated [women]” (Rich, 2004, p. 237).

However, feminist critics and scholars who want to create a separate and self-assertive women’s language are faced with a kind of paradox called “double-voiced discourse” (Lanser&Beck, 1979), embodying the heritages of the muted and the dominant. When a woman prefers to say ‘I am the Queen’ in an attempt to assert her difference from man by rejecting the word ‘King’, she also – somehow – accepts the fact that she is the queen who occupies the subordinate position to the king. Realizing this paradox, Showalter quotes Xavier Gauthier lamenting that “as long as women remain silent, they will be outside the historical process. But if they begin to speak and write as men do, they will enter history subdued and alienated” (1981, p.191). It is certain that the issue of women’s language has its political as well as emotional aspects, but despite these difficulties and paradoxes, according to Showalter, there is still hopeful evidence that female tradition and female culture have been a center of concern inspiring women writers to take brave actions to state their independence. All they need to do is to:

[e]xpress mind and body. Rather than wishing to limit women’s linguistic range, we must fight to open and extend it. The holes in discourse, the blanks and gaps and silences, are not the spaces where female consciousness reveals itself but the blinds of a ‘prison-house of language [...] women have been denied the full resources of language and have been forced into silence, euphemism or circumlocution (ibid, p. 193).

Bearing all these facts in her mind, Showalter encourages all women to establish a visible world for themselves in which they will no longer be defined by the fallacy of masculine power and its repressive language. She, especially, focuses on women writers and persuades them to explore a new woman’s language including the female creativity. According to her, these writers must present female sexuality and reproduction as positive forces to challenge the male-dominated traditional canon considering them as a biological trap or the binary opposite of the artistic creation. Briefly, the critics coming after Showalter owe her a lot, because through her pioneering studies, they now know more and do better.

2.2.2. Gilbert and Gubar and *The Madwoman in The Attic*

Alas! A woman that attempts the pen
Such an intruder on the rights of men,
Such a presumptuous Creature is esteem'd
The fault can by no virtue be redeem'd.
(Anne Finch, qtd. in Gilbert&Gubar, 1984, p. 3)

In *The Madwoman in The Attic*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, aiming to define what it means to be a woman writer in a patriarchal culture, in which creation and 'masterly execution' has always been considered a kind of male gift, use the power of metaphors to present how female literary tradition has been ignored by the male writers who "father [their] texts just as God fathered the world" (1984, p.4). Through the centuries, women writers have been imprisoned and kept from 'attempting the pen' since the "poet's pen is in some sense (even more than figuratively) a penis" (ibid, p.4). Thus, according to Gilbert and Gubar, the central question for feminist critics and writers is, "if the pen is a metaphorical penis, with what organ can females generate texts?" (ibid, p.7). In fact, this question still occupies the minds of masculinist and feminist theories, and the exact answer to it has not been found yet. However, no one can deny that the male metaphors of literary creation, attributing "the Phallus as 'transcendental signifier' and of the 'hymen's graphic' inscribed by the pen/penis" (Gilbert&Gubar, 1985, p.516), have caused the feeling of anxiety in literary women readers and writers who were brave enough to dare enter into the male's sphere, where the man is the 'author(ity)'. As Edward Said puts it:

Authority suggests to me a constellation of linked meanings: not only, as the OED tells us, "a power to enforce obedience", or "a derived or delegated power", or "power to influence action", or "power to inspire belief", or "a person whose opinion is accepted"; not only those, but a connection as well with *author* - that is, a person who originates or give existence to something, a begetter, beginner, father, or ancestor, a person also who sets forth written statements (2002, p. 74) (emphasis in original).

Underneath all these issues concerning 'author(ity)' lies the eternal act of creation, in which the Divine Creator is the sole origin and meaning of everything. With the influence of the dominant patriarchal ideology, the male writer over-identifies with the God Father, and declares himself as a "procreator and an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power" (Gilbert&Gubar, 1984, p. 6). In such an implicitly or explicitly patriarchal theory of literature, it is normal for a woman writer, who 'attempts the pen', to experience enormous anxiety. In fact, as being the daughters of Eve, causing the greater loss and fault since the Fall, women have no choice but to please "either men's bodies or their minds, their penises or their pens" (ibid, p.9). Though scarce in number, there have been always some brave women trying to show their creative power. However, when such creative energy appears in a woman, she is defined as freakish, deviant, and monster to be imprisoned, because this is essentially an 'unfeminine' characteristic. The pen must be in male hands and the woman must be 'penned in' his texts.

Gilbert and Gubar's enquiry shows that woman, who has been sentenced to confinement and dispossession by man, will now sentence herself to freedom with this monster woman, who is one of the terrible sorceress-goddesses such as "the Sphinx, Medusa, ... Kali ... all of whom possess duplicitous arts that allow them both seduce and steal male generative energy" (1984, p. 34). In short, by telling her own story, she will become a woman who defies the divine and literary authority. Nevertheless, the authors remind the difficult situation of the woman writer under patriarchy, and accept the fact that she suffers from a debilitating "'anxiety of authorship' – a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a 'precursor' the act of writing will isolate or destroy her" (ibid, p.49). In fact, this anxiety is something far more significant for the woman writer when compared to the male writer, because the author is already defined as male and the woman as his creature. Gilbert and Gubar, thus, raise a question, which cannot be answered exactly and this is one of the central problems of feminine literary criticism: According to these critics,

[i]f the Queen's looking glass speaks with the King's voice, how do its perpetual kingly admonitions affect the Queen's own voice? Since his is the chief voice she hears, does the Queen try to sound like the King, imitating his tone, his inflections, his phrasing, his point of view? Or does she "talk back" to him in her own vocabulary, her own timbre, insisting on her own viewpoint? We believe these are basic questions feminist literary criticism - both theoretical and practical - must answer, and consequently they are questions to which we shall turn again and again (ibid, p. 46).

As stated above, the woman writer trying to defy the literary paternity is between two fires: imitating the King – the male precursor, or remaining the Queen and insisting on making her voice heard. If she tries to be the King adopting his point of view, there is a danger of conscious or unconscious assimilation, and the direct affirmation or denial of the previous achievements, which causes the "anxiety of influence" – the "fear that he is not his own creator and that the works of his predecessors, existing before and beyond him, assume essential priority over his own writings" (Gilbert&Gubar, 1984, p. 46). This term is, actually, a kind of metaphor for literary paternity generated by Harold Bloom, who is a literary psycho-historian. Bloom analyzes the creative process in the writer/artist, a process that he calls "revisionist rereading" (1973, p. 43), and likens the relationship between the literary artist and history to the relationship of a son and a father by applying Freudian Oedipal structures into literary genealogies. According to Gilbert and Gubar, Bloom's model of literary history, in which "'a strong poet' must engage in heroic warfare with his 'precursor'" (1984, p.47) is extremely patriarchal and male-oriented. They criticize his views with the following questions:

Where does the female poet fit in? Does she want to annihilate a "forefather" or a "foremother"? What if she can find no models, no precursors? Does she have a muse, and what is its sex? Such questions are inevitable in any female consideration of Bloomian poetics? (ibid, p.47).

Gilbert and Gubar's answer to this question is that "a woman writer does not 'fit in'" (ibid, p.48), but this should not be dissuasive for her. She, on the contrary, should

keep becoming a distinctive Queen and trying to make her voice heard though “she seems to be anomalous, indefinable, alienated, a freakish outsider” (ibid, p. 48). Clearly, when she writes, her language will be the speech of evil, and marginalized by being declared ‘other’. Moreover, to be able to find words to express her feelings and female experience with the man-made language will be challenging, and maybe, her words will stay unarticulated. Nevertheless, Gilbert and Gubar believe that every woman writer has such a thing named a “distinctive female power” (ibid, p. 59), which must be expressed against the oppressive effects of the dominant patriarchal modes of reading, and this “difficult task of achieving true female authority” can be managed by these women writers by “subverting patriarchal literary standards” (ibid, p. 73). While decoding and demystifying all the disguised issues, these women writers will, most probably, be accused of being the ‘witch-monster-madwoman’. However, they should not desist from “telling all the Truth but tell it slant” (Emily Dickinson, qtd. in Franklin, 1998, p. 1263).

2.2.3. Dale Spender and *Man Made Language*

Dale Spender, a researcher, broadcaster and teacher besides being the author and editor of over thirty books, has created awareness by raising concern over the issues related with the rules and uses of language that promote a male view of the world. With her radical feminist analysis of language published in 1980, *Man Made Language*, Spender asserts the existence of the male control over language, and tries to prove that women have been systematically silenced through the forms of language. In fact, one can easily see how still relevant this highly influential text is today as much as when it was written. Take the example of a Turkish song named ‘*Bu Gece Barda, Gönüm Hovarda*’, which is frequently sung at the entertainment venues and football matches, the places associated with males. Its lyrics can be translated as follow: ‘That night at the bar, I am such a vagabond. / Let’s play the instruments and watch the girls dancing’. With that song, two messages are given. The first is the directly stated one based on the gender roles contributed to women by patriarchy itself. They must amuse and satisfy the needs of men with their bodies, dances and songs. The second is the implied one imposed by the structure of the language itself with its sexist words. Referring to an adult female, whether married or not, as a girl is considered derogatory or disrespectful in many contexts, because this implies that the person is not mature enough to be deemed an adult. This is why the phrases, ‘You are acting like a girl’ or ‘You are just a girl’ are considered reprimanding and insulting. On the contrary, in some cultures, referring to a never-married female as a woman may imply that she is sexually experienced, which would tarnish her and her family’s honor, because the term ‘girl’ is used to state virginity.

All these prove the exclusion of women from every field, especially the public sphere associated with males, as Dale Spender puts forth: “When they were dividing the world, males took for themselves the categories they could establish as productive (1980, p.101)”. However, this exclusion is sustained not only by the patriarchal structures but also by its ‘man-made language’. As known, the concept that women are oppressed by language has become a commonplace among feminist critics, but what do they try to establish with this willful use of ‘man-made language’? In fact, Dale Spender, being one of these critics choosing this ambiguous and punning term as her book’s title, aims to demonstrate that the rules of grammar, the ideological choice of lexis, the sexist words, and also the judgments of academic literary criticism have trivialized and undervalued women’s language and creativity, denying them access to the only vehicle for communication and the power that communication brings. For her, people construct their reality according to rules formulated by patriarchal society, and the key to the system is the semantic rule of the male-as-norm. If the norm is male, then female characteristics are automatically wrong or negative, which is called the ‘negative semantic space’, where women are told every day that their experience and observations are meaningless or wrong. Spender asserts that it is “one of the most pervasive and pernicious rules that has been encoded” (ibid, p.3), because once this norm has been constructed and sustained by those who control both the reality and talk – and in this case, those are the males – it is so difficult to eradicate its traces, which are deeply embedded in every aspect of our existence.

Spender’s assertions about women’s oppression through the man-made language, which shapes the vision and perception of people by creating a sexist world, articulate a form of social constructionism redolent of a strong version of the Whorfian hypothesis, the theory saying that language determines and greatly influences the modes of thought and behavior characteristic of the individual. Thus, her ideas are supported by a wide range of evidence from sociolinguists on language as social behavior. On the other hand, early post-structuralist critics have attacked her representation of language as a gender-biased system because of her determinist stance and insufficient acknowledgement of the fact that meaning can never be fixed. They find Spender’s view of language as somehow constructed by a conspiratorial patriarchy and criticize her de-privileging the influence of social class and ethnicity on language, as Maria Black and Rosalind Coward note: “Spender’s highly monolithic view of patriarchy and gender relations, and her emphasis on ‘pre-given groups’ gives us no real purchase on how ideologies participate in the production of groups and secure identification with the subject positions produced there” (1981, p.72). However, these critics – despite their emphasis on social class and ethnicity - could not explain the oppression of black women, who are under the risk of double jeopardy: to be black and female. These black women are

made insignificant and humiliated both because of their ethnicity and their gender. In other words, patriarchy and its man-made language label them as a “slave of a slave” (Beal, 1975, p.2).

Rejecting these accusations, Spender continues to prove language as operating to the clear disadvantage of women and contributing to their being effectively silenced:

I would reiterate that it has been the dominant group – in this case, males – who have created the world, invented the categories, constructed sexism and its justification and developed a language trap which is in their interest. ... Males ... have produced language, thought and reality. Historically it has been the structures, the categories and the meanings, which have been invented by males – though not of course by all males – and they have then been validated by reference to other males. In this process women have played little or no part (1980, p. 142 - 143).

For Spender, this rule can be de(con)structed through women’s talk and consciousness. Thus, she thinks that a new inception has been made on this task of expanding the reality of the culture, and making the females’ voice heard, but she does not underestimate the difficulties ahead: “The crux of our difficulties lies in being able to identify and transform the rules which govern our behavior and which bring patriarchal order into existence” (ibid, p. 6). However, she keeps on struggling and tries to create a world where sexist assertions such as ‘nagging women, chattering women, gossiping women’ have been eradicated and “the talkativeness of women hasn’t been gauged in comparison with men but with silence” (ibid, p. 42).

2.3. The Influence of Post-Structuralists on the Feminist Philosophy of Language

Women’s oppression is constructed and sustained not by social organization or physical domination, but by the male control of culture, religion, knowledge, and especially language, limiting the way of one’s thinking and causing patriarchal assumptions to be internalized by women as well as by men. Realizing that they have no name, no status and no words to express their female experiences, women have decided to challenge male knowledge and its language by creating alternative methodologies, such as a new language and a new mode of writing and thinking, in order to escape the confines of male logic and the self-definitions that patriarchal cultures have imposed on them. To be able to implement this revisionist way of thinking, feminist critics and writers have to “decode and demystify all the disguised questions and answers that have always shadowed the connections between the textuality and sexuality, genre and gender, psychosexual identity and cultural authority” (Gilbert, 1980, p. 19). However, to control and change the man-made language full of sexist structures is not easy since it will continually emerge and re-emerge in a variety of guises and genres. Such complexity can be handled by post-structuralist theory and with its deconstructive

language, which allows and even encourages “the plurality, multivocality and non-fixity of all meaning” (Baxter, 2003, p. 6).

To be able to establish this plurality and diversity in meaning, first of all, a set of dualities of the phallogocentric culture that functions as binary oppositions, such as ‘mind/body, active/passive, public/private, reason/emotion, subject/object, and self/other’ emanated from the primary ‘male/female’ opposition, must be de(con)structed and transformed, as Helene Cixous stated in her essay, *Castration or Decapitation*:

... the whole conglomeration of symbolic systems – everything, that is, that’s spoken, everything that’s organized as discourse, art, religion, the family, language, everything that seizes us, everything that acts on us – it is all ordered around the hierarchical oppositions that come back to the man/woman opposition, an opposition that can only be sustained by means of a difference posed by cultural discourse as ‘natural’ (1981, p. 44).

As clearly expressed in the above quotation, the chief reason of all these tensions and conflicts is the opposition founded in the ‘male/female couple’. Thus, feminist criticism has started to deal with these dichotomies, however, its aim is not to reverse them so that the repressed terms can be the dominant or positive ones, but to de(con)struct the ways of representing the world to be able to create a new state of difference and awareness – sexual, cultural or gender – that does not have to be defined within a hierarchical relationship of same/opposite or true/not-true. That is, the ultimate aim is to find and construct a new way of thinking where one does not have to be labeled either the ‘One or the Other’, but can enjoy being represented as simply two, or more; and the most important thing is to be defined on its own terms. Thus, in the next sections, within the framework of post-structuralist theories, seeking to challenge the logocentric thought with the idea that language and meaning are inherently unstable, and words and texts constantly undermine and deconstruct themselves, first, the underlying reasons of these false and misleading dichotomies will be clarified and de(con)structed.

2.3.1. Lacanian psychoanalysis: the ‘Imaginary’ and the ‘Symbolic’

As known, since the classical psychoanalytic theory inaugurated by Freud, psychoanalysis has been a frequently used theoretical tool for feminist critics. In this classical psychoanalytic theory, female psychosexual development is measured within the framework of masculine norms, and eventually found deficient due to the concepts of ‘penis envy’ and its female version of the ‘castration complex’. Thus, many feminists considered this misogyny a sufficient ground to reject psychoanalysis as a feminist theoretical tool. However, during the late 1970s, relying on the studies of French psychoanalyst Lacan, some feminist scholars such as Juliet Mitchell, Gayle Rubin and Nancy Chodorow moved beyond the initial rejection of psychoanalysis and focused on the ways of reinterpreting of it to explore its feminist potential; as Gayle

Rubin proposed: “[Psychoanalysis] can also be read as a description of how phallic culture domesticates women, and the effects in women of their domestication” (1975, p. 197 - 198).

Thus, recently, there has been a renewed interest in psychoanalysis, Freudian theories and concepts that are generally used to define women’s relationship to language, fantasy, and culture. Indeed, having a good knowledge about these concepts help women realize how they are alienated in the ‘Other’, and how they are psychologically and physically affected by this alienation. Using post-structuralist discourse and psychoanalysis as a method of qualitative research, feminist critics elucidate the ways of challenging assumed roles as sexual individuals, and encourage women to resist conformity to cultural taboos and change oppressive stereotypes. Here, Lacan’s concepts of the ‘Imaginary’ and the ‘Symbolic’ constitute one of the most fundamental parts of the psychoanalysis for a better understanding of the patriarchal structure and its man-made language.

Lacan’s famous statement claiming that “the unconscious is structured like language” (1982, p. 139) is the vital point of his theories. For him, language, the key ingredient of which is ‘loss and lack’, is all about absence. One would not need language where there was not any absence, and such a place exists during the first stage of the infancy, which is called the pre-Oedipal period, when the child believes itself to be part of the mother. This period is known as the ‘Imaginary’, where there is no difference and absence, because the mother satisfies all the physical and psychological needs of the baby. It is a kind of symbiotic relationship, in which there is a state of unity and satisfaction. Everything is complete and safe for the mother and the baby, who are “the imaginary couple of the mirror stage” (Lacan, 1977a, p.196-197).

This imaginary and satisfactory relation with the mother goes on until s/he realizes that the mother does not have the phallus, which is explained by Lacan as follows:

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

Because Lacan believes that the mother lacks the phallus, ‘her desire’ equals the mother’s desire for the phallus. Thus, when the child discovers this lack, s/he is separated from the mother and moves into the stage of ‘Symbolic’, where there are rules and restrictions that must be obeyed. The first rule is that ‘mother belongs to Father’, what Freud calls the oedipal prohibition. The child, therefore, must find substitutes for the ‘mother’, and this substitute becomes the father. In other words, in the Symbolic order, ‘the desire of the mother’ is replaced with the ‘Name-of-the-Father’ (Tyson, 2006), the authority in past and present. Then, the mother gradually becomes ‘m/other’, which

leads to the idea of ‘Other’, referring to anything that contributes to the creation of one’s subjectivity, or in simply, ‘selfhood’. The child now starts to think that s/he is an independent individual whose desires, beliefs and biases are the results of her/his unique personalities, wills and judgments. Nevertheless, “desire is always the desire of the Other” (Lacan, 1977b, p. 235), or in other words, what is desired is the thing that one is taught to desire in the Symbolic Order, consisting the society’s ideologies, beliefs, values, cultural and religious tenets created and constructed by the phallus as a privileged signification. Although Lacan insists that the phallus should not be confused with the penis, the phallus is still a concept that privileges the father, and consequently his penis. Chris Weedon clarifies this fact in her *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*:

In Lacanian theory...signification is not a process of infinite free play, as it is for Derrida, in which all meaning is temporary and relative. For Lacan, meaning, and the symbolic order as a whole, is fixed in relation to a primary, transcendental signifier which Lacan calls the *phallus*, the signifier of sexual difference, which guarantees the patriarchal structure of the symbolic order (1997, p.51-52).

From now on, all the relationships of the child will be based on such patriarchal and hierarchical orderings as s/he has entered into the Symbolic stage, and therefore into language, represented by the ‘Name-of-the- Father’ or the ‘Law-of-the-Father’. For Lacan, “it is in the name of the father that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law” (1977a, p. 67). This patriarchal and hierarchical structure of language gradually puts the boy child/man into a position of power and control with the virtue of his penis, and reduces the girl child/woman to the silent and miserable position, where she abides by and enacts. However, feminist criticism based on Neo-Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis does not give up struggling with the problem of feminine disadvantage and lack, and continually tries to raise awareness that language we use is the man-made, which itself creates the phenomenology of male consciousness and power. The only way to challenge this male order and structure of thought is to develop ‘non-phallogocentric’ ways of thinking with a female language, which would translate a long-silenced female reality into a new linguistic destiny what Mary Jacobus calls “the dream of a language freed from the Freudian notion of castration” (1979, p. 12-13) to create, in Elaine Showalter’s words, “a revolutionary linguism, an oral break from the dictatorship of patriarchal speech” (1981, p.191).

2.3.2. Derridean deconstruction

It is an inevitable fact that language is the most important aspect in the life of all beings. Besides using it to express their inner thoughts, emotions, and beliefs, and to fulfill their desires and needs, people need language to establish rules and maintain their culture.

In this process, most people take language for granted, believing that it establishes the communication and transfers what they want it to, and if a problem occurs, they take the blame assuming that the fault is in themselves, not in the language. However, as explained in the studies of feminist scholars stated in the previous sections, language is not a stable and reliable means of communicating the thoughts, feelings and wishes by nature. Contrary to assumptions, it is not as clear and simple as stated in Saussurean structuralist formula, 'signifier + signified', but language is much more slippery and ambiguous than it is often realized, as Derrida stated in his famous deconstructive theory, which questions assumptions about the ability of language to represent reality. Through this theory, Derrida aims to demonstrate deep-seated contradictions in a work by reading between the lines below its surface meaning.

For Derrida, truth is based on language, and language is not a fixed system. In other words, Derrida explains that language is not, as structuralists claim, based on a relationship between established codes and the fixed meanings attached to them, but it exists in an unsteady and changeable, 'free play' of signifiers. Disagreeing with Saussure, Derrida aims to "destroy the logic of the linguistic sign" (1997, p. 7) by showing that meaning cannot be formed by a simple binary connection between signifier and signified, but that signified is always already a signifier in another system as illustrated in the famous dictionary example: when a reader looks up a dictionary definition of a word, s/he does not find the signified of it, but only faces with more words, or in other words, more signifiers trying to explain that original word. Thus, meaning is always partially lost in a chain of signification, and never really arrives at a given moment of comprehension. This continuous play of signifiers is the result of 'différance', the combination of the French words to "defer" and "differ". For Derrida, each signifier exists both through its difference from other signifiers and through the deferral of the absolute meaning. In this way, the text is never closed since meaning is never fixed and finalized by a signified (Derrida, 1986).

Deconstruction, thus, offers a radical vision of thinking to the Western philosophy, organized around one grounding principle through the operation of a 'logos', a transcendental idea. According to this philosophical thought, deriving from Plato's strict division between mind and body, one term in the pair is always privileged, or considered superior to the other, as in the binary oppositions of good over evil, reason over emotion, or maleness over femaleness. For Derrida, this kind of 'logocentrism', creating fixed categories, is the greatest illusion and needs to be deconstructed, because "any human concept can be outside the dynamic, evolving, and ideologically saturated operations of the language that produced it" (Tyson, 2006, p. 256). That is, the theory that one's view of the world is constructed by language performs a key role in decentering of Western philosophy, because language is no longer considered

as a product of one's experience, but rather as the conceptual framework that creates the experience. In other words, language produces certain effects; some are easily recognizable while others require deconstructing. Therefore, the task of deconstructing, like all Derrida's terms, has two functions, which are both mutually exclusive and contradictory: to destroy and construct that can be combined like de(con)struct. Its first task is to find the settling infrastructure and challenge the hierarchical binary that keeps this infrastructure in place, and the second one is to displace the binary by introducing a 'new' term. However, de(con)struction does not intend to demolish a hierarchical opposition in order to make the inferior term in the place of the superior. This would only serve to sustain hierarchization and remain within hierarchical and oppositional logic. Deconstruction, therefore, is "not simply to invert the hierarchy, which would only confirm the categories, but to transform the notion of hierarchy itself. ... [O]verthrowing the hierarchy is only a 'first' (though of course necessary) step" (Atkins, 1983, p. 84).

For feminist theory and scholars, this hierarchal center, or what Derrida calls as 'transcendental signifier', is the phallus, which stands for the 'Law of the Father', representing man and its man-made language. Therefore, from a feminist point of view, the phallus has to be taken down and de(con)structed by breaking "open the prison of what has been called ontology, which becomes a prison precisely because it seems to shut out all our other possibilities as 'unreal'" (Cornell, 1991, p. 18). With this kind of de(con)struction and "the absence of a center or origin, everything became a discourse" (Derrida, 1986, p. 961) instead of a fixed meaning with a free play of signifiers, which leads to 'jouissance', a kind of enjoyment and pleasure that can be used to describe breaking down barriers between self and other. Briefly, with his deconstructive theory and ideas about erasing the hierarchy in the text, and deconstructing its phallogocentric structure, Derrida makes his contribution to feminist criticism and enables feminist critics to realize the possibility of creating a new female identity and language leading to *écriture féminine*, which will be discussed in the following chapter. As Chris Weedon points out, "deconstruction is useful for feminism in so far as it offers a method of decentering the hierarchical oppositions which underpin gender, race and class oppression and of instigating new, more progressive theories" (1997, p.160).

2.3.3. Roland Barthes and a 'text of bliss'

Text of pleasure: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture and does not break with it, is linked to a *comfortable* practice of reading.

Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language (Barthes, 1975, p. 14) (emphasis in original).

Roland Barthes, one of the foremost literary critics of the twentieth century, makes a distinction between two kinds of texts in *The Pleasure of the Text* (1975): the text of 'pleasure' and the text of 'bliss'. The text of pleasure complies with the reader's expectations and the established cultural norms of the society in which s/he lives. The reader demands pleasure from the reading, but the pleasure obtained is limited and short, because for Barthes, "pleasure can only be spoken through the indirection of a demand [...], we cannot get beyond an abridged, two-tense dialectics: the tense of *doxa*, opinion, and the tense of *paradoxa*, dispute" (1975, p.18) (emphasis in original). Barthes was against 'doxa', a Greek word meaning common belief or popular opinion that leads to conformism and the status quo, because these 'readerly texts', full of doxa, demand no requirement of the reader to produce, but they are just "imperative, automatic, unaffectionate and a minor disaster of static" (ibid, p.5). They make the reader passive and the reader "unmakes himself, like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web" (ibid, p.64). That is, they do not disturb the 'common sense' or 'doxa' of the surrounding culture, and move towards a final signified due to the limitations assigned to it by the author(ity), or in other words, by the "Author-God" (Barthes, 1992, p. 117), representing the 'transcendental signified' under the 'Law of the Father'. This fixity in the text, sustained by the given 'author', is the result of the pressure of history and tradition on writing created by the patriarchy that accepts writing as a threat to the authoritarian regimes. As known, women writing and female literature have always been exposed to such pressure under the authority of the symbolic order, and that is why, feminist critics and writers try to free themselves from the chains of the idea of an author-god and the constructions of his message, thereby from any fixed meaning.

This is exactly what Barthes claims in "The Death of the Author", where he excludes the father from the text, which is of great significance for the feminists. He also repeats these ideas in his "From Work to Text" and announces the death of author: "It reads without the inscription of the Father...the restitution of the inter-text paradoxically abolishing any legacy" (1986, p. 1008). Since there is no author-god who originates the hierarchal and final signified meaning of the text, the writer is free now to create 'an open, off-centered, plural, constantly moving and deferring' (Barthes, 1986) text through the play of signifiers that "makes the reader no longer a consumer but a producer of the text" (Barthes, 1990, p. 4). That is, unlike the 'readerly texts' that provide short and limited pleasure, 'writerly texts' "ask of the reader a practical collaboration ... wanting the audience to produce the book ... produce the text, open it out, *set it going*" (Barthes, 1986, p. 1009) (emphasis in original), and lead the reader to *jouissance*.

Roland Barthes takes Lacanian concept of *jouissance*, which is also used by Derrida while explaining the ultimate effect of his deconstructive theory, and renames it as

'bliss' – extreme happiness, ecstasy or a kind of orgasm. He uses this term to define his second kind of text, the 'text of bliss', which is "a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings [...] blend and clash" (Barthes, 1992, p. 116) by breaking free from doxa. For Barthes, the text of bliss, in contrast to the text of pleasure working "like a cupboard where meanings are shelved, stacked, [and] safeguarded" (Barthes, 1990, p. 200), does not conform to the reader's expectations, but disturbs what has been historically, culturally and psychologically settled so far. It, thus, is not in accordance with the popular literature demanded by culture and society, but a text of bliss unsettles the long-established assumptions and practices, as Robert Miklitsch reveals in his essay, "Difference: Roland Barthes's Pleasure of the Text, Text of Pleasure":

[A text of bliss] weans us and therefore, repeats that original moment of loss by which we find ourselves (*state du miroir*); it unsettles our presuppositions about history, culture, psychology; it undermines our faith in a cogito whose self-consciousness authors itself and its integrity; it forces us to recognize that, instead of a tool which we use (and abuse), language – in a work of art – *speaks us* (1983, p. 104).

In order to realize this process, in other words, to delimit and de(con)struct the oppressive influence of the language full of dominant patriarchal ideologies and doxa, one should break up with the stable point of view and its "comfortable practice of reading" (Barthes, 1975, p. 14), and find a way to subvert the dominance of these established representations, which are defined as 'de-doxification' process by Linda Hutcheon (2006), a specialist in postmodernist culture and critical theory. She adopts Barthes's term 'doxa' to unsettle all beliefs and ideologies, that is, all doxa. Hutcheon claims that the dominant ideology, in this case the male dominance, constructs and naturalizes everything presented by culture. De-doxifying this representation means denaturalizing the false and feigned reality that ideology assumes as truth. For Hutcheon "what postmodern theory and practice together suggest is that everything always was 'cultural' in this sense, that is always mediated by representation" (2006, p. 34). Thus, the de-doxifying process focuses on the unquestioned truths of society, established and internalized by cultural representations. This process can be observed in many works of the feminist critics and writers, as they have been struggling against the male-dominated norms and dictations since the ancient times. They all know very well that language is ideologically constructed through hierarchical values which appear as natural and real. Therefore, they have tried to liberate themselves and their feminine texts as well, from the patriarchally constructed systems of meaning and the oppression of the symbolic order, which puts women into a subject-object relation, where women are always defined as 'lack' with the fixed gendered identities.

As a result, with the awareness of the de-doxifying process, women writers attempt "to decode the repressive ideology of the text and its complicity with dominant power" (Morris, 1993, p.139). By challenging and de(con)structing the imposed ideologies

and doxa, women writers rewrite the ‘metanarratives’ (Lyotard 1984), transcendent and universal truth, including canonical texts, stories, patriarchal plots, myths and fairy tales to prove how our way of thinking is constructed and shaped by historical and cultural representations reproduced by the literary works. That is, with the contributions of Barthes, women writers become aware of the de-doxifying process that engenders rewriting, and thereby, decoding the repressive ideology of the text. This process also offers a new way of thinking – the method of reading texts through political and ideological intertextual awareness to be able to “deconstruct, displace, demystify the logocentric, ethnocentric, phallogocentric order of things” (Hassan, 1987, p.445). Briefly, from now on, women writers make their experiences and culture the center of attention and de(con)struct women’s oppression and silence with their feminist texts.



3. THE EMERGENCE OF ECRITURE FEMININE AND THE FEMALE LANGUAGE

When I use words, any words, I am always taking part in the constructing of the political, economic, and moral community in which discourse is taking place. All aspects of language - denotation, sound, style, syntax, grammar, etc. - are politically, economically, and morally coded... The only possible chance for change, for mobility, economic, and moral flow lies in the tactics of guerrilla warfare, in the use of fictions, of language (Acker, 1997, p. 5).

Feminist scholars and critics have attempted to prove the fact that nearly the entire ‘HIS’tory of writing has been gathered around a principle focal point: the phallogocentric tradition and its man-made language. Due to patriarchal society having male-dominated power, women have always been looked down on and forced to stay within their predetermined domestic fields, and take the assigned roles - an obedient wife, a self-sacrificing mother, a good keeper of the household and a guardian of moral purity. They have been hindered each time from realizing their dreams because of the long-established false belief that women are imperfect creatures, as clearly seen in the declaration of Aristotle stating that ‘the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities’. Somehow, men have always found a way to accuse women of “having desires, for not having any; for being frigid, for being “too hot”; for not being both at once; for being too motherly and not enough; for having children and for not having any; for nursing and for not nursing...” (Cixous, 1976, p.880).

Gradually, women have been forced into silence, and eventually, they have internalized the image of being the shadows and the inferior ‘others’ of men, which arises from the so-called binary oppositions between male/female, or rather, “from the power relation between a fantasized obligatory virility meant to invade, to colonize, and the consequential phantasm of woman as a ‘dark continent’ to penetrate and to ‘pacify’” (ibid, p. 877). With their ‘pen(ise)s’ enabling them the ‘author(ity)’, men suppress the female experiences, especially the sexual ones, and substitute their maternal bodies with their phallus. That is why, “puberty, menstruation, sexual initiation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause – the entire female sexual life cycle – constituted a habit of living that had to be concealed” (Showalter, 1996, p. 275), not just in daily life but in the literary world as well.

Realizing this difficulty of expressing their problems as women in a male-dominated world with a man-made language, women start to seek a language that will change their submissive and secondary position, and that is only possible by the decentering

of the phallus, which is the main focus of post-structuralist critics. According to these critics:

...for women the Symbolic means awareness of the self as a subject constituted through an alien, because logocentric and phallogocentric-discourse, which depends on pre-ordered naming and categorization. Entry into this state thus destines woman to a position in which she is linguistically marginalized, rendered inactive or mute in speech as well as in social signification. The only way to overcome this verbal suppression is to speak through a language not dominated by the phallus (Foster, 1990, p. 66-67).

However, changing the long-established tradition and norms already in place is so difficult that this situation leads feminist critics to find alternative ways. Among them, the ideas of French feminist criticism have created a new and significant theoretical formulation known as 'écriture féminine', or 'feminine writing', which deals with "the inscription of the female body and female difference in language and text" (Showalter, 1981, p. 185). Based on the assumptions of the post-structuralists, especially those of Lacan, Derrida and Barthes's, French feminists have also focused their attention on language and the ways in which meaning is produced. They have reached the conclusion that female repression is sustained by phallogocentric structures of the patriarchal society and its man-made language, which therefore only represents a world from the male point of view. Thus, with 'écriture féminine', they set sight on the expression of female body and sexuality, which is plural, fluid, and cannot be 'coded and theorized' within the framework of phallogocentric rules.

For some critics, the concept of 'écriture féminine' is something that describes a utopian possibility rather than a literary practice. In fact, Helene Cixous, one of the leading advocates of écriture féminine, has accepted the fact that writing which portrays femininity is utterly scarce in number, and also admitted the difficulty of defining a feminine practice of writing. Yet, this does not mean that it does not exist; as she clarifies in her famous work, *The Laugh of the Medusa*:

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. But it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogocentric system; it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophico-theoretical domination. It will be conceived of only by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate. (Cixous, 1976, p.883).

In order to be the autonomous 'subject' free from the phallogocentric status of language and to initiate the resistance, women must head for the source of écriture féminine, which is the female body and sexuality. It is the non-symbolizable and non-rational terrain of fantasy that leads to subversion of order and the ultimate feeling of jouissance. That is, it is Lacan's 'Imaginary' order', pre-symbolic, or the 'semiotic chora' in Kristeva's term. Furthermore, this female sexuality must emphasize the 'femaleness' as Irigaray and Cixous insist, and women themselves must establish "the site of difference from which phallogocentric concepts and controls can be seen through and taken apart" (Newton&Rosenfelt, 1985, p.87) both in theory and practice. To sum up, despite the

diversity of thoughts among the writers as to whether there is pre-symbolic phase, the source of which can be obtained through jouissance, or if there is a special femininity that can only be expressed by women, écriture féminine insists on the explorations of the relationships between language, sexuality and patriarchal ideology to be able to develop non-phallogocentric, nonbinary and nonoppositional way of thinking, which is "the kind that may have existed before Adam was given the power to name the animals; to determine the beginnings and ends of things" (Tong, 1989, p. 233). Thus, the only thing for women writers to do is to keep on challenging the patriarchy through feminine writing, as Cixous asserts in *The Laugh of Medusa*:

Let the priests tremble, we are going to show them our sexts!... You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her. And she is not deadly. She is beautiful and she is laughing (1976, p. 885).

3.1. French Feminism and Its Leading Figures

The central issue in much recent women's writing in France is to find and use an appropriate female language. Language is the place to begin: a *prise de conscience* [capture of consciousness] must be followed by a *prise de la parole* [capture of speech]. . . . In this view, the very forms of the dominant mode of discourse show the mark of the dominant masculine ideology. Hence, when a woman writes or speaks herself into existence, she is forced to speak in something like a foreign tongue, a language with which she may be uncomfortable (Burke, 1978, p. 844).

As stated in the quotation above, the debate over language has become one of the most exciting areas in feminist literary criticism. Feminist writers have persistently proved the fact that women constitute a 'muted group', both in the private and public spheres, due to the dominant (male) power controlling everything from ideologies to structures. Thus, this situation limits, shapes and makes the muted group bound to express their beliefs and experiences through the allowable forms of dominant structure. To be able to de(con)struct this inequity in roles, activities, tastes and behaviors assigned for women and redefine the age-old tradition between men and women, feminist theoreticians and writers have used Edwin Ardener's model of the relation between dominant and muted groups. Ardener explains that "women constitute a 'muted group', the boundaries of whose culture and reality overlap, but are not wholly contained by, the 'dominant (male) group' (1975, p.3). However, "the muted culture is not "mute" – not silent, dumb or without speech – but "muted" (Harrison, 1988, p.50), because the feelings and experiences of women cannot be expressed within the boundaries of the dominant group. Their voice cannot be heard and their speech may sound meaningless, as "all the language is the language of the dominant order, and women must speak through it" (Showalter, 1981, p. 200). Nonetheless, there is also a unique space that lies outside of the dominant group and is therefore unknown to masculine culture. Ardener terms this realm "the wild", which Showalter calls "the wild zone": a possible place for women's culture, "an area which is literally no-man's-land, a place forbidden to men ... the aspects of the female life-style which are outside of and unlike those of men"

(Showalter, 1981, p. 200). It does not make any sense, or more accurately, it does not have any corresponding within the field of man-world. That is why, female experience and body has always been defined and treated as deviant by the dominant patriarchal structure and its language. It is the 'dark continent' full of indefinable things, like female sexuality and textuality that must be avoided.

However, whereas the 'wild zone' is alien and frightful to men, it becomes a new and promising 'female space' for women where they can present what has been repressed and ignored for a long time. It provides feminist critics and writers with the possibilities of making the muted culture gain their genuine female voice and consciousness again. Especially for French feminist critics, supporting an oral break from the dictatorship of patriarchal speech, the 'wild zone' offers great opportunities for the construction of the female language and feminine culture. With similar views, Elaine Showalter also advocates the necessity of 'wild zone' for women, as in the following:

The wild zone becomes the place for the revolutionary women's language, the language of everything that is repressed, and for the revolutionary women's writing in "white ink". It is the Dark Continent in which Cixous' laughing Medusa and Wittig's *guérillères* reside. Through voluntary entry into the wild zone, other feminist critics tell us, a woman can write her way out of the "cramped confines of patriarchal space" (1981, p. 201).

Thus, what women need is to focus on women's writing that continuously de(con)structs the oppressive phallogocentric structure that defines women as deviant and leaves them speechless. Having those considerations in their minds, feminist critics engage in reinventing a language which cannot be "defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning" (Felman, 1975, p.10). In this sense, French theory, heavily influenced by the ideas of Lacan, Derrida and Barthes, has contributed a lot to the feminist concerns, principally related with the de(con)struction of the female body, sexuality and the assertion of women's relation to language and writing. Based on these facts, the following sections will focus on the leading figures of French feminist theory, Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, whose works are the most representative of the specific problems concerned with women's relation to writing, language and female body.

3.1.1. Helene Cixous: writing the female body

What is or who is a woman? Is she a daughter, a wife, a mother or just a human creature? Who defines her? Is she defined on her own taking her desires and wishes as a prime concern, or defined by the dominant patriarchal structures ruled by men? In fact, the more pertinent question should be 'what it means to be a woman in a society' as it is the society that keeps and reinforces the misguided views about women. It is not surprising to see that every society has quite similar (sometimes same) definitions for women despite having different cultural and social background. Women are generally

the 'marginalized other', against which men define themselves. They are the passive objects, instruments and bodies with certain roles as Barbara Omolade summarizes in the following quotation:

... her head and her heart were separated from her back and her hands and divided from her womb and vagina. Her back and her muscles were pressed into field labor where she was forced to work [...] like men. Her hands were demanded to nurse and nurture the [...] man and his family ... Her vagina, used for his sexual pleasure, was the gateway to the womb, which was his place of capital investment being the sex and the resulting child, the accumulated surplus, ... (1983, p. 354).

When studying the definitions in detail, one can easily get the underlying reason of all these negative descriptions attached to women, which is the female body. In fact, like man, woman also has a body, but her body does not belong to her – "it is something other than herself" (Beauvoir, 1989, p. 61). That is, it is the patriarchally constructed female body, which has always been regarded as the property of a man and an object for a male gaze. Under the well-founded principles of phallogocentric discourse, the female body gradually becomes the site of the "ideological construction of femininity [...] insisting that all women aspire to a coercive standardized ideal" (Alison&Bordo, 1989, p.16): which can be summarized as a self-sacrificing mother for her children, a wife and unpaid worker for her husband, mostly satisfying his sexual desires, and a bearer of the moral values of the family. She is trained and disciplined to please others, so a woman eventually learns to treat her whole person as a 'docile body' (Foucault, 1977), not because of her anatomy but of cultural and social dictations. Since she is just limited to being a sexual object for a man, and since to please his desires is a matter of utmost importance, a woman feels obliged to hide her own sexuality and pleasures. Her entire female sexual life cycle from puberty to menopause – menstruation, sexual initiation, pregnancy, and childbirth – becomes a source of horror, shame and disgust that must be out of sight (Showalter, 1981).

However, these negative descriptions emanated from men's obsession with the biological fact of womanhood have been challenged by later feminist critics aspire for reminding women the power and the value of the female body, which is the source of pleasure, fertility, and empowerment. Female sexuality, women's maternal bodies and the female capability to give birth have been glorified and celebrated for its capacity to break the chains from constraints of male dominance and submission (Rich, 1977). Helene Cixous is one of those feminist critics, who turns to the maternal body and focuses on the plurality and fluidity of the female sexuality after realizing the difficulty of expressing their problems as women in a male-dominated world with its man-made language. Thus, as a solution, she creates a new form of writing known as 'écriture feminine', or 'feminine writing'. With that new and significant theoretical formulation, Cixous asserts that at the rear of all patriarchal discourses lies human sexuality that inscribes femininity as inert and passive in a male-dominated gender binary system:

Men still have everything to say about their sexuality, and everything to write. For what they have said so far, for the most part, stems from the opposition activity/passivity, from the power relation between a fantasized obligatory virility meant to invade, to colonize, and the consequential phantasm of woman as a “dark continent” to penetrate and to “pacify.” Conquering her, they’ve made haste to depart from her borders, to get out of sight, out of body (1976, p. 877).

Therefore, women, having been estranged from their bodies and from their sexualities throughout history with the terrifying myth of Medusa, must emerge from their deep sleep and “show them [their] sexts!” (ibid, p. 885). Then, they will realize that the Medusa is not “deadly *but* beautiful and laughing” (ibid, p. 885) (italic is mine). By writing their body and sexuality, women will subvert the patriarchal binary constructions and de(con)struct the patriarchal discourse that regards the feminine as lack and absence by privileging the phallus as the unique source of power. According to Cixous, a woman without a body “can’t possibly be a good fighter. She is reduced to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow” (ibid, p. 880). Thus, women must write and their body must be heard since “[writing] will give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal” (ibid, p.880).

However, Cixous’ idea of ‘feminine writing’ or ‘écriture féminine’, which voices out the desires and pleasures of the female body, is criticized by some feminist scholars like Teresa Elbert and Mary Jacobus. According to them, écriture féminine may bring back the risk of re-essentializing the feminine. Nevertheless, Cixous, who strongly believes that the terms like ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ perpetuate the existence of phallogocentric dualities, responds to the claims by warning that it is not the sex of the writer that makes sense but the ‘sex of the writing’ s/he produces. Thus, Cixous asserts that

[g]reat care must be taken in working on feminine writing not to get trapped by names: to be signed with a woman’s name doesn’t necessarily make a piece of writing feminine... and conversely, the fact that a piece of writing is signed with a man’s name does not in itself exclude femininity. It’s rare, but you can sometimes find femininity in writings signed by men: it does happen (1981, p.52).

Cixous admits that both men and women can manifest the femininity and female sexuality in their writing through écriture féminine. However, she immediately adds that feminine writing represents expression not only as writing but also as lived experiences. Since the experiences of men and women are quite different from each other due to the patriarchal constructions of the male-dominated society and its man-made language, Cixous invites women to write their bodies and sexual experiences in order to express what has remained speechless so far. Based on those considerations, women need to find a new language and learn to write in a different way from the man-made language, which privileges the rational and linear kind of writing taking its power from the pen(is). Like their orgasms, the focal point of men’s writing is to create a kind

of ‘explosion’ at the end of the work. By following a unidimensional path controlled by the ‘phallus’, it just cares about the release at its end. On the other hand, women’s language and writing is nonlinear. It is cyclical, repetitive and fluid-like having more dimensions full of multiple ideas. As in the female orgasm, women’s writing does not perform with the focus centered on the end. It is experience-oriented that needs a slow and exploratory process unlike the male orgasm, which is result-oriented. It takes a longer time to occur, but creates a kind of euphoric state for an extended time. Briefly, by comparing women and men’s writing to their orgasms, Cixous aspires to prove that female language and the expression of that language in women’s writing is more fluid, spacious and expansive as in her sexuality. It has multiple beginnings, shapes and directions in its process. Thus, Cixous encourages women to write their bodies and to write as women.

At this point, the central question is why not men but women are closer to this kind of writing. Cixous, like other poststructuralist feminists, explains that issue by de(con)structing Lacan’s theory of ‘Symbolic’ order. Psychoanalytic studies assert that men realize the power of their ‘phallus’ while entering into the Symbolic, whereas women are the “peripheral figures” (Cixous, 1976, p. 883) of the Symbolic order. Therefore, Cixous believes that women, staying outside of the constraints of the Symbolic, are much closer to the Imaginary, in which they are united with the womb of the mother, a world that is not limited by time, rules and fixed meanings. It is a world, where there is no fear of being far from the voice of mother – “the omnipotent and generous dispenser of love, nourishment and plenitude” (Moi, 1996, p. 115). Women’s language is, therefore, erratic and effusive as it gets rid of the confines of fixed meanings and reason. It is closer to the unconscious and maternal body, and accordingly, closer to female sexuality and body having no boundaries. It is not oriented around a single organ – the phallus. For Cixous,

[woman’s] libido is cosmic, just as her unconscious is worldwide. Her writing can only keep going, without ever inscribing or discerning contours... she goes and passes into infinity...She lets the other language speak - the language of 1,000 tongues which knows neither enclosure nor death... Her language does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back, it makes possible (1976, p. 889).

To sum up, according to Cixous, female sexuality and body are considered as a direct source of female writing, which is a powerful discourse to de(con)struct the binaries and recreate the world. Now, everybody will see that “Medusa is not deadly. She is beautiful and she is laughing” (1976, p. 885), and that shattering laugh gives life rather than brings death.

3.1.2. Julia Kristeva: the maternal 'semiotic chora' and the 'subject-in-process'

Having similar views with Cixous, Julia Kristeva, an influential feminist psychoanalyst and literary critic, also looks for a less sexist and less phallogocentric model for women, who have been oppressed and defined as the 'other' in relation to the phallus, which is the absolute power. To be able to resist that masculinist thinking and de(con)struct its man-made language, Cixous and Kristeva rely on the influence of *jouissance*, "... the physical pleasures of infancy and of adulthood, repressed but not obliterated by the Law of the Father" (Tong, 1989, p.220) However, in order to achieve this state of excessive pleasure beyond the limits, Cixous and Kristeva use different paths. Unlike Cixous, emphasizing the female sexuality and its expression through female body that has been confiscated historically, Kristeva finds the solution in psychoanalysis, where she recasts the valences of Lacan's model of psychosexual development. In classical Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, the child learns to separate between self and other during the 'Mirror Stage', and then enters the realm of shared cultural meaning ruled by the Father, which is known as the Symbolic. In that new world,

[the] developing child comes to subjectivity in relation to the Symbolic functions in language. The child inserts him/herself into culture by submitting to the father's 'no,' by conforming to the linguistic rules of grammar, syntax and propriety in vocabulary, and in this process is related to the child's insertion into social rules. Since the social world is the patriarchal world, to learn the language of that world is necessarily to learn the language of the father. The process is instigated by the child's separation from the mother, his/her recognition that s/he is separate and different from the mother. The learning of symbolic language, therefore, necessitates a submission to masculine functions and a farewell to the feminized pre-Oedipal space of the mother-child bond (Robbins, 2000, p. 128).

Briefly, the 'Symbolic' is the period, in which the child has to learn the language of power full of patriarchal functions and norms established by the Law of Father. That is why, the central issue within the feminist literary field is to challenge that law and find an answer to those persistent questions: Why is everybody obliged to speak and behave in accordance with confinements of the Symbolic, ruled by the father's name and his prohibitions? Is there something that comes before the symbolic and does not exclude the maternal figure and her language? For Kristeva, there is a stage preceding the Symbolic and the child's enforced entrance into the patriarchal language, which is called the 'semiotic'. Her term, the 'semiotic', is sometimes considered confusing due to its indefinable essence. While some critics define semiotic as something associated with poetic and rhythmic feminine language that lacks structure and meaning in the preverbal stage, for some others, it is closely related to the pre-Oedipal or pre-mirror stage, representing the undifferentiated state of the infant as explained in the works of Freud and Lacan. Since semiotic is generally defined in reference to the preverbal stage, where there is no father, no law and no phallus, everyone (especially the child and the mother) is whole, content and purified from fear and lack. Because of the absence of the father, who does not threaten the feeling of wholeness with the maternal

body, the infant in the semiotic stage experiences "a joy without words" (Kristeva, 1980, p.283) that produces laughter. Nonetheless, "the child's laughter is one of a past event" (ibid, p. 286) as soon as s/he enters to the symbolic law, where s/he acquires the language, because the symbolic law means separation from the mother as well as loss of touch with the semiotic. However, according to Kristeva, this separation process is a bit different for a female child, because she keeps on identifying to some degree with the mother figure even after she enters the symbolic. This continued identification with the mother creates a "subject-in process" (Kristeva, 1980) that fluctuates between the semiotic chora and the symbolic realm, rather than arriving at a fixed identity dictated by the paternal figure. Therefore, unlike Lacan, claiming that the child speaks the Father's language in the Symbolic, Kristeva states that the Symbolic is constantly erupted by Semiotic, whereby the child continues to speak the semiotic language. This language, which is mainly poetic, is full of deviations from the Father's language, such as silences, contradictions, ambiguity, rhythm, music and meaninglessness. Thus, as Kristeva asserts in the following quotation, achieving this poetic language as a signifying practice is the one of the important steps of the creation process:

The semiotic, which also precedes [the symbolic], constantly tears it open and this transgression brings about all the various transformations of the signifying practice that are called 'creation'. Whether in the realm of metalanguage (mathematics, for example) or literature, what remodels the symbolic order is always the influx of the semiotic. This is particularly evident in poetic language since, for there to be a transgression of the symbolic, there must be an irruption of the drives in the universal signifying order, that of 'natural' language which binds together the social unit (1984, p. 62).

Therefore, Kristeva subverts the key elements of Lacan by making the maternal figure both a self-defining and other-defining agent, rather than accepting the phallogocentric rationale that regards her as an impotent and sacrificing object defined by lack during the individuation process. That is, she demystifies the archaic mother of Lacan and creates a new image of a mother, who is "an independent source of desire, as someone who has a desire for another, and whose desire the child needs in order to be a separate identity" (Meyers, 2001, p.85 - 86). Therefore, one must be someone who desires, rather than being desired, in order to be a complete subject, or, in Kristeva's words, one must be a "subject of enunciation" (1984, p. 23), the "synthesizing unity" (ibid, p. 237). Evidently, with this desiring and speaking powerful maternal figure, the infant does not have to repress her/his feelings and desires towards the mother caused by the castration anxiety or penis envy. Moreover, s/he does not need to directly accept the Father's rules and language without questioning. That is, feminine peculiarities symbolizing the 'semiotic' are never decisively rejected in favor of masculine ones, or masculine peculiarities symbolizing the 'symbolic' are not directly affirmed to the exclusion of feminine ones, but rather, they are interwoven in Kristeva's exposition.

By combining the feminine and masculine images, first of all, Kristeva tries to prove that the semiotic is one of the most important parts of the signifying process and still coexists with the symbolic. Moreover, unlike Lacan, she asserts that the semiotic does not disappear with the child's entrance into the symbolic. In that way, Kristeva aims to prove the difficulty of separation from the mother for both male and female identities due to the symbiotic relationship with the mother, in which the child and the mother become one. Thus, Kristeva develops a new definition of the subject: the 'subject-in-process', which is an ambiguous, fluid and split subject not rejecting the 'Other'. In brief, by combining the semiotic and the symbolic within itself, or in other words, by carrying the (m)other within herself or himself, the 'subject-in-process' denies the socially and culturally constructed boundaries between self and Other and lives in accordance with the rhythms of the semiotic, favoring the maternal principle as well as the rules of the symbolic order. As the 'subject-in-process' is a concept that has been established based on an egalitarian basis, in which the symbolic and the semiotic, self and Other, subject and object, and men and women can unite with one another, it helps to destroy the hierarchically constructed binary oppositions (Aktari, 2010). In fact, de(con)structing the binary oppositions is one of the most vital aims of the French feminists within the field of *écriture féminine*. Moreover, Kristeva's concept of the 'subject-in-process' will be a good source to explain the plurality and fluidity of a female language to be studied in the following section.

Another reason why the idea of the 'subject-in-process' is quite important for French feminists, who advocate the existence of a female language, is its source, which is the semiotic chora. The 'subject in process' is represented in that "invisible and characterless sort of thing, one that receives all things and shares in a most perplexing way in what is intelligible, a thing extremely difficult to comprehend" (Kristeva, 1980, p. 40). Kristeva agrees that the chora, which is a term she borrows from Plato, is a space that is difficult to posit or define. However, she acknowledges the fact that the existence of this space cannot be destroyed, just as the semiotic is never destroyed. It is always there to be remembered, because chora is "a receptacle of all becoming" (ibid, p.38) like a maternal body. Thus, even though the child may lose the connection with the semiotic in the Symbolic Order, as Lacan asserts, it would eventually come to the surface "in the form of rhythms and intonations" (ibid, p.134), and let the child speak the language that comes from the maternal body, or in Kristevan term, from the semiotic chora. This new language, emerged with a reunion with the mother in the semiotic chora, is a 'poetic language' of the 'subject-in-process', which stretches and liberates one's conceptual frameworks and thinking, as explained in the following:

It is a language distinct from that ordinary language use for communication, the language of everyday speech, though it is recognizable within the terms of such ordinary communication. But it is also a language that draws attention to itself *as* language, a language of materiality, rather than the apparent transparency of ordinary speech in which the reader/hearer is encouraged to forget the words and to move straight to the world to which the words are supposed to refer. Poetic language advertises the writer/speaker's efforts to encase concepts or objects in sounds and rhythms. The recipient of such a language is therefore encouraged to notice language in use, rather than moving directly to the 'reality' or the abstraction to which the words are supposed to refer" (Robbins, 2000, p.126).

Since the source of this poetic language is the chora, which is inside the mother's body, some French feminists claim that women are much closer to the semiotic than men. However, Kristeva does not attribute the use of the semiotic just to women, but rather stresses the fact that the semiotic can be employed by anyone regardless of their sex. In fact, this reminds the ideas of Cixous, who claims that what matters is the 'sex of the writing' s/he produces, not the sex of the writer (1981). Nevertheless, both Cixous and Kristeva add that encountering with that kind of language in writings signed by men is so unusual and scarce in number. The most important thing for Kristeva is meaning produced when the semiotic meets the symbolic: "Because the subject is always both semiotic and symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both" (1984, p.93). Therefore, both elements are needed, because language would be incomprehensible babbling without the symbolic and would become empty and senseless without the element of the semiotic. As a result, what Kristeva advocates is that in order to speak the language of the 'subject-in-process', while one tries to get rid of the obtrusions of the symbolic speaking, the man-made language, s/he also has to open up her/his mind and body to the semiotic in order to get in touch with the preverbal language, or in other words, with the female language, including the drives of the body and the pre-oedipal unity with the mother, which takes its source from the semiotic chora.

3.1.3. Luce Irigaray: female sexuality and the image of 'two lips'

Gender is a system of inequality, and in this system, masculinity has always been regarded as superior to femininity. One of the major grounds of those, who define man as the 'absolute subject' and woman as the 'inferior Other', is the penis. It is regarded as being the only sexual organ of recognized value when compared to the 'clitoris', which is "conceived as a little penis pleasant to masturbate" and the *vagina*, which is "valued for the 'lodging' it offers to the male organ", says Luce Irigaray in her influential work, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985a, p.23). For her, this narrow view of feminine eroticism, having been defined within the established patriarchal parameters, is merely a projection of masculine eroticism, which considers "woman's erogenous zones never amount to anything but a clitoris-sex that is not comparable to the noble phallic organ, or a hole-envelope that serves to sheathe massage the penis

in intercourse” (ibid, p. 23). Irigaray rejects that kind of objectifying and degrading portrayal of a female sexuality and encourages women to remember the uniqueness of their pleasure. According to her,

[w]oman’s autoeroticism is very different from man’s. In order to touch himself, man needs an instrument: his hand, a woman’s body, language ... And this self-caressing requires at least a minimum of activity. As for woman, she touches herself in and of herself without any need for mediation, and before there is any way to distinguish activity from passivity (ibid, p.24).

In *This Sex Which Is Not One* and *When Our Lips Speak Together*, Luce Irigaray aims to de(con)struct the hierarchized masculine-feminine dualisms and revalorize the female body with the image of ‘two lips’, touching and kissing each other continually. The significance of Irigarayan female lips emanates from the fact that they are “neither one nor two” (Irigaray, 1985a, p.26). These two distinct but inseparable lips of the female body, which represent both the mouth and the vulva, discard Freud’s conceptualization of female sexuality as either vaginal or clitoral, but not both. Irigaray denounces that kind of phallogocentric mode of signifying the female sexuality. According to her, feminine jouissance cannot be reduced to the male-defined feminine body, because

[h]er jouissance is a result of indefinite touching. The thresholds [of lips] do not necessarily mark a limit, the end of an act. She can take part in the man’s act, or even produce it, without ever achieving her own act. In the act of love, she finds herself more or less expanded, more or less deeply touched, more or less unfolded in her desire of the moment. ... An expanse extending on and on forever (1993,p.56).

With her emphasis on ‘indefinite touching’, Luce Irigaray preoccupies with de(con)structing binary opposites. The opposition ‘touched’ and ‘touching’, for instance, cannot be assigned to the lips, which are touching each other all the time, thereby “distinguish[ing] between what is touched and what is touching, between object and subject, known and knower, passive and active” (Canters and Jantzen, 2005, p.106) is not possible. In this way, Irigaray counteracts Freud’s active/passive and subject/object dichotomy between woman and man; as she puts it:

Woman ‘touches herself’ all the time, and [...] no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact. Thus, within herself, she is already two but not divisible into one(s)-that caress each other (1985a, p. 24).

In their singular plurality, the two lips involve absolute fluidity, plurality and irreducibility of female sexuality, instead of dichotomous logic of thinking that prioritizes the phallus as the supreme symbol of masculine power. Irigaray, with the recurring references to female anatomical descriptions and terms like ‘lips, vagina, clitoris, cervix, uterus and breasts’, emphasizes the endless multiplicity of the sexual pleasure of a woman. By creating a female gendered association with ‘touch’, she shatters the insistence on the presence or absence of one organ, and opens up the possibility for a myriad of perspectives as well as pleasures. That is, besides “introducing a genuine plurality or alterity into a previously mono-sexual model” (Grosz, 1990, p.142), the image of ‘two lips’ with its diversity and polyvocality also represents the female language for

Irigaray. She asserts that just as the female pleasure and sexuality, the female language, as analogous to the female body, is fluid, multiple and diverse as well. Unlike the univocal framework of the masculine symbolic and its man-made language, which “put in place of the pleasures of the whole body/language system and the primacy of one organ/meaning” (ibid, p.178), it sets off in all directions, resisting to fit into the logic and law of oneness and sameness. Hence, “woman’s desire would not be expected to speak the same language as man’s”, says Irigaray (1985a, p.25). Then, she argues that when a woman speaks, her language is not recognizable within the present symbolic order, which relies on the masculine/feminine binary system of phallogocentric imaginary. Irigaray extends her arguments with the following analysis:

Hers are contradictory words, somewhat mad from the standpoint of reason, inaudible for whoever listens to them with ready-made grids, with a fully elaborated code in hand. ... One would have to listen with another ear, as if hearing an “other meaning” always in the process of weaving itself, of embracing itself with words, but also getting rid of words in order not to become fixed, congealed in them (ibid, p.29).

This new female language, unlike the man-made language, perpetuating a system of thought that reduces the vast and amorphous female experience to a singularity, creates new space and opportunities that would allow women to participate in their own representation. However, while seeking a speaking position for women, Irigaray admits the difficulty of describing or defining that female language in current phallogocentric discourses that repress female pleasures and corporeality, because in doing so, it would identify itself with the man-made language, which causes “woman [to] lose the uniqueness of her pleasure” (ibid, p. 30). For Irigaray, the only solution to overcome those restrictive containments of patriarchal representations is that women have to explore different kinds of discourse and new aspirations for language; as she clarifies in the following lines:

When women want to escape from exploitation, they do not simply destroy a few ‘prejudices’; they upset the whole set of dominant values -- economic, social, moral, sexual. They challenge every theory, every thought, every existing language in that these are monopolized by men only. They question the very *foundation of our social and cultural order*, the organization of which has been prescribed by the patriarchal system (1977, p.68).

In this long process, women should first know their own bodies if they desire to get rid of that phallogocentric system and create their own language. Women, whose sexualities have been defined from a masculine point of view for centuries, should claim back their bodies and begin to know their sexuality as it truly is. Only then can they make a difference, says Irigaray. Like Cixous, she also considers that women’s body is resourceful and it is the source of creative process itself. In this respect, Irigaray rejects all the phallogocentric accusations regarding women as a lack and replies that women are no lack, but that their sexual organs are dispersed throughout the body. “There is no above/below, back/front, right side/wrong side, top/bottom in isolation, separate, out of touch” (1980, p.75) in a female body. On the contrary, they all intermingle despite

“the brutal separation of the two lips by a violating penis” (1985, p.24). The plurality of women’s sexual organs and bodily pleasures, which do not recognize patriarchal oppositions like ‘I–other, subject–object and mind–body’, proliferate when they come out of the man-made language and begin to speak through their own language, which resists and denies the ‘sameness’. Irigaray explains why women must resist speaking the same language in her following quotation:

If we keep on speaking the same language ... if we keep on speaking sameness, if we speak to each other as men have been doing for centuries, as we have been taught to speak, we will miss each other, fail ourselves. Again ... Words will pass through our bodies, above our heads. They’ll vanish, and we’ll be lost. Far off, up high. Absent from ourselves: we’ll spoken machines, speaking machines. Enveloped in proper skins, but not our own. Withdrawn into proper names, violated by them. Not yours, not mine. We don’t have any. We change names as men exchange us, as they use us, use us up (ibid, p.205).

With this idea in her mind, Irigaray ceaselessly endeavors to de(con)struct the existing forms of the man-made language and dominant discourses of the patriarchy that seal women’s desire into narrowly defined ‘sameness’, and invites women to invent their own language. In her opinion, women should “keep on going, without getting out of breath” (ibid, p. 214) despite the obstacles if they do not want to remain unsatisfied and paralyzed again within that phallogocentric discourse.

3.2. The Features of a Female Language

In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards: what it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours: it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. (Bronte, 1998, p. 321).

For many literary critics, Bertha Mason, Rochester’s mad wife in Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, represented the negative image of sexual women in Gothic fiction who should better be locked away and silenced as they have lost their sanity and control over their passions. However, the different historical readings attached to Bertha Mason disclose the evolution of the way female madness has been interpreted through the course of literary fiction, and prove how “affirmative femininity turned into the monstrous or, in narratological terms, into a voiceless textual object” (Becker,1996, p.72). Since then, especially after the influential work of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, feminist theorists have exalted Bertha as the embodiment of rebellion and rage, and make the figure of mad woman, symbolizing the inferiorised other, the omnipotent subject. Nevertheless, as having been forced to stay silent so long by that contemptuous and oppressive society, she feels incapable of speaking out, or more precisely, “defin[ing] her feelings in language which is chiefly made by men to express theirs” (Hardy, 1986, p.405). The only way for her redemption is to de(con)struct the man-made language that positions her negative, Other and without subjectivity. As a consequence, a theory

of uniquely female language emerges as “woman’s desire would not be expected to speak the same language as man’s” (Irigaray, 1985a, p.25).

Defining the female language and the unique difference of women’s writing with that language, however, presents a slippery and demanding task, as some women writers and feminist critics have warned. Among those, who draw attention to the difficulties of giving an exact definition for the female language, are Erendiz Atasü, Virginia Woolf and Helene Cixous. According to them,

[w]omen’s discourse is not a kind of formula with a certain definition and limitations (Atasü, 2009, p.144).
[a] woman’s writing is always feminine; it cannot help being feminine; at its best it is most feminine; the only difficulty lies in defining what we mean by feminine. (Woolf, 1979, p.70).
[i]t is impossible to define a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice will never be theorized, enclosed, encoded -- which doesn’t mean that it doesn’t exist (Cixous, 1976, p. 883).

Although feminist writers mention the difficulty of defining a female language, all of them struggle to find a common terminology that can rescue women and their language from their stereotypical associations with inferiority. The common basis for that aim is to articulate the female body, which is more diffusive and supple enough to communicate multifarious experiences than its ‘masculine counterpart’. For those women writers, this new language that reconnects with the body,

[w]ill not degenerate and dry up, will not go back to the fleshless academicism, the stereotypical and servile discourses that we reject. ... Feminine language must, by its very nature, work on life passionately, scientifically, poetically, politically in order to make it invulnerable” (Chawaf, 1976, p.177 -178).

Consequently, this new female language destroys the present phallogocentric system and causes an upheaval, which will consequently lead to the freedom and jouissance of women.

3.2.1. Rejection of the binaries

Beauties slept in their woods waiting for princes to come and wake them up. In their beds, in their glass coffins, in their childhood forests like dead women. Beautiful but passive; hence desirable: all mystery emanates from them. ... She sleeps, she is intact, eternal, absolutely powerless. He has no doubt that she has been waiting for him forever. ... Then he will kiss her. So that when he opens her eyes she will see only him; him; him in the place of everything, all him. (Cixous, 1986, p.66)

In *The Newly Born Woman*, Cixous questions binary oppositions which have been ingrained into every field of life and asserts that gender and sexual identities are culturally and discursively constructed by phallogocentric discourse. In this hierarchically structured system, revolving around ‘male/female opposition’ where the former is always regarded as superior to the latter, women are always associated with passivity. To underline the constructedness of these categories, Cixous uses the ‘sleeping beauty’ tale as the starting point for her discovery of how women should defy the prescribed roles assigned to them by patriarchy. For her, the ideal of the ‘passive woman’ is the

groundwork of phallogocentric discourse, so a woman, firstly, must stop seeing herself through the eyes of male desire, and then tries to find the ways of taking herself as the female subject. She must deconstruct “the shadow she is” (ibid, p.67) and speak herself into existence. Nevertheless, Cixous is aware of the fact that this hierarchical binary structure pertains not only to gender but is also inherent within language itself. That is why, for Cixous, women must seek the ways of resisting linguistic, historical, and sexual confinements placed on them in advance, and create a new feminine rhetoric, which is only possible through writing and through the reclamation of the female body; as she maintains in the following:

Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it. I know why you haven't written. (And why I didn't write before the age of twenty-seven.) Because writing is at once too high, too great for you, it's reserved for the great—that is, for “great men”; and it's “silly.” ... Write, let no one hold you back, let nothing stop you (1976, p.877-878).

By writing ‘her body, her jouissance and her sexual pleasure’, which are fluid, multiple, diverse and nonhierarchical, a woman challenges the speech governed by the phallus and brings down phallogocentric discourse that confines her as a silent, irrational and passive object within dualist oppositions. She goes beyond the binaries and demystifies the so-called conventional wisdom of the fairy tales by enacting and telling a different story. Supplanting the patriarchal systems of thought that relies on a logocentric notion with ‘feminine divine’ (Irigaray, 1993), grounded in the multiplicity and fluidity of a woman's body and pleasure, this new woman puts an end to the myth of the weaker sex and becomes the subject of an entirely different story, as Cixous explains in the following lines:

She *will not* spend her youth in labor; from bed to bed, until the age at which the thing isn't “woman” for [man] anymore. ... She *will not* be the nonsocial, nonpolitical, nonhuman half of the living structure. ... The feminine ones are coming back from far away, from forever, from “outside”, from the heaths where witches stay alive; from underneath, from the near side of “culture”; from their childhoods, which men have so much trouble making women forget, ... A woman's coming to writing: who invisible, foreign, secret, hidden, mysterious, black, forbidden (1986, p.66-69) (italics are mine).

This new subject, taking “her native strength, [...] her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal” (Cixous, 1976, p.80) back, ultimately, renounces her false feminine self in favor of her true female self and de(con)structs the value hierarchies that shape the phallogocentric world.

3.2.2. The plurality and fluidity of the subject: psychological bisexuality

Binary oppositions such as head/heart, activity/passivity or man/woman have long damaged and systematically erased women to entrench masculine domination. Within that culture, where they have been usually associated with nature rather than culture and with the heart and the emotions rather than with the head and rationality, women and their female body have always been suppressed. However, feminist critics and writers,

desiring to alter those states of affairs, have plunged into bringing women into history on their own terms. In that search, ‘bisexuality’ is promoted as a method of de(con)structing the power of the repressive binaries, on which so much of the phallogocentric culture is structured. By denouncing the dualist oppositions as devastating forms of essentialism, false representation of human reality, they advocate a non-exclusive form of bisexuality; as explained in the following analysis of Cixous:

Bisexuality: that is, each one's location in self of the presence – variously manifest and insistent according to each person, male or female – of both sexes, nonexclusion either of the difference or of one sex, and, from this “self-permission”, multiplication of the effects of the inscription of desire, over all parts of my body and the other body. ... , it is women who are opening up to and benefiting from this vatic bisexuality which doesn't annul differences but stirs them up, pursues them, increases their number. In a certain way, “woman is bisexual”; man – it's a secret to no one – being poised to keep glorious phallic monosexuality in view (Cixous, 1976, p.884).

What Cixous aims here is to subvert the phallogocentric discourse and its man-made language by weakening strong boundaries and differences between the signifier, the phallus, and the signified, the vagina or clitoris; or in other words, between the self and the Other. By questioning and de(con)structing the territorial boundaries of identity, especially the female one constructed by phallogocentric discourses, Cixous desires to multiply the experiences of the self. She believes that blurring the singularity of meaning into plurality and multiplicity can circumvent the oppressive logocentrism of language that is founded on the overvalued ‘presence/absence of the phallus’. This plurality can only come true through a female language that does not restrict the signifier to one meaning. Female language, transcending the logic which situates women in the position of a lack, is always plural and open, like the female body and sexuality. Within that language, there is no centre or end to anything. In fact, there is just ‘openness’; as Irigaray puts it:

... openness is ours again. Our “world”. Between us, the movement from inside to outside, from outside to inside, knows no limit. It is without end. ... Between us, the house has no walls, the clearing no enclosure, language no circularity. ... If our pleasure consists of moving and being moved by each other, endlessly. Always in movement, this openness is neither spent nor sated (Irigaray, 1980, p.73).

The female subject, acquiring an open, multiple and plural language by breaking away from the rigid boundaries or dichotomies of the phallogocentric discourse, also begins to speak through a more fluid language, “which is, like woman, fecund [...], inventive, ever changing and pointing beyond itself” (Kuzniar, 1992, p. 1203). This fluid language, like the female body and sexuality, functions as many parts of woman combined into one woman and passes out of the boundaries. It cannot be pinned down, controlled and possessed since it is continually becoming, forever fluid. This physical and linguistic fluidity encourages the female subject to explore and perform different identities beyond the confinement of a socially inscribed body. She, eventually, begins to speak in feminine voices, like the many serpents of *Medusa*, rebelling against the “libidinal and cultural—hence political, typically masculine—economy” (Cixous,

1976, p.879). However, she cannot be understood within the form of phallogocentric culture. Man does not hear her as she speaks flowing, fluctuating and ‘fluid’, as Luce Irigaray clarifies in her following statement:

Yet one must know how to listen otherwise than in good form(s) to hear what [she] says. That it is continuous, compressible, dilatable, viscous, conductible, diffusible, ... That it is unending, potent and impotent owing to its resistance to the countable; that it enjoys and suffers from a greater sensitivity to pressures; that it changes – in volume or in force, ...; that it allows itself to be easily traversed by flow by virtue of its conductivity to currents coming from other fluids or exerting pressure through the walls of a solid; that it mixes with bodies of a like state, sometimes dilutes itself in them in an almost homogeneous manner, which makes the distinction between the one and the other problematical; and furthermore that it is already diffuse “in itself”, which disconcerts any attempt at static identification . . . (Irigaray, 1985a, p.111).

Consequently, there is no prescribed rhetoric and no fixed economy at work for a woman. There is only and always the fluid body and language, written as a physical inscription undecipherable, unknowable, and unheard in fixed man-made language. By denying the socially and culturally constructed boundaries between self and Other, subject and object, and men and women, the female one obtains the fluidity along with openness and multiplicity, and becomes the ‘subject-in-process’ (Kristeva, 1984), one capable of dissolving similarities and differences in the body, and hereby, de(con)structing all kinds of binary mechanisms to create fluid identities.

3.2.3. The voice(s) of m/other

Women, who have been the objects of male theorizing, male desires, male fears and male representations for ages, have to reclaim their usurped bodies and silenced voices back. For this aim, they have to create both a new female language and a new politics. However, it is a challenging process since the system of the patriarchal language and its hegemonic powers have penetrated into almost every field of experience. The obvious place to begin is the silent place, the ‘dark continent’, as Cixous points out:

The Dark Continent is neither dark nor unexplorable. – It is still unexplored only because we’ve been made to believe that it was too dark to be explorable. And because they want to make us believe that what interests us is the white continent, with its monuments to Lack (Cixous, 1976, p.884-85) (emphasis in original).

For Freud and Lacan, women are excluded from any available connection with culture and the cultural order as they lack any relation to the phallus, the ‘transcendental signifier’. According to them, female subjects, not having the phallus, cannot signify speech and desire, because all individuals must symbolize their desire in terms of the male penis. Hence, women acquire a split identity and self-understanding as they are merely considered silent and passive objects of male desire. In order to move beyond the limitations of this oppressive formulation of desire, with its basis in the Oedipal conflict, and achieve their unity again, women must listen to the call of the chora, an echo reminiscent of original bliss, or the ‘semiotic chora’, a term for the ‘enclosed

space, womb’ or ‘receptacle’ that Kristeva derives from Plato’s *Timaeus* (Kristeva, 1984).

During the time of infancy, there is no sense of separation from the body of the mother. The infant and mother are one and whole. There is no self, no other, no this or that; everything is one and the same. Their world is composed entirely of sensations elaborating wholeness and jouissance. As there is no absence, there is also no need for language. Thus, the concept of ‘other’ is not conceivable to the infant yet. However, this situation significantly changes once patriarchy reaches his hands to the child. The process of othering starts both for the child and the mother: s/he becomes an ‘Other’ to the mother and the mother turns into the ‘m/other’, a selfless object, whose sole reason for existence is to gratify the wants and needs of the family. The child views the mother not as a person but as an object who fails to give her/him what s/he desires from her. Acquiring the ‘Law of the Father’, the child becomes a subject of the system (Lacan, 1977a) and loses the union with the mother. The feeling of wholeness, producing laughter, disappears gradually and “the child’s laughter [becomes] one of a past event” (Kristeva, 1980, p.283). Therefore, the entrance of the child to the Father’s law means both separation from the mother and losing touch with the semiotic chora; as Toril Moi clarifies in the following:

Once the subject has entered into the Symbolic Order, the *chora* will be more or less successfully repressed and can be perceived only as pulsional *pressure* on symbolic language: as contradictions, meaninglessness, disruption, silences and absences in the symbolic language. The *chora* is a rhythmic pulsion rather than a new language. It constitutes, in other words, ... the disruptive dimension of language, that which can never be caught up in the closure of traditional linguistic theory (1996, p.162) (emphasis in original).

Even though a person loses touch with the semiotic in the symbolic stage, the chora is always there for her/him. The mother’s voice has been repressed, though, not silenced. It is present but defined as “an invisible, formless being, a mysterious” (Irigaray, 1985b, p.307) within the patriarchal discourse. In order to re-experience the sensations, experiences, and most importantly the wholeness of the chora, the tightly wound structures of phallogocentric discourse and its man-made language must be unravelled, because all these have been formed to separate one from the mother. By re-uniting with the chora, in which there are no binaries or hierarchies but only unity and harmony, one can create a new world, where the Law of the Father does not count. It is not a utopian dream as there was such a place once in everyone’s life: ‘the pre-symbolic period’, where the child is one with the m/other.

For French feminists, especially for Cixous, this idea of wholeness echoes with the theory of bisexuality, which considers the feminine and the masculine sides of a person whole. However, she asserts that women are closer to the semiotic, so to the wholeness

and bisexuality, since they have the potential for motherhood in their bodies. That potential facilitates their connection with the m/other, because for Cixous,

[t]here always remains in woman that force which produces/is produced by the other-in-particular, the other woman. In her, matrix, cradler; herself giver as her mother and child; she is her own sister-daughter. ... Everything will be changed once woman gives woman to the other woman. There is hidden and always ready in woman the source; the locus for the other (1976, p.881).

Therefore, the other, which is at the same time the mother, is the source of de(con)structing everything related with the phallogentric discourse: its cultural norms, laws, language, and power. Once women get to the other side of the looking glass and become one with their image, instead of seeing it from outside as an 'other', their female language will be brought into the foreground of consciousness. Eventually, the female language finds its source, the 'm/other's body', "mak[ing] everything all right, nourish[ing] and stand[ing] up against separation" (Cixous, 1976, p.882). This poetic female language, coming from the 'semiotic chora/the maternal body' eliminates the dominating sense of the symbolic and lets women overcome their initial silence and express themselves outside the bounds of phallogentric signification.

4. THE USE OF ECRITURE FEMININE AND THE FEMALE LANGUAGE IN THE NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF AND ERENDİZ ATASÜ

4.1. Virginia Woolf's Pursuit of a Female Language

I thought how unpleasant it is to be locked out; and I thought how it is worse perhaps to be locked in; and, thinking of the safety and prosperity of the one sex and of the poverty and insecurity of the other and of the effect of tradition and of the lack of tradition upon the mind of a writer, I thought at last that it was time to roll up the crumpled skin of the day, with its arguments and its impressions and its anger and its laughter, and cast it into the hedge. A thousand stars were flashing across the blue wastes of the sky. (Woolf, 1929, p.21)

Having been prohibited from entering the library of 'Oxbridge', representing the male *logos* and elitism, Virginia Woolf describes the miserable status of women who have been "locked out" for centuries, but she also adds immediately that "it is worse, perhaps, to be locked in" – locked in by the man-made ideologies and its sexist and discriminatory language. For her, the current language is inadequate to represent the female experience since "the very form of the sentence does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman's use" (1979, p.48). Thus, it is high time for women to "roll up the crumpled skin", and for women writers to write authentically by "altering and adapting the current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it" (ibid, p.48). Woolf thinks that it is difficult to clear the long-established man-made language as it has been internalized both by men and women, and become the norm. Thus, Woolf regards subversion as being a first step in the history of women's writing. She asserts that women should start from scratch, and "explore their own sex" first, to be able "to write of women as women have never been written of before" (ibid, p.49). Woolf believes that, at the end of this process, women will create a "feminine prose", through which they can express a female inner reality by defying the rules of conventional language (ibid, p.49). However, she accepts the difficulty in defining the word 'feminine', and adds that nobody can know "until she has expressed herself in all the arts and professions open to human skill" (ibid p.60). Knowing this fact, Woolf never gives up developing and refining her concept of 'feminine prose' throughout her whole writing career. As a woman novelist, she wants to create her own style since she believes that feminine writing has been left untheorized so far. Thus, Woolf experiments ceaselessly in new forms and new techniques, and tries to challenge "the accepted forms, discard the unfit, create others which are more fitting" (ibid, p. 67) for

women's use, because for her, a woman's sentence is not the same as a man's sentence as she states in *A Room of One's Own*:

Man's writing... so direct, so straightforward... It indicated such freedom of mind, such liberty of person, such confidence in himself. One had a sense of physical well-being in the presence of this well-nourished, well-educated, free mind... But after reading a chapter or two a shadow seemed to lie across the page... something like the letter 'I'. One began dodging this way and that to catch a glimpse of the landscape behind it. Whether that was indeed a tree or a woman walking I was not quite sure. Back one was always hailed to the letter 'I'. One began to be tired of 'I'; honest and logical; as hard as a nut, and polished for centuries by good teaching and good feeding... But—here I turned a page or two, looking for something or other—in the shadow of the letter 'I' all is shapeless as mist. Is that a tree? No, it is a woman. But... she has not a bone in her body... But... I had said 'but' too often. One cannot go on saying 'but'. One must finish the sentence somehow, I rebuked myself. Shall I finish it, 'But—I am bored!' But why was I bored? Partly because of the dominance of the letter 'I' and the aridity... Nothing will grow there (1929, p. 83 - 84).

Being one of the first woman writers, noticing and understanding the relationship between dominant male ideology and language, Virginia Woolf is sure that it is impossible for women and women writers to express their ideas and feelings with that 'man-made' language. Therefore, Woolf calls women writers to free themselves from all the constructions of masculinity having been formed according to its never-ending demands and needs. To be able to realize this, once they've set aside the problems of money and time, women writers need to overcome two obstacles: the shade of father, the patriarchal tradition lurking in the background, and the cliché of ideal womanhood, "Angel in the House", who does not have "a mind or a wish of her own" (Woolf, 1979, p. 59). For Woolf, killing the Angel should be considered a priority, because if she had not killed that 'angel', the angel would have killed her. Thus, it is a kind of self-defense; as Woolf puts it:

Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing. Thus, whenever I felt the shadow of her wing or the radiance of her halo upon my page, I took up the inkpot and flung it at her. She died hard. Her fictitious nature was of great assistance to her. It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality...Killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer (ibid, p. 59).

Once women writers get rid of the "perpetual admonitions" of the patriarchal male voice, their minds are free and "literature is open to [them]" (Woolf, 1929, p.63). Now, they can challenge the traditional representationalism in all forms and replace the rigid and authoritarian male sentence with the flexible and inclusive female one. In this connection, Woolf, in her review of *Revolving Lights*, praises Dorothy Richardson's style and her exploration of a unique feminine thought:

Miss Richardson has invented, or if she has not invented, developed and applied to her own uses, a sentence which we might call the psychological sentence of the feminine gender. It is a more elastic fiber than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes (1979, p.191).

Like Richardson, Woolf's sentence structure resists linear and conventional patterns of the narrative, so it disrupts the hierarchically structured patriarchal culture and its man-made language by using looser and more accretive sentences in accordance with the natural shape of the thoughts and feelings of women. To be able to incorporate

female experiences and concerns into literary works, and prove how language is the medium for construction of human 'self', Woolf challenges the ready-made grids of phallogocentric thinking and representationalism in all discourses in many ways. One of them is her deliberate attempt to penetrate into the "regions beneath" (1979, p.191) realism to be able to explore the inner and subjective reality of the female mind that has been overlooked by man-made language. For Woolf, the inner reality of the female mind is like atoms falling down:

Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness. Let us not take it for granted that life exists more fully in what is commonly thought big than in what is commonly thought small (1984, p.104).

In fact, considering this unpatterned and chaotic psychic reality as the shaping factor of her works, Woolf attempts to create a female language that is "capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes" (1979, p.191). She believes that feminine writing, with its less restricted and more subtle language, can represent experience that has not previously found representation in the male-dominated world. According to Woolf, this representation takes place when the ambiguous boundaries between identity and origin – or more precisely self and mother – blur and the wholeness has been achieved again. She gives the details of coming to this awareness in her memoir, *A Sketch of the Past*:

I was looking at the flowerbed by the front door; "That is the whole", I said. I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; that a ring enclosed what was the flower; and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower. It was a thought I put away as being likely to be very useful to me later (1985, p.71).

Apparently, the search for the lost mother and the desire of wholeness with her is the impetus behind Woolf's works. The 'invisible presence' of Julia Prinsep Duckworth Stephen has always inhabited and inspired Woolf. Thus, to be able to deeply understand her intentions concerning feminine writing, it is necessary to focus on the relationship with her mother while studying her texts. The rhythm and sound of the semiotic, a residue of the pre-imaginary, pre-Oedipal, pre-symbolic realm closely related with mother's body, is always underneath her language. By resisting the symbolic realm of language associated with the Name-of-the-Father, Woolf attempts to rediscover the *chora* through rhythm, sound, and color. Instead of using language simply for communication, she aims to recreate the experience and the sensation through descriptive language. Briefly, Woolf's usage of semiotic poetic language is one of the most defining features of her works. Throughout her texts, Woolf's characters try to find a way to move away from the phallogocentric language of the symbolic towards the fluid language of the semiotic, including all the sensual elements inspired by the maternal body: the auditory, visual, olfactory, and tactile. Upon re-establishing the fusional unity with primeval mother, they discover the inadequacy and limitations of

the phallogocentric language. From that moment, their only aim is to create their own language by transcending the rigid boundaries of that symbolic language.

However, Woolf is also aware of the dangers of becoming obsessed with the pre-Oedipal mother and its disastrous consequences. In one sense, she knows very well that she must commit 'matricide' to live (Kristeva, 1989), so she tries to demonstrate the dangers of attempting to return to the lost mother through her characters. In the meantime, Woolf also cannot resist 'the call of the mother' (Taylor, 2006). As a result, the only solution for her is to create women characters exploring the possibilities of bridging the symbolic and the semiotic. This is another important feature of her feminine writing. That is, by consolidating masculine and feminine elements, or in other words symbolic and semiotic elements, which are regarded as influential determinants in the process of the construction of subjectivity, she creates a new poetic language. In this way, Woolf facilitates the "multiplicity of meaning" (Moriconi, 1996, p. 8) by moving beyond the fixed confines of sexual differences. Thus, this new writing practice introduces a kind of "in-between" (Cixous, 1976, p. 883) writing with its emphasis on the connections, rather than the oppositions between woman and man. It is the unity of mind, or in Woolf's own words, "it is one of the tokens of the fully developed mind that it does not think specially or separately of sex". It is the '*androgynous mind*' that can be both "man-womanly, and ... woman-manly" (1929, p. 82- 83), which enhances freedom to think creatively and liberation from sexual prejudice in literature. As long as one is able to think androgynously, according to Woolf, "the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties" (ibid, p. 82) to disrupt the fixed and the hierarchical structures of language in favor of a more fluid, sophisticated and heteroglossic discourse.

In fact, these remarks of Woolf concerning the theory of androgyny – signaling a close affiliation with Kristeva's and Cixous's vision of bisexuality and the construction of shared poetic language – disrupt the symbolic structures of language, meaning, and writing by connecting both sexes, and thus, have paved the way for the French feminists and become the essential component of 'écriture féminine' that questions how language is highly responsible for the patriarchal construction of femininity. In nearly all her literary and non-literary works, Woolf endorses fluid, permeable and multiple identities that challenge the essentialist structure of the symbolic order and enjoy the sensations of the semiotic expression. In this creation process, her pursuit of a female language is the key point. She uses it as a tool to feel and experience sensation rather than solely for communication. It is not simply aesthetic but it also explores the deepest regions of her experience as a woman through metaphors and symbols. Knowing that the body is the realm of the self, Woolf – like the French scholars Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray, whose aspirations show uncanny parallels to the type of writing proposed by her – advocates that a woman should write and create with her maternal

body. She believes that when she takes her body as a fruitful source bearing in mind the symbiotic relations with her mother, there will be no restriction and she will find a new way to make her silenced voice heard. For Woolf, this new way is the 'literature':

Literature is open to everybody. ... there is no gate, no lock, no bolt, that you can set upon the freedom of my mind. ... No doubt we shall find her knocking that into shape for herself when she has the free use of her limbs; and providing some new vehicle, not necessarily in verse, for the poetry in her (1929, p. 65).

4.1.1. *Orlando*

Expression of female desire, which has been ignored and disguised in male texts, starts to puzzle Woolf again in *Orlando* (*O*, henceforth). She decides to explore that vast, private and unapproachable 'dark continent' so that she can articulate the unspeakable body and its desires. Knowing the inexpressibility of the female body and the parallel improbability of a female text through a borrowed man-made language, Woolf focuses on the ways of creating a female language that could express female desire. However, this is a long process paved with adversity since the first language available to women is a language of patriarchy. It seems that women have but two options to be able to involve into the male discourse: they may "remain outside entirely, and thus communicate in incomprehensible babble. ... *or* remain inside (or perhaps on the 'underside') of masculine discourse and imitate it" (Parkin-Gounelas, 1993, p. 142) (italic is mine). Woolf chooses neither of them and finds an alternative way to create the language that she seeks in *Orlando* by joining the polarized gender roles. Everything in *Orlando*, identities, polarities, and demarcations, coalesce into one and form the androgynous – "the man-womanly, and ... woman-manly" mind that is "fully fertilized and uses all its faculties" (Woolf, 1929, p. 82). Eventually, Woolf practices what she persistently praises in *A Room of One's Own*, and creates the character Orlando, who "operate[s] on both sides of the looking glass" (Parkin-Gounelas, 1993, p. 147).

At the beginning of the novel, Orlando's biographer feels obliged to "state the facts" (*O*, p. 32) because of the influence of the hegemonic masculinity, and gets irritated with his elusive subject, who does not fit in with any rules of time, gender, sexuality or pre-established patterns. Thus, not to let his subject "slip out of [his] grasp altogether" (ibid, p.125), he vainly tries to get a firm hold on Orlando. On the one hand, the biographer attempts to find a "single thread" (ibid, p.38) of personal identity for Orlando, but on the other hand, he is fascinated by Orlando's body, which encompasses all the features of masculine and feminine nature:

Thus, those who like symbols, and have a turn for the deciphering of them, might observe that though the shapely legs, the handsome body, and the well-set shoulders were all of them decorated with various tints of heraldic light, Orlando's face, as he threw the window open, was lit solely by the sun itself. . . . The red of the cheeks was covered with peach down; the down on the lips was only a little thicker than the down on the cheeks. The lips themselves were short and slightly drawn back over teeth of an exquisite and almond whiteness. Nothing disturbed the arrowy nose in its short, tense flight; the hair was dark, the ears small, and fitted closely to the head. But, alas, that these catalogues of youthful beauty cannot end without mentioning forehead and eyes. Alas, that people are seldom born devoid of all three; for directly we glance at Orlando standing by the window, we must admit that he had eyes like drenched violets, so large that the water seemed to have brimmed in them and widened them; and a brow like the swelling of a marble dome pressed between the two black medallions which were his temples (ibid, p. 8-9).

To the dismay of the biographer, who wants everything to be predictable and in its place, Orlando is full of "a thousand disagreeables" (ibid, p.9) due to the feminine natures of his manly body. The legs, lips and face of 'male' Orlando, which are described in accordance with the words that are most commonly associated with females, are wisely displayed to the reader in a subversive way. Through these variances from the accepted and promoted binary standards of sex and gender expectations, Woolf attains her aim and creates an androgynous personhood by "combin[ing] in one the strength of a man and a woman's grace" (ibid, p.65), which is echoed in her "*A Room of One's Own*", where she continuously questions the presumption that all human beings belong to one of two discrete gender categories – either masculine or feminine – that have been permanently determined on their basis of biological sex characteristics. However, with her "man-womanly" and "woman-manly" (Woolf, 1929, p.82) character, Woolf "celebrates an alternative aesthetic, an alternative model of self in *Orlando*" (Lokke, 1992, p.242) by mocking the masculinist phallogocentric sublime. Not only does she cancel the gender distinctions but she also refutes Freud's famous statement: "Anatomy is destiny" (Goodreads, 2013, *Quotable Quote*).

The notion of the androgyne is mostly based on the well-known myth of the formation of the two genders recorded in Plato's *Symposium*. The round, rolling and omnipotent creatures having two heads, four legs and arms as well as the two genders, threaten to surpass the gods. Therefore, they have been punished by being sliced into two isometric pieces, which forms the two genders:

In the first place, let me treat of the nature of man and what has happened to it; for the original human nature was not like the present, but different. The sexes were not two as they are now, but originally three in number; there was man, woman, and the union of the two, having a name corresponding to this double nature, which had once a real existence, but is now lost, and the word "Androgynous" is only preserved as a term of reproach. . . . So great that they dare to climb mount Olympus and challenge the gods themselves. Furious, the gods discuss what is to be done with these troublesome humans, and Zeus comes up with an ingenious solution: he will simply divide the humans in two, thus halving their strength. . . . At last, after a good deal of reflection, Zeus discovered a way. He said: "Methinks I have a plan which will humble their pride and improve their manners; men shall continue to exist, but I will cut them in two and then they will be diminished in strength and increased in numbers; this will have the advantage of making them more profitable to us" (Plato, 2013, p. 1017 - 1019).

These Platonic formulations of androgyny have passed on to the Romantics, especially to Coleridge, believing that "every great mind must be androgynous" (Goodreads,

2014, *Quotable Quote*). Then, twentieth-century writers influenced by these notions, including Woolf, try to explore and extend the idea of androgyny in their works. Contrary to the Gods leaving the 'Androgynous' creatures incomplete and distorted, Woolf has always clung fiercely to the unity of mind and claims that "the normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating" (1929, p.82). However, critics Jones (1994), Marcus (1987) and Brown (1984) assert that despite advocating the unity and balance of the mind, what Woolf actually offers is the female-centered type of androgyny. Woolf knows very well that, even in androgyny, the patriarchy would force the woman to either sacrifice her selfhood or remain as a negative 'other' existing within the male. Thus, in her androgynous symbolism, "femaleness is plainly its ideal" (Brown, 1984, p.200), and especially in *Orlando*, "the whole tenor of the work is to elevate femaleness at the expense of maleness" (ibid, p. 200). Having this fact in her mind, Woolf manages to subvert the long-established phallogocentric norms and gainsays the essentialist view of gender, stating 'anatomy is destiny', through the famous feminization process of Orlando that takes place during his stay in Turkey as ambassador to King Charles. In fact, Orlando's gender shift from masculine to feminine comes completely naturally, because it is not a kind of transformation but a realization of Orlando's female identity within herself/himself, so it is hardly a change:

Orlando had become a woman — there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity. Their faces remained, as their portraits prove, practically the same. His memory — but in future we must, for convention's sake, say 'her' for 'his,' and 'she' for 'he' — her memory then, went back through all the events of her past life without encountering any obstacle. Some slight haziness there may have been, as if a few dark drops had fallen into the clear pool of memory; certain things had become a little dimmed; but that was all. The change seemed to have been accomplished painlessly and completely and in such a way that Orlando herself showed no surprise at it (*O*, p.66-67).

Though the change is a natural fact for Orlando, her naked *female* body is represented as a veiled mystery when compared to the eloquent celebration of her 'male' body on the opening pages. The three ladies, 'Purity, Chastity and Modesty' struggle hard "to mitigate, to veil, to cover, to conceal, to shroud . . . the naked Orlando" (ibid, p.136) with their white garments. In fact, in this scene, Woolf reveals the myth of the unspeakable female body once again, and leaves the reader alone with those recurring questions: What is it that cannot be articulated in Orlando's body, and why does it have to be kept away from the male gaze by hiding beneath the veil? According to Showalter, the veil traditionally represents the hymen associated with female sexuality, "a kind of permeable border, an image of confinement and enclosure that is also extremely penetrable" (1991, p.148). Nevertheless, for Woolf, what is hidden beneath the veil is not the hymen symbolizing chastity and virginity, but Orlando's muffled "little clitoris" (Cixous, 1981, p. 43), the symbol of androgyny. Rediscovering of her clitoral nature, Orlando "stood upright in complete nakedness [...], and while trumpets pealed Truth!

Truth! Truth!” (*O*, p.65), the three veiling figures disappear from the scene as they “have no choice left but confess — he was a woman” (*ibid*, p.65). Now, it is time for Orlando to celebrate her hysteria, despite the Freudian notion claiming that the clitoral woman is hysteric. According to Freud, the female child has to undergo a maturation process that involves a move from clitoral (or masculine) eroticism to vaginal (or feminine) sexuality to become a woman. However, Orlando gets the utmost enjoyment of her ‘new experience’ and does not repress the pleasure of her clitoral nature as she understands fully that “hysteria ... is almost inevitable in female sexuality because of the double erogenous zones: one masculine, one feminine” (Kofman, 1985, p.37).

With the final depiction of the female Orlando, Woolf seems to suggest that Orlando has become a new type of woman, one who is able to explore the pleasures of both the sexes equally, because “she was man; she was woman; she knew the secrets, shared the weaknesses of each” (*O*, p.75). Now, with her new status providing the “dual personality” (Knopp, 1988, p.30), like the ‘clitoral jouissance’, Orlando is able to utilize her intellect and creativity thoroughly. She puts a strain on phallogocentric thinking and its man-made language, and liberates the self from any supposed determinism of the body through this dynamic and fluctuating quality of identity. Now, achieving the “greater ecstasy” (*O*, p.74), situating her outside the inheritance of any established style or language, Orlando realizes that what she seeks is not “Life and a lover” (*ibid*, p.87), “Life! A husband!” (*ibid*, p.113), which means maintaining the pre-existing codes of male dominance and female submission; but to live and write outside the patriarchal definitions and frame. However, as a woman, to write about female desires through a borrowed male language is like spitting in the wind, so Orlando has to invent her own language, “a kind of shorthand ... to carry on a dialogue with herself about this Beauty and Truth” (*ibid*, p.69).

Orlando finds the courage to write when she suddenly has discovered her ‘boyish, short dream’, ‘*The Oak Tree*’:

Orlando felt in the bosom of her shirt as if for some locket or relic of lost affection, and drew out no such thing, but a roll of paper, sea-stained, blood-stained, travel-stained — the manuscript of her poem, ‘*The Oak Tree*’. She had carried this about with her for so many years now, and in such hazardous circumstances that many of the pages were stained, some were torn ... She turned back to the first page and read the date, 1586, written in her own boyish hand. She had been working at it for close three hundred years now. It was time to make an end (*ibid*, p. 110).

Upon the discovery of her long-hidden poem, Orlando’s “floridity was chastened” (*ibid*, p.53) and she decides to “write, from this day forward, to please [herself]” (*ibid*, p. 49). The revival brings change and Orlando arrives at a protean state of writing with ‘*The Oak Tree*’ that revitalizes and cultivates her body. “She felt the bones of the tree running out like ribs from a spine this way and that beneath her” (*ibid*, p.150), which

makes her more spirited to write. Freeing from patriarchal patterns and its authoritarian language, Orlando experiences her first euphoric moments of creation:

She had no ink; and but little paper. But she made ink from berries and wine; and finding a few margins and blank spaces in the manuscript of ‘*The Oak Tree*’, managed by writing a kind of shorthand, to describe the scenery in a long, blank version poem ... This kept her extremely happy for hours on end (*ibid*, p.69).

As if she were performing a private ritual or in a secret act of self-discovery, Orlando starts writing her poem again. Her first lines, full of empty spaces and strange sights, seem incomprehensible to everyone except Orlando because of the new language she uses to articulate her newly found consciousness. With this new female language, she penetrates into the dark and private female chamber and initiates a change for the unspeakable female body and its desires. Despite being aware of the fact that writing, for a woman, “is to usurp a place, a discursive position she does not have by nature or by culture” (Lauretis, 1987, p.80), Orlando has a firm belief that she can plunge into man’s discourse and de(con)struct it to speak the female desire:

Orlando, it seemed, had a faith of her own. With all the religious ardour in the world, she now reflected upon her sins and the imperfections that had crept into her spiritual state. The letter S, she reflected, is the serpent in the poet’s Eden. Do what she would there were still too many of these sinful reptiles in the first stanzas of “*The Oak Tree*”. But “S” was nothing, in her opinion, compared with the termination “ing”. The present participle is the Devil himself, she thought (now that we are in the place for believing in Devils). To evade such temptations is the first duty of the poet ... We must shape our words till they are the thinnest integument for our thoughts (*O*, p.82).

The seductive immortal snake, Lilith, having lived since the first days of creation, like Eve and Lamia, seem to defile Orlando’s text initially. However, the female part of her dual personality helps her come to an important realization: the first women-snakes, disobeying the Law of Father, have provided women with the freedom to act by subverting the patriarchal patterns. Thus, for Orlando, “Eve becomes “Eve eating” the fruit, “Eve defying” patriarchy; Medusa likewise may become “Medusa laughing”, “Medusa defying” Perseus’ sword. The S and the verb, the woman in the moment of action, the “woman writing” her own story, becomes part of Orlando’s religion” (Kitsi-Mitakou, 1991, p.248). She gets out of the discourse of man and begins to feel the rhythm of her ‘female’ body that “fills [her] breasts with an urge to come to language and launches [her force] ... urges [her] to inscribe in language [her] woman’s style” (Cixous, 1976, p.882). Now, it is time for Orlando to overcome all the obstacles and make her poem emerge from obscurity:

The manuscript which reposed above her heart began shuffling and beating as if it were a living thing, and, what was still odder, and showed how fine sympathy was between them, Orlando, by inclining her head, could make out what it was that it was saying. It wanted to be read. It must be read. It would die in her bosom if it were not read. ... The violence of her disillusionment was such that some hook or button fastening the upper part of her dress burst open, and out upon the table fell ‘*The Oak Tree*’, a poem (*O*, p.127 - 130).

The poem refuses to remain unspoken, to be buried in eternal silence. Like the baby miraculously coming out of her mother’s womb, ‘*The Oak Tree*’ abruptly comes to life

from her bosom, which brings ‘the greater ecstasy’ for Orlando. At that moment, when the body and text are united, Orlando discovers her censored sexuality and regains “her native strength, [...] her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal (Cixous, 1976, p.880). After a long wait lasting for centuries, Orlando lets her breast, or rather her body, spawn and hatch the pearls adorning her neck during the whole journey of her self-discovery. Finally, she proves to be an eternal tale weaver, “a vast moon spider”, from whose eggs her future female texts will emerge:

‘Here! Shel, here!’ she cried, baring her breast to the moon (which now showed bright) so that her pearls glowed — like the eggs of some vast moon-spider. The aeroplane rushed out of the clouds and stood over her head. It hovered above her. Her pearls burnt like a phosphorescent flare in the darkness (*O*, p.152).

4.1.2. *To The Lighthouse*

Aptly-named as “a psychological poem” (Woolf, 1982, p. 102) by Leonard Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (*TTL*, henceforth) is considered by many critics to be one of the most influential novels written by Virginia Woolf. Moreover, since perhaps Woolf has woven a great deal of her personal experiences and unresolved issues with her deceased parents into the novel, *To the Lighthouse* is accepted as a semi-autobiographical work. In this masterpiece, Woolf aims to discharge that intensified psychic energy with two main characters based on her parents: Sir Leslie Stephen, who provides a model for Mr. Ramsay, “... sitting in a boat, reciting *We Perished, Each Alone*, while he crushes a dying mackerel” (Woolf, 1982, p. 75), and Julia Stephen, a model for Mrs. Ramsay, staying “there... in the very center... from the very first” (Woolf, 1985, p. 81). Woolf, obsessed with her parents, admits that she has to write this novel, *To the Lighthouse*, to release herself from them, especially from her mother:

I wrote the book very quickly; and when it was written, I ceased to be obsessed by my mother. I no longer hear her voice; I do not see her. I suppose that I did for myself what psychoanalysts do for their patients. I expressed some very long felt and deeply felt emotion. And in expressing it I explained it and then laid it to rest (1985, p. 81).

To the Lighthouse is a kind of journey for Woolf, a metaphoric journey to her own past, to the maternal space and semiotics from the phallogocentric symbolic order. In fact, Woolf has to set out on that journey to distinguish her self-identity from that of her identity with the mother, but she cannot resist the attraction of this complex relationship and always finds herself being drawn “into its orbit not only as a daughter but as a writer” (Rosenman, 1986, p.15). Thus, like in many other works, Woolf aims to regress back to the beginning, also in *To the Lighthouse* to re-experience and re-create the early experiences of semiotic chora full of ecstasy and rapture. As she writes in *A Sketch of the Past*, achieving that satisfaction “is only a question of discovering how we can get ourselves again attached to it, so that we shall be able to live our lives

through from the start” (1985, p.67). Briefly, by descending into a realm of semiotic fluid that spilled over the restraints of symbolic language, Woolf seeks the secret essence that she carries within her throughout the novel, particularly in relation to the mother, represented by Mrs. Ramsay.

Mrs. Ramsay, like Julia Stephen, is a typical Victorian woman who has sacrificed herself for the sake of her husband and children. She is the ‘Angel in the House’, who “warmed and soothed” (*TTL*, p.41) everybody around her with her maternal realm, especially her children, who long for the secure world of the chora and semiotics. She is the looking glass, “possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size” (Woolf, 1929, p.30) not just for her husband, Mr. Ramsay, desiring “to be assured of his genius, ... to be taken within the circle of life, ... to have his senses restored” (*TTL*, p.32), but she also provides solace to her guests:

[Mr. Tansley] should have been a great philosopher, said Mrs. Ramsay, ... but he had made an unfortunate marriage. It flattered him; snubbed as he had been, it soothed him that Mrs. Ramsay should tell him this. Charles Tansley revived. Insinuating, too, as she did the greatness of man’s intellect, even in its decay, ... she made him feel better pleased with himself than he had done yet (*ibid*, p.9).

Despite all her efforts of self-sacrifice and surrender, Mrs. Ramsay is sometimes faced with dilemmas and serious doubts about her marriage. In some certain moments, “when, in a state of mind... half plaintive, half resentful, she seemed unable to surmount the tempest calmly, or to laugh as they laughed, but in her weariness perhaps concealed something. She brooded and sat silent” (*ibid*, p. 168). She thinks that her entire life is in vain. In fact, Mrs. Ramsay feels like she has a split personality represented by two kinds of body – the ‘body for others’, “the body cast in social roles and bound by the laws of social interaction”, and the ‘visionary body’, “a second physical presence in fundamental respects different from the gendered body constituted by the dominant social order” (Hite, 2000, p.1). When she is alone and isolates herself from everything – her husband, children and chores – she feels that her visionary body “offer[s] an inviolable place for momentary but definitive experience” (Hite, 2000, p.17). In those times, Mrs. Ramsay sees the light reflected from the lighthouse:

... the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call ... but for all that she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotized, as if it were stroking with its silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight, she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness, and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough! (*TTL*, p.54).

With the touching of the light, Mrs. Ramsay has reached beyond the limits of a ‘dark continent’, which has been defined as uncanny and a threatening place for women by the phallogocentric tradition. However, there, she experiences jouissance and freedom, not fear and uncertainty. She feels as if her body was fluid, which cannot be controlled

or shaped. Unfortunately, this 'exquisite happiness and ecstasy' do not last long, because Mr. Ramsay, regarding his wife just as a body that merely belongs to him, realizes the change in Mrs. Ramsay. He senses the threat of her new 'fluid body', which will "deform, propagate, evaporate, consume him, to flow out of him and into another who cannot easily be held on to" (Irigaray, 1985b, p.237). Fearing the loss of his authority over his wife, Mr. Ramsay turns up the heat. All the strength and energy of Mrs. Ramsay is absorbed "by the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of the male, which smote mercilessly, again and again, demanding sympathy" (TTL, p.32). Very soon, she cannot resist being the 'body for others', and her quest for truth ends in unconditional surrender to Mr. Ramsay, like "a bride to meet her lover" (ibid, p.53). In that way, by letting her husband exploit her body, Mrs. Ramsay has no staying power and dies unexpectedly.

By exemplifying two different bodily experiences of Mrs. Ramsay, Woolf tries to prove how the phallogocentric world and its typical patriarchal system mold and ideologically program women's bodies. With this controlling idea in her mind, she challenges and subverts women's body image largely influenced by false assumptions of male opinions, and creates sensuous and passionate female characters who remain aloof from the unresolved problems of motherhood and love affairs. These female characters, having the modernist body, or in other words, the 'visional body', represent "an inspired solution to the problems of women's culturally sanctioned vulnerability" (Hite, 2000, p.6). Woolf creates that body, "sealed off from social consequences, secure from interruption or invasion" (Hite, 2000, p.6), through the character 'Lily'. Unlike Mrs. Ramsay, representing the typical Victorian woman, Lily does not align with the ideologies of the mentioned period. She is "an independent little creature" (TTL, p.15), who deals with art and artistic creation instead of getting married and having children. In this respect, in *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf has laid foundations for transforming the patriarchal 'docile body' into the 'fluid body' that cannot be controlled or shaped, and kills the 'Angel' in the house and creates the female modernist body, or in other words, the 'visionary body' so as to reach the states of enlightenment and transcendence.

Women, defined as an 'incomplete man' or an 'incidental being' that lacks certain qualities, have internalized the patriarchal ideology, claiming that women are essentially insufficient. Considering themselves as the insignificant 'Other' in relation to men, who are the 'Absolute', women are full of self-loathing and shame over their bodies. Thus, always seeking men's approval, women drown out the inner voice of their bodies and resort to being 'the body for others'. However, for Woolf, it is a self-destruction not a salvation. She claims women have to get rid of those docile bodies and disembodied minds to be able to take control of their own lives cleared from all the social constraints, society constructed gender roles and patriarchal demands; that

is, from all the reductive systems of masculine confinement and oppressive language. For Woolf, this is only possible when women assert themselves through their bodies, as it is "one's body feeling, not one's mind" (ibid, p.148). She believes that once a woman reclaims her body, she eventually realizes a new sense of being inside her that is powerful and autonomous ready to actualize its potential as a whole and healthy person. Thus, Woolf encourages women to resist the patriarchal representations of their bodies and accept the fact that their body is an essential aspect of self-expression.

Correspondingly, Lily, who cannot complete her painting however hard she tries, understands that she needs a new way to express her feelings and spiritual energy, which is not controlled through the moral codes of phallogocentrism and its man-made language. This new way is her body, as the place of self-expression, as Woolf states in *A Room of One's Own*: "No doubt we shall find her knocking that into shape for herself when she has the free use of her limbs; and providing some new vehicle (1929, p. 65). Realizing this fact, Lily stops considering her body as an obstacle and sets it free:

Then, as if some juice necessary for the lubrication of her faculties were spontaneously squirted, she began precariously dipping among the blues and umbers, moving her brush hither what and thither, ... with some rhythm which was dictated to her. ... she lost consciousness of outer things, and her name and her personality and her appearance, ... her mind kept throwing up from its depths, scenes, and names, and sayings, and memories and ideas, like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues (TTL, p. 134).

Only when Lily decides to trace her body does she feel the rhythm of her 'visional body', and trembles in "a painful but exciting ecstasy" (ibid, p.132). Gradually, with the help of those rhythms, what seems like "ghost, air, nothingness ... a center of complete emptiness" (ibid, p.149) at the beginning of her journey becomes clear, and Lily lifts the veil of the mystery. Now, she understands very well that this "white space" is the maternal body, which is a rich and fertile terrain for creation. Realizing this fact, Lily decides to find her lost mother and re-establish the dual union through which she can obtain the feeling of wholeness and creative spirit, because only then she will be able to complete her masterpiece, which is not "single and solitary births; ... *but* the outcome of many years of thinking in common" (Woolf, 1929, p.55) (*italic is mine*). Desiring to seek a mode of representation outside of the father's symbolic universe, the only way for Lily to explore and describe the archaic and primary relation to 'the maternal feminine' (Irigaray, 1985b) is to paint in 'white ink'. For this purpose, she affiliates with her figurative mother, Mrs. Ramsay, who will nourish her with all that she needs.

In fact, by focusing on the reintegration with the lost mother and her maternal body, Woolf aims to de(con)struct the ignorant patriarchal gaze over the mother-daughter and/or woman to woman relationship in *To The Lighthouse*, because she believes that women are "confidantes, ... mothers and daughters" (Woolf, 1929, p.69). To clarify

the problems of the patricentric texts, she interrogates Freud and Lacan's arguments on the pre-Oedipal structure, and prognosticates the matricentric theory as a gateway to the symbolic register (Abel, 1989) like Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva (as a pioneer of them). Unlike Freud and Lacan, advocating the complete separation from a mother for a successful individuation, Woolf believes that nothing is required to be repressed. She identifies the fourth dimension of human life in which one can obtain the lost unity with the mother again: "I mean: I: & the not I: & the outer & the inner [...] New combinations in psychology & body – rather like painting" (Woolf, 1982, p.353). What Woolf emphasizes with the fourth dimension is the mother's womb, or the chora, "a receptacle of all becoming" (Kristeva, 1980, p.38) that offers equal chances to both sexes. It is not a place of emptiness or mystery but a place of production. When Lily comes to term with this fact, she "[goes] on tunneling her way into her picture, into the past" (*TTL*, p. 145), like Woolf does during her creation process. There, she returns to the pre-oedipal phase of 'unity' with the mother and identifies with Mrs. Ramsay, representing the mother archetype that promises the primordial unity. With this unification, Lily Briscoe resolves her own insecurities and comes to peace with the memory of the deceased Mrs. Ramsay. Now, it is the right time for Lily to complete her painting:

Quickly, as if she were recalled by something over there, she turned to her canvas. There it was—her picture. Yes, with all its greens and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempt at something. It would be hung in the attics, she thought; it would be destroyed. But what did that matter? She asked herself, taking up her brush again. She looked at the steps; they were empty; she looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision (ibid, p.176).

Lily finishes her painting just after "peace had come" (ibid, p. 120). She, at last, finds the way to express her body's feelings that have been inexpressible before, and transforms what seems indefinite and absent into the certitude and properness of a vision. In other words, Lily succeeds in making "the shadow on the step" (ibid, p. 170) visible and turns it into a sign of presence. It is not just somebody but Mrs. Ramsay, the primary source of everything. She is still part of the "picture" Lily seeks. Thus, by catching the essence of Mrs. Ramsay, Lily Briscoe finally manages to conceptualize Woolf's vision at the end of the novel. She transfers what she sees into a form. That is, she makes visible the world's invisible form by uncovering the language of art. That language, purified from the patriarchal ideologies and male gaze, erases all the binaries and creates a new image of the female body defined by female experience. It puts an end to the rule of phallic authority and logocentrism over the female body, and lets this visional body assert itself in Lily and her attitude towards life and art. Her body, urged by "a curious physical sensation" (ibid, p. 133) to paint, connects with the rhythms of the mother's womb, or the semiotic chora that always ensures peace and truth along with the primordial unity. Through this unity and the pre-linguistic experience with

the mother, Lily Briscoe ascertains her transcendent vision and manages to reach the maternal jouissance, the source of aesthetic revolution, and violates the constraints of the symbolic discourse by "connect[ing] *the* mass on the right hand with that on the left" (ibid, p. 44). (the italic is mine).

4.2. Erendiz Atasü's Pursuit of a Female Language

The concept of 'woman' has always had an utmost importance in the all works of Erendiz Atasü, who acts responsibly towards social and political issues, and considers literature as being one of the most significant fields to question and understand life. She does not deny the fact that a writer has a multilayered identity, but unlike the writers who advocate that literature has no sex by claiming 'I write as a human being, not just as a woman', Atasü describes herself as a 'woman writer' and explains why the issue of woman is very important for herself as in the following quote:

I write to be able to understand and give voice to women, my fellows, who have been ignored and subordinated. I write, never forgetting that I am a woman. Women, having been silenced for thousands of years, need to find their own voices, not to repeat what they have been taught and dictated so far. They need to express and transfer their demands, repressed feelings, opinions and lives – trapped inside the patriarchal system – to the collective consciousness of humanity through their own words (Atasü, 2014, p.33)

In addition, Atasü points to the fact that the concept of women's literature does not only cover the texts created for women, just because they include and explain women's experiences, personal lives and the problems they have faced. For her, real women's literature, by relying on feminine consciousness in any case, "question[s] and transform[s] the patriarchy within the elegance and beauty of literature" (ibid, p.34), no matter what the issue is.

For centuries, women have been defined and shaped in accordance with German 3 K: 'Kinder, Küche, and Kirche'. This phrase, which can be translated as 'children, kitchen, church', and equivalent phrases such as 'barefoot and pregnant, good wife and wise mother' were used to define ideal female roles in a patriarchal society. However, whenever women start to question the validity of these kinds of labels and attempt to get rid of those derogatory connotations, men take the floor and raise objections against the disobedience of women relying on the long-established patriarchal norms dictating that 'a woman's place is in the home'. Men also claim women's experiences and domestic lives are very simple and insignificant that they have no place in the public sphere dominated by males. Nonetheless, for Erendiz Atasü, "female experiences are the raw stuff of literature, like other experiences and human natures" (Atasü, 2001, p.17).

Unfortunately, as soon as someone talks about ‘female experiences and/or lives’, the first thing that comes into the mind is female body and sexuality, which is “wrapped and secluded” (Atasü, 2009, p.133). Men, relying on the supremacy and primacy provided by the patriarchal ideologies, are accustomed to defining a woman and her body as a sexual object, which is readily offered for the male gaze and abuse. Thus, she cannot make any decisions concerning her own body, and eventually, she becomes estranged from that body. Since she believes that she is unable to become an autonomous subject, she starts to repress and deny her bodily desires in time. For Atasü, the most important role of a woman writer is to reveal this paradoxical contradiction, and raise awareness among women to challenge and de(con)struct it. To be able to put this into action, in addition to the feminist perspectives questioning the patriarchal system and its norms, a woman writer must be free of the man-made language, formed in accordance with the dominant ideologies, and create a ‘female language’ through which she can better express her emotional and bodily experiences. Erendiz Atasü explains why a woman / a woman writer needs a ‘female language’ as in the following:

When one refuses to suffice by expressing the experience of a female body between the lines, like a vague shadow, but attempts to actually narrate it using words, one has to face the challenging rudeness of language which needs to be broken in order to create a female discourse; let alone the difficult task of shaping into words an ages old silence of feelings and sensations. I daresay all the languages of the world would force a woman writer to create a new discourse if she dares write about sexuality. I wonder if there exists any language that does not contain words of scorn for the female body and female sexual experience (Atasü, n.d., *Bir Kadın Edebiyatı Var Mıdır?*, erendizatasu.com).

As long as a woman writer keeps on writing with that man-made language, humiliating her bodily desires and experiences, she can never be totally free to express herself. What’s more, when she attempts to write herself, she will feel as if she spoke a foreign language (Burke, 1978). Hence, all women must get rid of the current man-made language, which is full of male erotomania, and possess a ‘female language’ that will let women find their own creative energy.

According to Atasü, it is obvious that a female language will differ a lot from a man-made language, because women writers’ approaches to plot, discourse, and imagery tend to display qualities distinct from those of men. She exemplifies this point in one of her novels, *The Real Life of Güneş Saygılı*, with the following quotation, in which the sexual relationship of men and women is defined based on the female and male perspectives respectively:

He - tiny, impatient, zippy, left out in the cold – is longing for acceptance leering his tail by standing near a round and calm egg cell. (...) Think it is so feminine? Here is the masculine one! The dauntless creature rushed forward cracking the whip, and turned up to the portcullis to be invaded by canonizing of his ancestors! (...) You liked it? (Atasü, 2011, p.289).

Erendiz Atasü here indicates how men fancying themselves to be right at everything, an unfair claim resulting from the reinforced ideology of male power and phallocentrism,

manipulate and use language for their own benefits. Man-made language, having been constructed according to masculine ideologies, has considered ‘man’ as the absolute power in everything, especially in shaping sexual identities where women have been defined as ‘deficient’ (Spender, 1990). However, Atasü has her readers think long and hard about these sexual assumptions. By integrating the poetic imagery emanating from “literary production” with metaphors of positive science achieved from “scientific knowledge” (Yüksel, 2014, p.48), she tries to raise awareness among her readers helping them gain a different viewpoint. Contrary to popular beliefs and internalized sexism, Atasü proves that women can stop being defined as an ‘object’ for the male gaze and exist as a ‘subject’ with a specific language that belongs to them. It is a more active, disobedient and heteroglossic ‘female language’, which unchains women from all the mental and bodily limitations and sanctions. In other words, it is a ‘poetic language’ that prevents “the distance between body and mind” (Atasü, 2009, p.vii).

Unlike a male writer engraving his works with ‘black ink’ as if he was “sow[ing] the semenotic blank ink onto the feminine page” (Simons, 2011 p.259) to make his lineage and power continue, a woman writer writes with ‘white ink’, or as what Cixous has termed with “mother’s milk” in *The Laugh of Medusa* (1976), to subvert his authority by putting the feminine sensuality and bodily desires into circulation. Atasü is also one of these women writers, and like Cixous and Irigaray, she claims trying to write with a man-made language, which humiliates and ignores the female body and sexuality, disrupts the creation process and makes things hard for a writer. That is why; the theme of female sexuality becomes more of an issue in her works; as she puts it:

I know women have some sexual experiences that make them aghast and disillusioned. Yet, I can say that these are not confessed easily by women, and men have no idea about them. What prompts me to write about these unspoken areas is to make the experiences of females visible and clear through the help of a fictional work within the bounds of its own genre. Concerning these issues, in my opinion, women writers have a great responsibility and they should always be at the forefront, because sexuality is private. And it is so difficult to verbalize the sexual experiences. I think it is much easier for a writer to figure out the appropriate words. (Atasü, n.d., *The Author’s Ideas about Women Fiction*, erendizatasu.com).

To sum up, whenever a woman writer accepts the fact that the existing language has been ideologically constructed by the patriarchal systems, she will get closer to ‘female language’ and explore the possibilities of ‘making silence speak’. For Atasü, the principal source of that language is the female body. Having similar views with Cixous, claiming that “censor[ing] the body ... censor[s] breath and speech at the same time” (Cixous, 1976, p. 880), Atasü advocates the expression of a female body in its own language. That is why; the first priority of a female writer is to resist against the male supremacy exacerbated by patriarchal ideologies and its man-made language. Then, she must try to hear the silenced voices of those ignored and humiliated bodies, and make their songs heard again. As long as she can achieve this aim, women will be able to unchain from the constraints of the Father’s language and speak freely without

shame about their bodily desires and instinctive experiences. To summarize, through this new ‘female language’ that facilitates their individuation process, women will stop feeling ashamed of their bodies and reach for the wholeness and integrity they long for by getting rid of the constructions of the man-made language. Most importantly, rather than being a passive object for the male gaze, they will be a self-determined subject of their own body and destiny, thereby diminishing the distance between body and the mind.

4.2.1. *That Scorching Season of Youth*

Gençliğin O Yakıcı Mevsimi (1999), translated as *That Scorching Season of Youth* (SSY, henceforth), the second novel of Erendiz Atasü, is a poetic work where the suppressed, censored and ‘locked up female body’ starts to speak out freely, rather than following the phallogocentric rules of the Father’s Language. With Atasü’s own words, this novel is “the sexual experiences of a female body”, through which women and women writers try to utter what has remained unspoken so far, despite men and male writers regarding the explicit expression of sexual experiences of a female body as demonic and uncontrolled lust. During these sexual experiences of a female body, Erendiz Atasü has created real female characters holding no fears of pursuing their sexual desires unlike the ones defined and illustrated by male writers as something “veiled in an impenetrable obscurity owing to their conventional secretiveness and insincerity” (Freud, 1971, p. 63).

Thus, AyşeAysu and Tomris, the female protagonists of the novel, are considered a bit strange and mysterious within the male-dominant society as they defy their prescribed gender roles, thereby feeling alone and insecure. These two highbrow women, having medical educations and good careers, have realized that it is high time they nourished their bodies as well as their minds. Therefore, they plunge into a quest to be in touch with their bodies autonomously. In this quest, sexual needs and desires take first place unlike their predecessors. However, it is difficult for these women, whose bodies have been denied and ignored for ages, to “have sexual intercourse *and* get sexual maturity without sensual confusion and contradiction, *because*, dilemmas mark the development process of the literary novel characters – either female or male” (Menteşe, 2000, p.11-15) (italics are mine).

These dilemmas emanating from ‘mind-body’ dualism are effectually displayed through ‘AyşeAysu’, who evokes two different women in one body: ‘Ayşe’ is the traditional and ‘Aysu’ is the modern one. Erendiz Atasü, with this deliberate choice, aims to draw the reader’s attention to the fact that women have acquiesced and internalized mind and body conflicts through male discourses, dictations or more precisely, all forms of

male-domination over the female individuals. Ayşe, representing the traditional and rational side, aspires to start a relationship with her colleague, Fethi, who is about to divorce his wife. However, she feels awkwardly bashful:

It is so difficult for a bashful woman to reach a man... First, while crossing the bridge from childhood to youth, you are caught up and isolated in a cell built up by tales and rhymes of chastity. Next, they expect you to walk out of the quarantine as a pleasant, smiling woman (SSY, p.58 - 59).

That smiling woman is ‘Aysu’, evoking the female body and sexuality. Aysu, who never fears love and its fleshly desires, silences ‘Ayşe’ and suppresses all her dreads. The desires of the ‘body’ override the ‘mind’, and AyşeAysu “realize[s] her breasts aching with a sudden revival ... the fathomless and dormant silence moving ...” (ibid, p.35) as soon as she sees Fethi, who is “a smiling brunette man, like a sun, with a slender and graceful build” (ibid, p.35). Then, she “notice[s] that agonizing desire, creeping into her perineum through the thighs... stuck between the smoldering coal shed and the ice crystal” (ibid, p.12). For once, AyşeAysu will not ignore her fleshly desires, unlike her predecessors. She is determined to try her best not to lose that long-expected “body and mind” (ibid, p.61) unity, by messing around “membranous thresholds” (ibid, p.60), because she believes wholeheartedly in the equality of men and women in “this sensual dream ...stirr[ing] like a groundswell in depth” (ibid, p.29). AyşeAysu, having a new lease on her life, thinks that “their bodies *are able to* remove all former prejudices” (ibid, p.29) (italics are mine).

Unfortunately, before long, she has come to realize sadly that Fethi “*cannot* notice the upheavals going on in [her] body” (italic is mine) because of “the hunger raging in his own flesh” (SSY, p.37). Despite upholding the gender equality within the society, Fethi finds AyşeAysu too ‘demanding’, as she also aspires to “touch [him]” (ibid, p.74) by following the desires and passions of her body. Extremely surprised, Fethi gives her a stern warning: “Women do not touch, but are felt up!” (ibid, p.75). Having been brought up in a patriarchal family structure, where he has internalized the man-made ideologies, behavioral codes and man-made language, Fethi is accustomed to the kind of women that are obedient and passive servants in a private life. More precisely, for open-minded Fethi, women must keep on being a sexual objectification of the male gaze and they should never dare to be the autonomous subject, who can ‘touch’ by experiencing the liberation and passions of their ‘forbidden’ bodies.

AyşeAysu, whose body is humiliated and trivialized, “stand[s] aghast like pieces of a broken body swept away” (ibid, p.75). She feels as if she were just “flesh and bones”, but then she realizes that “it was not [her] flesh that hurt, but [her] inner being that [Fethi’s] grabby hands refused to reach, and [her] emotions smashed by his hands hurt with a physical pain” (ibid, p.75). Once again, the actual treatment of male supremacy

and “the man-made language, bearing the traces of a patriarchal society that humiliates a woman, her female body and sexuality” (Atasü, 2009, p.144) seals women as passive and submissive nurturers, and shatters the unity of her mind and body irrecoverably. Unlike Fethi, who just cares about “puffing on a cigarette” (ibid, p.76) after his awestruck “triumph” (ibid, p.75), AyşeAysu is in a struggle for “making sense of her unexpected misery that invades and eats away her feelings and muscles” (ibid, p.76). The only explanation that Fethi comes up with for her ‘misery’ is AyşeAysu feels guilt-ridden due to the indiscreet affair between them. However, AyşeAysu honestly admits that what she has done is “of her own freewill” (ibid, p.76). She gives herself up to bodily passions, in contrast to what is expected of a woman. Now, she is so sure that “nothing will be same in her life passing in the tunnel” (ibid, p.77). She will survive and keep existing despite oppressive male discourse and conditions offering no place for women, because “[...] the wheel of patriarchy, seeming like it will not ever end, has stopped and another wheel has started to operate: the wheel of time and experience specific to women” (Koyuncu, 2014, p.173).

Even though her first experience in the ‘tunnel’ has ended in disappointment, AyşeAysu has stepped across the ‘threshold’. She meets her *body*, hidden behind her *mind* until then, and “the conflict between the two parts come[s] to an end” (ibid, p. 183). From now on, she is neither ‘virtuous and sexless Ayşe’, having been limited by her mind, nor ‘unchaste and vamp Aysu’, living in a body defined by male dominant ideologies. AyşeAysu rejects all these rigid patriarchal binaries, and tries to be a ‘whole’ woman with her mind and body despite her unpleasant experience in the ‘tunnel’. Upon breaking the taboos molding her female body, AyşeAysu regains authority over her body and its desires, and comes to realize what she really wants: “to seek for the non-created language of the unexpressed experiences and contribute to the creation of this language” (Direnc, 2014, p.90). However, it is “a great and suffering struggle” (SSY, p.154) to find words that can describe the sexuality of an ignored, suppressed and humiliated female body under the influence and siege of the man-made language. AyşeAysu comes off victorious from that fearful struggle in the tunnel by “transforming her unsatisfied and frozen desire, like an ice crystal, to a piece of diamond” (ibid, p.154). For AyşeAysu, everything starts with ‘awareness of her body’. She turns the page to a new life, and puts an end to “the inconsistency persistent between the fleshly desires of her body and rational mind” (Atasü, 2009, p.47). At last, AyşeAysu is a ‘whole woman’, managing to reach a state of bodily and mental integration:

A metamorphosis, among the layers of life. Just as the metamorphic rocks in the bosom of the earth, all the cells of the tunnel have also experienced a change ... The ice crystal has turned into a piece of diamond... And you have attained the eternal youth! ... It is sturdy, you can trust it... your creativity never melts away. A diamond is the most enduring mind (SSY, p.153).

The other female character, whose life and sexual experiences in the tunnel are portrayed, is Dr. Tomris – the older friend of AyşeAysu. Tomris is the wife of Turhan, the chief resident in Psychiatry. He is both a highly respected and feared figure for everyone in the chamber. However, Tomris does not like being defined as ‘Turhan’s wife’, and refuses to be limited by this patriarchal definition, because what really matters for Tomris is to “survive”. She does not like “submission and passivity” (ibid, p. 47). Feeling trapped between the patriarchal gender roles and her own true self, Tomris arranges her life in such a way as to minimize dilemmas, and decreases the number of days spent together in her husband’s works place. Thus, she aims to “protect her basic and fundamental component” (ibid, p.47).

Tomris and Turhan decide to get married during one of their night watches. It is a sudden knee-jerk decision, that’s why their marriage is on shaky ground. In their relationship, Turhan is always occupied “ministering” (ibid, p.47) to Tomris, who would rather have a relationship high in intimacy and passion. There has always been “an impermeable membrane wall” (Atasü, 2009, p. 42) between them, which brings forth the spurious experience’s lack of “real physical and emotional bond of man and woman” (ibid, p.42). The major reason for this is that Turhan, who likes being bossy and interfering, “does not like that living matter which cannot be dominated” (SSY, p. 67). Her unsatisfied desires resulting from their passionless sex life seriously damages their relationship. In fact, both of them sense the shadow of coolness arising, but Tomris is the one most and deeply psychologically affected. She gradually becomes estranged from her own body, and in the last instance, she starts to abhor anything related to her body. Fortunately, Tomris gets the chance to put an end to this miserable life, “passing in the tunnel like a slave, locked and held captive in her own body” (ibid, p. 67) with her colleague Can, who teaches her “not to detest the body”(ibid, p.67):

The man’s tongue was feeling up the areas, not having been touched before – even by her husband’s hands, soaking the feathers and unveiling the tissues. The woman was standing and the man was kneeling down in front of her. What functions or actions of nature would be disgusting! .. (ibid, p. 68).

Tomris’s position and attitude towards sexuality has changed. “This unfamiliar and cold body”, having been always in agony and despair in the presence of a male body, starts to “get more intimate” (ibid, p. 71) and closes the distance with her mind. For the first time in her life, Tomris feels that she is a complete woman with her mind and body, like AyşeAysu. She achieves this long-awaited integrity when she lets her body experience its fleshly desires purified from any guilt or shame. Freedom comes with the re-discovery of the body. Tomris realizes that she cannot comply with society constructed gender roles anymore, so she refuses to be “a cheerful mother, submissive wife, friend, lover, *or a diligent physician resigning herself to work*” (ibid, p. 66) (italic is mine). Now, as an ‘integrated’ woman that exhibits a real mind and body unity,

Tomris takes firm action and extricates herself from the passivized woman, who “has been comfortable in her ignored body for eighty, ninety years – without touching or letting him touch ... taking a morbid pleasure in controlling her body” (ibid, p. 71).

By the end of their self-discovery journey, AyşeAysu and Tomris, the protagonists of *That Scorching Season of Youth*, have become ‘the knowing subject’ by resisting passivation and ‘objectification’ of their female bodies. They finally put an end to the repetitive denial of their autonomy by the dominant male power, and give voice to their bodies as the site of self-awareness and self-esteem – not as the origin of guilt and shame. AyşeAysu and Tomris “break the patriarchal mold and become integrated” (Koyuncu, 2014, p.183). For Atasü, to obtain this integrity and the feeling of completeness is a very painful process for women, especially “with a language that bears traces of the patriarchal discourse of male-dominated circles, bound up with devaluation of woman, her body and sexuality... above all, in prose fiction” (2009, p.144), because with that man-made language, female sexuality is condemned to remain unspoken again. Thus, Atasü asserts that a writer needs a poetic and figurative language, which “combines the sexual desire and affection; the dream of lust and act of flesh” (ibid, p.40) to be able to bear out the sexual hypocrisy and double standards of the man-made language. This language, liberated from the humiliating phallogocentric discourse, is the ‘female language’ reminding women that their bodies are not male commodities or sexual objects deserving an excessive amount of scrutiny, but knowing and willing ‘subjects’.

According to Erendiz Atasü, who tries to write in a masculine world, where everything is based on male superiority and dominance, the sole purpose of women writers is to challenge the man-made language. She believes that “as long as a woman writer gets through the patriarchal discourse, she will be able to get into women literature” (2009, p.144). *That Scorching Season of Youth* is a poetic and figurative work written in accordance with these feminine principles. It de(con)structs masculinized writing and its man-made language through the rediscovery of the female body, the source for the female voice. Atasü, in a distinctive discourse peculiar to her, portrays the undefinable and unrepresentable female body and its inarticulate desires, purged from any feelings of shame and guilt, in such a way that readers never feel unsettled and agitated while reading the experiences of the female characters. On the contrary, Atasü offers a more sensible reading both for readers and other writers, through the female language that has multiple meanings, “not limited to but including the speaking feminine, speaking of and to women, speaking as women-subject, an action or speech by or on behalf of women” (Irigaray, 2008, p.130). For instance, the metaphors of ‘tunnel’ and ‘diamond’ that symbolize, respectively, the “vagina and unsatisfied desire” (Atasü, 2009, p.149), and the transformation of this unsatisfied desire into ‘creativity’, encourage women to de(con)struct the body image discourse, conceptualized on the basis of masculine

parameters and its phallogocentric gaze. Now, it is time for women to hear their inner voice hidden in the depths of the body and “create alternative discourses of femininity by object[ing] to male-imposed definitions” (Berkday, 1995, p. 216). To demolish the socially constructed notions of femininity and reconstruct the new ones is only possible through liberating and integrating female language and feminine writing, which “denaturalizes, destabilizes, and defamiliarizes *male-imposed* sex and gender signs” (Garber, 1997, p.147) (italic is mine) accompanied by a jouissance.

Believing the body is a powerful tool in the shaping of identities, Erendiz Atasü adopts this fact as a principle in all her works, especially in *That Scorching Season of Youth*. While writing this novel, she never molds women’s sexuality, sensuality or emotions into socially acceptable patterns, but rather challenges institutionalized male sexual dominance and female sexual submission. Being aware of the fact that she herself is a woman, Atasü makes belittled, ignored and silenced women’s experiences visible, and “lances them with the sharp determined pencil of her lights” (2009,p.149) (italics are mine). Ultimately, she unveils the masqueraded female sexuality and ends the sexual violations of captive females through the feminine principles and its female language.

4.2.2. *A Midlife Dream*

A Midlife Dream (2002), (*MD*, henceforth) at first glance, reminds the reader of *The Wren*, one of the canonical texts of Turkish literature, written by Reşat Nuri Güntekin. In fact, considering its theme and the characters, the parallelism between the two texts cannot be denied. Atasü uses Güntekin’s novel as a sub-text and takes the advantage of her reader’s interests by including this similarity within her novel:

They had turned *Feride the Wren* into a game they played between themselves. Sedat was quite a bit older than Feride, so he naturally adopted the role of Dr. Hayrullah, the elderly man Feride eventually marries, but never sleeps with, in the novel. In their version, though, there was no Kamuran, Feride’s fiancé at the beginning of the novel, who betrays her, prompting her to leave Istanbul for the provinces. Ferhat did not fit that role. He would probably have been the major, the war hero whose handsome face was torn up by shrapnel during the First World War. Actually, Ferhat was equally distant from all three members of this small family and this distance could not be reduced no matter how many games they played. So Feride was left without Kamuran: sometimes she was the poor Feride with no love in her life and sometimes she was the lucky woman who did not have to deal with an unfaithful lover. The one part of the novel that they never touched was the little girl Feride adopted. Little Munise’s tragic death made them shudder; nevertheless, the role was perfect for Şirin (*MD*, p. 63).

However, as well as the similarities, there are remarkable contradictions between the two texts, and the clearly portrayed sexuality is the most important of them. Feride, the protagonist of *The Wren*, represents the new Turkish woman, taking a leading role in the transformation of traditional Ottoman Empire into the modern Turkey during the early 20th century. She is the “enlightened mother” (Durakbaşa, 2007, p.104), raising the future generations, and sexless ‘sister’, having no need to tote a purity body guard. There is not even the slightest implication of Feride’s bodily experiences of sexual

desire. On the contrary, Feride of Atasü's novel breaks the chains of "the stable sheath of sealed nerve and muscle tissues that had enveloped her frozen emotions for nearly a year" (MD, p.21-22). Unlike *Feride the Wren*, accepting whatever happens to her by abandoning all her wishes concerning love, Feride, the protagonist of *A Midlife Dream*, is a kind of woman who demands "to 'do' things and to 'change' things; because just to 'bear' things is not enough for [her]" (MD, p.146) (italic is mine). She never suppresses her desires. Therefore, despite the similarities between the two works, Atasü creates new and different perspectives in *A Midlife Dream* by drawing attention to the sociocultural and political changes facilitating the female quest for individuation. She reveals further details about the themes of love, female body and sexuality, which she has started exploring in *That Scorching Season of Youth*, and the 'sensual adventure' of a woman, having been initiated by AyşeAysu and Tomris, reaches an immersive apogee with Feride. For too long, women, like AyşeAysu, Tomris and Feride, have been scared of the power of their sexuality or used it to manipulate, control and hide due to the patriarchal norms. Fortunately, the time has come for them to experience and activate their awakened sexual energy.

Feride's female journey into self-discovery and sexual awakening starts with Ferhat, her forbidden love. "That irrepressible desire she felt for him... The desire that weighed on her flesh and scratched at her heart with its painful longing" (MD, p.7-8) is very strong that she cannot help falling in love with Ferhat, because "a maelstrom that was beyond the control, independent, subtle and irresistible got hold of [her]... lust" (MD, p.20). She attains her desire, the body that she has been drawn to like a magnet, after the death of Ferhat's wife. However, Feride gets very soon that she should not paint dreams but paint her own reality:

That first night, when after so many obstacles she was finally one with him, she lay there silently, like a broken question mark beside him, sleepless under her crushed dreams, while he was fast asleep taking big, contented breaths. The only explanation she could find for the feeling of incompleteness inside her was what would be expected of a woman in her situation with a similar life story to hers: an inadequacy of the flesh caused by extended abstinence, an insufficiency of her senses, not her partner's. ... She had imagined it would be different for the two of them. She had hoped it would be. And now she hoped that everything would sort itself out in the long run, while she tried to nurture an imagined pleasure from the fact that Ferhat had finally and completely claimed her feminine geography (MD, p.22-23).

Unfortunately, like most women who are imposed to keep their body, or more precisely virginity, for their prospective husbands who will love them forever, Feride also gets disappointed. Her desire, which she tries to keep alive, diminishes day by day "whenever crushed by her husband's indelicate touch" (MD, p.23) (italic is mine). Feride's passion "crumple[s], drie[s] out like a young plant subjected to the merciless blast of fiery air" (MD, p.22) just like AyşeAysu, who defines herself as "pieces of a broken body" (SSY, p.75) after having intercourse with Fethi, with whom she is infatuated. Feeling discouraged, hopeless and lost, Feride chooses to lock herself up

in her ivory tower again, just as she has been taught. She pretends to have a perfect marriage, free from emotional and sexual deprivation, and tries to turn a blind eye to everything concerning menfolk, like the other women in the family. Yet, it does not work. She feels as if "the ground slipped from under her feet; there was no air left to breathe. It was as if she stopped being human and was transformed into a pale, shadowy product of her imagination" (MD, p.9). Having lots of questions in her mind, Feride desperately tries to find a way out. She wonders if there is any possible way to get rid of this marriage, which drains all her energy, and shaped womanhood. Then, abruptly, all her questions arrive at a solution when she least expects it. Ferhat is killed by his own followers during an intra-organizational conflict. Feride stands all alone with her unrealized dreams, aspirations and passions at the very beginning of her midlife. The sole remedy available to her is to channel all her hopes and energy into Şirin, her step-daughter, because from now on, "it was utterly impossible for her to be attracted by a new body" (MD, p.28) (italic is mine). Thus, she, once more, sets her passion "in a sheath of muscles, nerves and memory" (MD, p.28) till Sedat, who "surrounded Feride and Şirin with his magnetism, like a sparkling field of energy" (MD, p.35), comes into her life. Sedat, the second husband of Feride, is different from Ferhat in many ways. For instance, unlike Ferhat, always "making her feel a hunted animal soon to be caught and bound in chains" (MD, p.37), Sedat creates a safe environment both for Feride and Şirin. It is true that there is no passion or "persistent fire of desire" (MD, p.37) in their sexual relation, but she is happy in "her husband's tender embrace" (MD, p.71). Most importantly, for the first time in her life, "when [Feride, Sedat and Şirin] were together, they managed to attain a wholeness that they had never had with Şirin's biological father" (MD, p.35).

Feride is happy in her "warm and protective home" (MD, p.71), but sometimes, as she nears forty, she feels unexplained stirrings, "a very thin but vital vein in her quiet, peaceful inner world ruptures and bleeds towards the passion that had quietly pooled in her forgotten depths" (MD, p.64). Having one of those moments again, Feride cannot control the increased flow of blood through her veins that heats her body. Like AyşeAysu, crying out "let me also touch" (SSY, p.74), she demands to have "an adventurous sex life... but Sedat [does not] like adventure. He [does not] even approve of the woman initiating sex..." (MD, p.108). Thus, once again, the woman is severely punished since she dares to speak out about her sexual pleasures instead of keeping her innocence and being a beacon of morality for her husband. Boiled with rage, Sedat pushes Feride hard, which makes her fall upon a radiator and hit her hip. Then, something unexpected happens and it changes both of their lives irrevocably:

[Feride] was staring in awe and confusion at the handfuls of dark, thick, scarlet liquid pouring out of her womb, which had not been able to bring a child to term. No, this red cascade with clotted lumps was not like the miscarriages she had had when she was married to Ferhat. It was something else! But what? Sedat's large hands held her with care and tenderness. The ferrous smell of blood was in her nostrils. Her soul was split. One part of her wanted to take refuge in his compassion; the other was repelled by the heavy hands and muscular arms of this big man and shuddered with sheer animal terror (*MD*, p.110).

Time stands still for Feride. She does not think about Ferhat, Sedat or even Şirin. The only thing she can focus is her “crumbling [body]... that nobody attached any real importance to, not even herself” (*MD*, p.114). Since the day she was born a woman, Feride has always felt incomplete, weak and insufficient as she is unable to have children and become a mother. And now, her fruitless “uterus together with the ovaries” is being removed by “total hysterectomy” (*MD*, p.110) and she is reduced to “a woman with emptied-out loins” (*MD*, p. 115). Feride hears questioning voices making decisions about her poor body: “It's nothing to worry about. And I don't suppose you were thinking of any more children at your age anyway” (*MD*, p.112). That moment crushes all her pre-formed illusions about her life, but it helps Feride unveils the mystery as well. She realizes that, during her entire life, she has been defined as the carrier of male offspring and considered insufficient as she is infertile. Neither Ferhat nor Sedat has accepted her as she is, as a woman with a mind and body:

They carved me up... Both of them... They laid their hands on the half of me they needed and ignored the rest... They each grabbed a different half (*MD*, p.286).

Abused both sexually and emotionally by her intimate partners, Feride feels absolutely shattered. Her body, satisfying Ferhat, and her mind, pleasing Sedat, do not belong to her. However, it is time for Feride to crack down and take back the things that have been stolen from her:

I am a woman... I had a woman's body. Now, I have an incomplete woman's body: no uterus, no ovaries, a defective vagina. I would have liked to have been accepted as a complete body when I had one, as well as being accepted the way I am now. You cannot abstract my personality and my temperament from my body... You cannot take them independently of each other. I am a whole (*MD*, p.146).

Once Feride gains the ability to experience her desires and not repress them, her body and mind, trapped in the male-dominated ideologies, become ‘whole’ again. From now on, her primary focus is to break free from the patriarchal chains that hold her back, and make a fresh start. Unfortunately, this new phase of life with greater self-awareness and self-compassion comes during the midlife years with a tragic event. Though a bit late, she starts a spiritual journey and opens “the lost box of her life ... with the excitement of someone who has discovered a buried treasure” (*MD*, p.120). While trying to face her unfulfilled and repressed desires, Feride happens upon a very young man, Kamuran, a gay friend of her daughter, Şirin. Nevertheless, Feride does not care about his age or sexual orientation. All that she can feel is the ecstasy of utmost delight as emanating from the pleasures of her body. Despite being aware of

the impossibility of having a sexual relationship with Kamuran for obvious reasons, Feride merely dreams about the pleasure of physical contact with him and getting the ‘imaginary sensation’, as stated by Erendiz Atasü. Kamuran is just a total combination of “Sedat... Ferhat... and even like her dear father” (*MD*, p.289). The image of Kamuran stirs a “crazy desire that burrowed deep into her vagina” (*MD*, p.292). Eventually, this desire becomes so uncontrollable that her body rediscovers its repressed emotions and her inner voice hidden deep inside and bawls unexpectedly:

For God's sake! It's carving out my vagina! I don't care if he's queer! I don't care if he's half my age. I need him, do you hear me? All of him! For the first time in my life I want a cock! (*MD*, p.288)

Feride, for the first time in her life, feels self-confident and determined. Others may assume that she is going through a female midlife crisis, but Feride knows her own mind. From now on, her needs are more important than anybody else's; nothing and no one else counts, including her daughter. Just as nobody questions or even thinks about a woman “let[ting] *her husband* put *his* piss-soaked dick inside her” (*MD*, p.118) (italics are mine), her cracked bladder and “vagina leaking urine” (*MD*, p.118) cannot be seen as the villain of the piece. Where she is now puts her beyond the trivial; or rather, redefines as trivial what she has previously considered problematic. She puts an end to defining herself as insufficient and ‘emptied-out’, and takes pride in being a woman achieving personal autonomy and integrity by getting rid of the patriarchally-shaped roles. Feride is now a whole woman with her mind and body, like AyşeAysu and Tomris in *That Scorching Season of Youth*. And this spiritual and sexual wholeness is obtained through full body awareness.

Erendiz Atasü, who believes that self-individuation can only be achieved by articulating the unspoken female body and its repressed desires, analyzes such broad themes as the female body and sexuality in her writing to elucidate the issues of sexuality and gender, sexuality and love, and sexuality and oppression. Bearing in mind how a person's sexual behavior becomes an expression of power, Atasü also aims to unite the female body and mind that have been estranged from each other by male-dominated ideologies and its sexist man-made language in *A Midlife Dream*. This intended spiritual and sexual integrity comes to fruition only with feminine principles and ‘female language’, placing emphasis on female body experiences and their articulation. Henceforth, women are able to de(con)struct dichotomous gender stereotypes produced by the dualist discourse, which assumes the male-as-the norm, by means of this female language. The female body is an important site of struggle and resistance against the patriarchal structures, a medium through which a woman can articulate her repressed and ignored desires. Thus, Erendiz Atasü portrays the female body and its sexual experiences in *A Midlife Dream*, as in all her works, to raise awareness and feminist consciousness in her readers by breaking free from the internalized male gaze and its hegemonic

ideologies that dominate women's lives in all fields. Once a woman starts a journey of self-discovery – the journey that starts with awakening and ends in enlightenment, she will realize how deeply patriarchal ideology and its hegemonic language are rooted within her very thinking. To be able to de(con)struct them, the only way for her is to stick at feminine principles constituted by a female language. Thus, in this way, these “feminine principle[s] *will* initiate a cycle proposing a notion of integrity, rather than the duality of patriarchal structures” (Koyuncu, 2014, p.193) (italic is mine). It is that cycle which will let women “kill the false woman who is preventing the live one from breathing” (Cixous, 1976, p.880), and create the welcoming world where there is no othering, denial and ignorance; where different voices can be heard and different choices are accepted without questioning – the world that Feride has always dreamt about and finally reached in her midlife.

4.3.A Comparative Analysis of the Writers

For many years, language has been considered a medium for creating, communicating, and storing information, but recent studies in criticism have made people aware that their use of language really shapes and limits their interpretation of the world. Thus, their world is “limited to the mere face of the text in front of [them]” (Thomas, 2011, p.16), and unfortunately, all texts are made up of phallogentric structures, which dominate and control all aspects of human life. As an expected consequence of this, women have been defined as the weak and incomplete ‘other’ by the patriarchal discourse, which subordinates, exploits and abuses them. If it is the man-made language that puts women into this situation, then they have to de(con)struct it and move beyond those constraints, as clarified in the following statement:

... for women the Symbolic means awareness of the self as a subject constituted through an alien- because of the logocentric and phallogentric discourse, which depends on pre-ordered naming and categorization. Entry into this state thus destines woman to a position in which she is linguistically marginalized, rendered inactive or mute in speech as well as in social signification. The only way to overcome this verbal suppression is to speak through a language not dominated by the phallus (Foster, 1990, p.66-67).

To find that language by moving beyond that constraining place, many women have plunged into their search for alternative modes of expression and firstly, tried to “change the verbal realities of their daily lives” (McConnell-Ginet, Burker, & Furman, 1980, p.xi). However, since the masculine values have permeated every field of women's lives from private spheres to public ones, women have to think more comprehensively and reach a wider audience to challenge the long-established patriarchal norms. Here, literature has an essential role due to its influence on society. Women writers, especially, must search for a new language and incorporate a female vision of life into it so that all women can coalesce around shared aims by speaking the same language,

and more importantly, that language should be their language, not their oppressors'. Henceforth, women can create a female tradition of writing and give rise to the future generation with those questioning and de(con)structing feminine texts written in a ‘new female language’. Therefore, in the end, “the whole of feminine literature *that* has been whispered to women in man's language” (Leclerc, 1990, p.75) (italic is mine) will take on a new meaning and prepare the way for revolutionary change in women's lives.

In fact, there have been women writers trying to challenge dominant phallogentric or patriarchal discourses and disciplines throughout history, but unfortunately, most of them have been alienated and treated as ‘other’ since the available model of literary history is male-centered, claiming that man is the “procreator and ... *his* pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1984, p. 6) (italic is mine). Therefore, whenever a woman writer ‘attempts the pen’, she suffers from a debilitating “anxiety of authorship” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1984, p. 49) and gives up writing, because her body is defined as lacking the phallus – the pen(is), which enables a male writer to father his texts. On the other hand, there are also women writers who believe that women do not need a penis to become authors, because writing with a pen(is) would mean articulating the female experiences through the patriarchal discourse and its man-made language. For these women writers, the only way to subvert patriarchal literary standards based on “the traditional generative authority of the pen/penis” (Gilbert, 1986, p.494) is to write their body and female sexuality with their own female language. They should write as women, not as men, and release the energy of their female sexuality to achieve the true female authority. Among those women writers, for whom the experience of being a woman and desire to express that experience in a feminine way plays a foundational role in their writing, is Virginia Woolf. Woolf, a pioneer feminist seeking to challenge all the patriarchal ideologies by incorporating a woman's vision of life into her works, is still a revered figure and a liberating force for modern women writers. “First there was Virginia Woolf” (1996, p.1), says Mary Eagleton in her essay “Constructing Literary Feminist Studies”, implying that Woolf stands as a creative literary foremother for the tradition of women's writing. Seeing her influence on Western women's writing traditions, especially on Canadian literature, like Marie Campbell, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro and Anne Carson, I have begun to wonder if there is a women's writing tradition inspired by Woolf in the Middle Eastern world, which has different philosophic, religious and cultural perspectives. While keeping up my studies, I had a chance to attend a symposium on ‘Erendiz Atasü's Work’, which shaped the framework of my further studies.

Atasü, a prolific Turkish feminist writer, who highlights the private world of feminine consciousness and sexuality, especially in bold interpretations unlike her

contemporaries, sincerely declares she is fascinated by Virginia Woolf's style and work of art (Atasü, 1995). Based on this fact, I have decided to make a comparative study between Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü even though they live in quite different periods, places and cultures, because "books continue each other" (1929, p.67) as Woolf says. It does not mean that Atasü uses the same blueprints or tools during her creative process, but as a woman and a woman writer, she also "thinks back through her mothers" (Woolf, 1929, p.81) – the 'mothers' who paved the way for future generations of women writers. This is the inevitable influence of women's writing tradition, through which all women speak the same language – the 'female language' that enables the writer to de(con)struct the Father's rule and its internalized beliefs and patriarchal modes of signification, as Woolf and Atasü put it below:

[...] the very form of the sentence does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman's use. ... And this a woman must make for herself, altering and adapting the current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it (Woolf, 1979, p.48).
I write to be able to understand and give voice to women, my fellows, who have been ignored and subordinated. I write, never forgetting that I am a woman. Women, having been silenced for thousands of years, need to find their own voices, so as not to repeat what they have been taught and dictated so far. They need to express and transfer their demands, repressed feelings, opinions and lives – trapped inside the patriarchal system – to the collective consciousness of humanity through their own words (Atasü, 2014, p.33).

Thus, for both Woolf and Atasü, women should stop regarding themselves as 'dark continents' waiting to be explored by men, but rather take control of their own bodies and speak out their desires against masculine values. In addition, they should create a female history and tradition of writing to shape the new generation of women. However, they cannot realize this "if women [write] like men, or [live] like men, or [look] like men" (Woolf, 1929, p.74), because "the language bearing the traces of patriarchal culture that humiliates the female body and sexuality" (Atasü, 2009, p.144) condemns women into passivity and subordination. It does not allow them to unveil the unspoken areas and verbalize their real experience, especially the sexual pleasures with the dominant, ordered and 'logical' man-made language. Henceforth, being writers by profession, their constant interaction with language has led Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü to create a new female language "to speak not only against, but outside of the specular phallogocentric structure, to establish a discourse the status of which would no longer be defined by the phallacy of masculine meaning" (Felman, 1975, p.10). They believe that this new female language, which is fluid, unconfined and supple enough to communicate multifarious experiences, does not just articulate what cannot be spoken and written within the male discourse, but creates a sense of recognition, connection and most importantly unity among women so that they can raise their voice against the oppression of the patriarchy.

In order to get the utmost benefit from that new female language and create open-ended feminine texts, offering plural and immeasurable possibilities for women unlike

the phallogocentric order of things, a woman writer must maintain individuality in her experiences as a writer and develop her own personal style in the area of fiction. For Woolf, the single solution to sustain individuality is through the 'freedom of the mind', a characteristic of creative genius. In fact, if "the mind of an artist is ... free and unimpeded ... like Shakespeare's mind" (Woolf, 1929, p. 47-48), it can achieve its full expression and creative capacity. However, even if that mind belongs to a hypothetical sister of Shakespeare, possessing all his genius, or "any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century, [she] would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at" (Woolf, 1929, p. 41), because her mind is full of obstacles that stifle her creativity: mothering, being a wife, and the culturally defined expectations of women. The suffocating reality of a woman's life, full of housekeeping and child-rearing duties, distracts her from writing; that is, her "life conflicts with something that is not life" (Woolf, 1929, p. 60). Thus, whatever her gifts, she is not able to express her genius in whole aspects as the threatening male voice will disorient her mind and get her values altered "in deference to opinions of others" (Woolf, 1929, p. 62). The only way out for a woman writer is to 'kill the Angel in the House'. Woolf survives from the battle against the smothering embrace of the Angel:

The Angel was dead; what then remained? You may say that what remained was a simple and common object — a young woman in a bedroom with an ink pot. In other words, now that she had rid herself of falsehood, that young woman had only to be herself. ... These then were two very genuine experiences of my own. These were two of the adventures of my professional life. The first — killing the Angel in the House — I think I solved. She died. (Woolf, 1979, p.62)

For example, in *To the Lighthouse*, only when Lily 'kills the angel' does she resist the pressures and demands of patriarchy expressed by Mr. Ramsay. She gets over her fear of "taking the wrong brush [...] at Mr. Ramsay's presence" (Woolf, 1990a, p.132), and completes her picture. Unlike Mrs. Ramsay, who believes that her household "came to her ... since she was a woman, all day long with this and that; one wanting this, another that" (Woolf, 1990a, p.28), Lily does not succumb to the never-ending demands of patriarchy. She recognizes that she does not want to be inscribed with male discourse and its language, so she claims for herself the venture of realizing the possibilities of a woman's discourse.

In this painful process of becoming a woman writer, the experiences are the same for Erendiz Atasü, even though she writes a century after Virginia Woolf. She also believes "a woman cannot be totally free if she does not possess her own body and money" (2009, p.131). For Atasü, attaining economic freedom is an important step to set one's mind free and "light[en] the burden of essential labor traditionally demanded from women" (2009, p.146), which means 'killing the Angel' in Woolfian terms. That's why, in almost all of her works, she creates strong female characters who are

well-educated and economically independent. For instance, in *That Scorching Season of Youth*, ‘AyşeAysu’ and ‘Tomris’ are physicians while in *A Midlife Dream*, ‘Feride’ and ‘Şirin’ work in the field of education as a teacher and an academic respectively. According to Atasü, as long as a woman has an economic freedom, she can move and take possession of the more abstract rooms of her mind and body, which have been “cruelly shattered... in patriarchal cultures” (2009, p.vii). And this issue, that is; achieving a personal autonomy and a self-determination over her own body is the most essential characteristic of women writing for Atasü, because “if a person has no power of decision over her/his own body, s/he does not experience true freedom, but deception” (2009, p.133). However, being able to “articulate the adventures of a female body” and write about “sexuality and female body... on the verge of birth and death” (2009, p.144) is a challenging responsibility for women writers, especially in a male-dominated society in which women and their bodies are sexually objectified and treated as an object for male gaze and desire. They are considered physical object to be valued for their use, so eventually women internalize this sexual objectification and resign themselves to the self-defeating “masochistic personality” (Atasü, 2009, p.54) that has been traditionally assigned by the patriarchy. For instance, in *A Midlife Dream*, Feride suffers from that kind of personality after getting married to Ferhat. Even though Ferhat is her forbidden love, initiating her sexual awakening, Feride gradually feels discouraged, hopeless and lost due to the “indelicate touch” (Atasü, MD, p.23) of her husband. Despite all the emotional and sexual deprivation, she turns a blind eye to everything and lets her marriage imprison her into the passive obedience and nonresistance. Like Mrs. Ramsay, who has chosen to be an obedient ‘bride’ for her husband, Feride accepts being the ‘body for others’ by controlling her own sexuality and “trie[s] to nurture an imagined pleasure from the fact that Ferhat [has] finally and completely claimed her feminine geography” (ibid, p.22-23). However, Atasü asserts that women can challenge and defy all these patriarchal odds and settings despite the obstacles, because “a woman is much closer to her true essence of self, so [...] she may identify with her body” (Atasü, 2009, p.54) (italic is mine.)

Emphasizing the importance of a female body and writing about women’s shared bodily experiences is an important issue for Erendiz Atasü. She admits that it is “a fledgling and new entity, but it is “fluid” as well (2009, p.144), so it can be shaped by women writers. They can put an end to women being portrayed as a “blank page” (Gubar, 1980) by male writers, who often use literature as a way to create women the way they would like them to be created. According to Atasü, the only thing women writers must do, is to bring to the surface what masculine history has repressed. This process begins with their sexuality, and their sexuality begins with their bodies. In most of her works, Atasü never molds women’s sexuality into socially acceptable

patterns. On the contrary, she saves women from further institutional molestation and humiliation by questioning the rationale of male-dominated society and challenging its established assumptions on the female body and sexuality. In her works, the journey to individuation and self-discovery for her female protagonists starts with their awareness of bodily sensations. They unveil the masqueraded female sexuality, and then diminish the socially-constructed distance between their minds and bodies. Upon breaking the taboos molding their bodies and minds, the female protagonists in Erendiz Atasü’s works regain authority over their bodies and come to realize what they really want: “to seek for the non-created language of the unexpressed experiences and contribute to the creation of this language” (Direnç, 2014, p. 90).

Writing the ignored, suppressed and humiliated female body also has a great importance for Virginia Woolf. In fact, both writers, Woolf and Atasü, claim that ‘writing the body’ is the crucial element in the textual product, as the body – especially the female body – is not a body in isolation exclusively possessed by its owner, but rather, the bearer of cultural practices, symbols and values that have a crucial role in determining who one is. Thus, they try to encourage women to unveil and question the relationship between body/sexuality and text, as well as inviting them to de(con)struct the phallogocentric discourses, because they believe that women are able to reach a literary self-consciousness and a ‘productive space’ for a female voice through their bodies. However, while stressing the importance of ‘writing the body’, Virginia Woolf sincerely admits that it is the greatest obstacle to overcome when compared to ‘killing the Angel’, the first “part of the occupation of a woman writer” (Woolf, 1979, p.59):

But the second, telling the truth about my own experiences as a body, I do not think I solved. I doubt that any woman has solved it yet. The obstacles against her are still immensely powerful — and yet they are very difficult to define. ... Outwardly, what obstacles are there for a woman rather than for a man? Inwardly, I think, the case is very different; she has still many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome. Indeed it will be a long time still, I think, before a woman can sit down to write a book without finding a phantom to be slain, a rock to be dashed against (ibid. p. 62).

This confession of Woolf, who continually encourages women to ‘take back’ their bodies and construct some other ‘embodiment’ of themselves, may confuse readers, and make her ideas and feminist philosophy concerning the female body issue a bit ambivalent. If so, what are the underlying reasons of these statements that appear to contradict each other? Why does Virginia Woolf declare that she could not ‘tell the truth’ about her own body? One of the reasons is that Virginia Woolf, being a woman and a woman writer in a male-dominated society, cannot resist the cultural discourses of femininity. In fact, in the patriarchal Victorian era, the cultural inscription of gender is so powerful that it does not allow the female subject to create a special space, ‘a room of her own’. Hence, unable to get the space of creativity and the preservation of female integrity, Woolf is divided between her intellectual aspirations and her female

body, which she believes is always constructed and controlled by “the male members of the family in the most diverse ways ranging from the penetrating gaze to incest and sexual abuse” (Stuart and Todd, 2009, p.46). In my opinion, her sexual abuse by her half-brother, Gerald Duckworth, is the most important reason why Woolf cannot present the body as a stable identity or a locus of self-actualization. In addition to patriarchal assaults, this traumatizing event makes her body a passive prisoner to male desire, as Woolf confesses in the following lines:

There was a slab outside the dining room door for standing dishes upon. Once, when I was very small, Gerald Duckworth lifted me onto this, and as I sat there he began to explore my body. I can remember the feel of his hand going under my clothes; going firmly and steadily lower and lower. I remember how I hoped that he would stop; how I stiffened and wriggled as his hand approached my private parts. But resenting, disliking it- what is the word for so dumb and mixed a feeling? It must have been strong, since I still recall it. This seems to show that a feeling about certain parts of the body; how they must not be touched; how it is wrong to allow them to be touched; must be instinctive (Woolf, 1985, p. 81).

Over the rest of her life, Woolf has to deal with the residue of the incest, which results in feelings of ‘hopeless, sadness and powerlessness’. Having been haunted by the specter of male animality and male violence, “she feel[s] the need to deny her femininity, and perhaps, by extension, her sexual feelings” (Culver, 1990, p.8). This is the only way for Woolf to survive the pain of the incest. She deliberately numbs her vulnerable body and deems it from the point of view of a detached onlooker; that is, imagines herself as ‘disembodied’ to protect herself from further molestation. Despite her efforts to deal with the unbearable effects of the incest, Woolf experiences “a strong feeling of guilt”, and feels “ashamed” (Woolf, 1985, p.67) of her own body, especially when confronted with mundane act of looking in mirrors:

At any rate, the looking-glass shame has lasted all my life, [...] I cannot now powder my nose in public. Everything to do with dress – to be fitted, to come into a room wearing a new dress – still frightens me; at least makes me shy, self-conscious, uncomfortable (ibid. p.68).

In my opinion, this unconscious guilt caused by the patriarchal codes, dictating that women and their bodies are responsible for creating a complementary drive in men, might be the reason why Virginia Woolf feels so uncomfortable with ‘writing the body’. Her emotional distress to the incest finds its way into her novels, where the characters consciously or unconsciously seek to escape from the distasteful experience by disembodiment. For example, Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* feels intense terror when aggressively kissed by Richard Dalloway, who claims “[Rachel] tempts [him]” (Woolf, 2001, p.68). Rachel, horror-struck, has no choice but to imagine herself as one of the sea-birds to cope with that feeling:

Her head was cold, her knees shaking, and the physical pain of the emotion was so great that she could only keep herself moving above the great leaps of her heart. She leant upon the rail of the ship, and gradually ceased to feel, for a chill of body and mind crept over her. Far out between the waves the little black and white sea-birds were riding. Rising and falling with smooth and graceful movements in the hollows of the waves they seemed singularly detached and unconcerned (ibid. p.68).

It is clear here that Woolf represents herself in the surrogate character Rachel and draws an analogy between Rachel’s reaction to the infuriating behavior of Dalloway and her own physiological reaction to the sibling sexual abuse. Throughout the novel, she describes Rachel’s body as threatened, helplessly cracked and easily invaded, like her own body. Not being able to overcome her terror of sexual intercourse, Woolf lets Rachel, the female protagonist of her first novel, “[fall] into a deep pool of sticky water, which eventually closed over her head”. There, at the bottom of the water, Rachel sees and hears nothing, but “a faint booming sound, which was the sound of the sea rolling over her head.” (ibid. p.331-2). Here, the reader can easily sense that Woolf tries hard to convey her fear of sex through the diffused lens of metaphors, such as the sticky water, drowning little figures and the suffocating heat. No matter how hard she struggles to get rid of her disturbing childhood memories, Woolf loses her creative energy and ultimately kills the female protagonist of her first novel.

However, for me, the death of Rachel Vinrace is not a failure as some critics (Ruotolo, 1986; Friedman, 1996) claim, but just the beginning of a new phase for Woolf. *The Voyage Out* and Rachel, in one sense, provide Woolf with the possibility of a cathartic discharge of her strong emotions with regards to her incestuous abuse. Once she closes the door on many destructive experiences of her youth, Virginia Woolf gets her bearings as a writer; as she explains in the following lines:

I only know that many of these exceptional moments brought with them a peculiar horror and a physical collapse; they seemed dominant; myself passive. This suggests that as one gets older one has a greater power through reason to provide an explanation blunts the sledge-hammer force of the blow. ...I still have the peculiarity that I receive these sudden shocks, they are now always welcome; after the first surprise, I always feel instantly that they are particularly valuable. And so I go on to suppose that the shock-receiving capacity is what makes me a writer (1985, p.72)

Being an adult and having the capacity to tolerate these shocks through the act of writing, Virginia Woolf welcomes and values everything related with her past. She no longer perceives them to be a “blow from an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool of daily life” but a “revelation of some order ... a token of some real thing behind appearances” (ibid. p.72). Once regarded as a source of shame and guilt, the body is now a powerful and indispensable tool to move beyond the boundaries of male gaze, and to “feel ecstasies and raptures spontaneously and intensely” (ibid. p.68). Reclaiming her body back, Woolf is now able to locate her fears and cry them out through her works. Writing the body enables Woolf to discover what has remained hidden and bring it to the surface from the depths of the ocean. Nonetheless, during her search for an adequate means of representing reality ‘behind the cotton wool of daily life’, she faces another obstacle: the limitations of man-made language. Woolf finds it difficult to express her perceptions and ideas in words. This problem arises as much from the traumatic childhood experience as from the inadequacies of language itself. That’s

why Woolf tries to articulate a different gendered language that is more appropriate for the expression of women's emotions – a language that makes the unspoken voiced and the unseen visible. Thus, she invents a new form drawing from the language of parables and metaphors to explore the deepest regions of her experience as a woman. She believes that unlike the unfigurative man-made language full of pungent assaults, “there is [...] a stately and memorable beauty in the undropped sentences which follow each other like women so slightly veiled that you see the lines of their bodies as they go” (Woolf, 1984, p.19).

Erendiz Atasü is of the same opinion as Virginia Woolf about the difficulty of writing the body with linear, conventional and authoritarian patterning of the man-made language that does not fit the natural shape of the thoughts and feelings of women. She claims trying to write with a man-made language, full of scorning words for a female body, disrupts the creation process and makes things hard for a writer. For her, “there is a distance between ‘sensual’ experience and a language” (2009, p.55), because the language, having been shaped by men out of their own needs for their own use, creates an obstacle, or a ‘distance’. It increases the discrepancy between feeling and writing, and violates both the sexual and textual pleasure. Thus, a woman writer needs to create a new form – a poetic and figurative female language that appeals to the reader's mind and senses – to be able to write about the unspoken areas of a “wrapped and secluded” (ibid, p.133) female body. In fact, Erendiz Atasü explains the necessity of a ‘female language’ as in follows:

When one refuses to suffice by expressing the experience of a female body between the lines, like a vague shadow, but attempts to actually narrate it using words, one has to face the challenging rudeness of language which needs to be broken in order to create a female discourse; let alone the difficult task of shaping into words an ages old silence of feelings and sensations. I daresay all the languages of the world would force a woman writer to create a new discourse if she dares write about sexuality. I wonder if there exists any language that does not contain words of scorn for the female body and female sexual experience (Atasü, n.d., *Bir Kadın Edebiyatı Var mıdır?*, erendizatasu.com).

Why is the freedom of body and expression of it very important for Atasü, like Woolf, even though they both have different cultural and social backgrounds? Atasü admits that she has never been restricted and marginalized within her family group and has grown up in an atmosphere in which the equality of men and women is of great importance. Hence, she does not need to free herself from confining feminine stereotypes and avoid the kinds of relationships that place women in service of men. However, she also has to “come up against loutish male hands when confronted with the outside world, far from [her] hearth and home” (2009, p.130):

The first time I got felt up in a full bus, I was just a kid. I was shocked, and could not understand what was happening. When first slapped by so-called loving hands, I was young. I was baffled, hurt, offended; I was in a mess (ibid, p.130)

Erendiz Atasü does not let that experience devastate her to the point she is unable to get up and move on, but rather, she makes use of it for her literary scope of inquiry. Longing to be free of “the capillaries of patriarchal power spreading into every field of life” (ibid, p.144), she aspires to give voice to a woman's bodily experience and sexual desire rarely depicted. For her, unless a woman writer ‘writes the body’ and creates a long-lasting work about it, the patriarchy will go on ignoring, or worse, molding the female body in accordance with the phallogocentric discourse. Knowing that ‘words fly away’, Atasü desires to put the female body in writing. This desire is stated very forcefully in her writing and accompanied by the kind of bold interpretations of women's sexual lives, which is not overly present in the works of Woolf. Unlike Atasü, Woolf hides the female body and its sensuality behind the “veil of words” (1979, p.76) as she regards the veil as a productive image for aesthetic creation. For instance, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa Dalloway's orgasmic meditation is described as a “sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure of rapture, which split its thin skin and gushed and poured with an extraordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores!” (1990b, p.32). In this account, sexual desire is central to her work, but it occurs behind the veils, as Molly Hite notes in following:

First of all, it is a recollection rather than a present event. Second, it is a recollection of a verbal rather than an explicitly sexual incident ... Finally, the sexuality of the narration is a by-product of metaphor and the phonic materiality of the language employed. As the narrator reports, Clarissa did “undoubtedly then feel what men felt,” but on the level of plot the experience is unshared and unwitnessed, safely sealed within her physical body (2000, p.17).

On the other hand, Erendiz Atasü, aiming to “reflect the reality of women's love and sexual experience as it is” (qtd. in Yıldırım, 2003, p.14), resists the cultural and patriarchal discourses that seal and inscribe woman and femininity and subvert the regulatory norms through her bolder expressions, which is one of her distinctive features that is rarely seen, even among her contemporaries:

But I want his penis! [...] For God's sake! It's carving out my vagina! I don't care if he's queer! I don't care if he's my half age. I need him, do you hear me? All of him! For the first time in my life I want a cock! (MD, p.288)
The man's tongue was feeling up the areas, not having been touched before – even by her husband's hands; soaking the feathers and unveiling the tissues. The woman was standing and the man was kneeling down in front of the woman. What functions or actions of nature would be disgusting! .. (SSY, p. 68)

Though expressed in a sexually explicit language, Atasü's works do not irritate the reader since they are conveyed in a poetic way, adorned with such a vivid glow of female sensibility. Her works attract readers, especially female ones, mostly due to the power of feelings dominated by a sense of recognition and connection. While reading her texts, they come out of their shells and cease feeling remorse or guilt about their bodies and desires, because the “impermeable membrane wall” (Atasü, 2009, p.42)

has lost its function. Once recovered from the chains of her ‘docile body’, she lifts the veil of mystery that blinds her mind and grasps the truth. Getting rid of the binaries, the contradiction, or rather, the patriarchally constructed ‘conflict’ between a woman’s body and mind ends and the distance between them is diminished. Eventually, she regains her ‘wholeness’:

I am a woman... You cannot abstract my personality and my temperament from my body... You cannot take them independently of each other. I am a whole (*MD*, p.146).

Getting the inner consistency between all fleshly desires and mental life is of great importance for Erendiz Atasü. She asserts that “in literary works written up with a distinctive female consciousness, the longing for wholeness is so evident. This may be one of the most distinctive features of women literature” (2009, p.viii). In an effort to achieve wholeness in her works, Atasü interweaves her historical and political sense with her artistic and poetic ability. For some readers, her texts may seem to be disconnected at first, but then the wholeness of the text emerges in such a way that they grasp the text more clearly and precisely. As a writer, Atasü renders the authoritative and omnipotent presence of the writer in her texts, and creates the illusion that the reader is entering in and out of the characters’ minds with interior perspective and flashbacks and flash-forwards in time. Thus, she aims to enable the reader to go beyond the text to a place where s/he is engaged with the story, characters and ideas. Günseli Sönmez İşçi points out “Atasü’s narrative technique reminds one of Woolf’s “tunneling process”, which she has discovered while writing *Mrs. Dalloway*” (2014, p.118). Through these tunnels, Atasü’s works form a kind of living organism where lines of communication, threads of meaning, chains of causality, and streams of consciousness converge and intertwine to establish a complementary and dialogic relationship between context and text.

For example, in *That Scorching Season of Youth* and *A Midlife Dream*, Atasü constructs the wholeness out of the fragmentary broken pieces of the particular experiences of female protagonists. AyşeAysu, Tomris and Feride, who have been historically and culturally alienated from themselves – both from their bodies and minds, embark on their own journey of self-discovery that transforms their lives into something more deep and full of moments of wholeness, even transcendence. Now, they are all alone; “the men have been written off, the children are far away” (*SSY*, p.159). They all know ‘that scorching season of youth’, ushering in a new era full of excitement, passion and sexuality, has ended for them:

The young woman’s innocence was touching; the old one smiled at her. The young body knew very well what the old mind just remembered. No man’s touch would tingle her body as the way the rain did. She walked alone to the 21st century (*SSY*, p.167).

Despite feeling bitter, AyşeAysu, Tomris and Feride look to the future with hope and confidence, as their ‘old self’ has died, and a new one who is being renewed to a true knowledge that leads to ‘wholeness’ has come to life in its place:

If you opened yourself up to receive the world, the world embraced you silently in moments of lucid introspection. Only then were you able to see that your life was not solely your own doing. You did receive your share of joy and suffering. They seldom came in their pure form; they usually came together, mixed, but they did come (*MD*, p.294).

It is true that everybody is subject to tension, separation, fragmentation and alienation, because life itself is disintegrated. On the other hand, “new ideas germinate and bloom, whether they have positive or negative connotations for us. Maybe, it is much easier for a woman’s mind to sense those times that refresh the soul” (Atasü, 2009, p.151), because the mind of a woman, especially that of a woman writer, is like a vast open space of consciousness in which endless thoughts, perceptions, emotions and sensations keep appearing and disappearing in pursuit of ‘wholeness’. For Atasü, this is an experience of “panoramic awareness” (2009, p.150) and Virginia Woolf is one of the leading figures of those women writers having that kind of consciousness and expanding awareness, as she states in the following:

I think Woolf has a more divine method. She evaluates the life, time and her own work in detachment; grasps every remote connection and determines all the possible relations that we cannot realize. Thus, she creates a deep harmony and a sense of wholeness out of a chaos and free-flowing time (2009, p.169).

In fact, the need to ‘make it whole’, or more precisely, ordering disparate narrative pieces of fragments into a “coherent and comprehensive whole” (Woolf, 2000, p.189) has long haunted Woolf’s thinking. For her, life is comprised of both the inner and the outer, the objective and the subjective, the conscious and the unconscious, fact and vision, experience and what lies beyond experience. As she states in her essay “Modern Fiction” published in *The Common Reader*: “Life is not a series of gig-lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end” (1984, p.160). It may seem “disconnected and incoherent in appearance” (*ibid*, p.104), but then the contradictions blend so perfectly that they bring out the fusion and wholeness in the end, as it happens in *To the Lighthouse*. Early in the novel, for Lily Briscoe, her painting is a confusing question full of contradictions: “It was a question, she remembered, how to connect this mass on the right hand with that on the left. She might do it by bringing the line of the branch across so... but the danger was that by doing that the unity of the whole might be broken” (1990a, p.49). Suddenly, she “feel[s] an enormous exultation” (*ibid*, p.147), causing the understanding and appreciation of the relationship between those ‘two masses’ – the feminine represented by Mrs. Ramsay and the masculine represented by Mr. Ramsay. Only then does Lily achieve the perfect point of balance that permits her to produce the ‘androgynous’ work of art:

She looked at her canvas; it was blurred. With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the center. It was done; it was finished. Yes, she thought, laying down her brush in extreme fatigue, I have had my vision (ibid, p.175)

Until that moment of ‘wholeness’, Lily desires to go beyond her femininity, as she constantly hears Mr. Tansley whispering in her ear, “women can’t paint, women can’t write...” (ibid, p.41). She blames her female body for being an obstacle rather than a resource, and thereby creates a need for her to transcend her body. The notion of transcendence is based on the ideas of Descartes, the seventeenth century philosopher, who asserts that the ‘mind’, the “I”, is separated from the ‘body’ and is closer to knowledge than the body. His theory about the body-mind split and “his insistence on the essence of the “I” has contributed to an understanding of the “I” as a mere thinking thing, a consciousness that loses contact with things, its body and the world” (Matlok-Ziemann, 2005, p.27). This radical separation of mind and body may be the explanation why Lily cannot complete her painting. Feeling like “a soul reft of body” (Woolf, 1990a, p.133), Lily is not capable of grasping the ‘whole’, “that razor edge of balance between two opposite forces; . . . which was necessary” (ibid, p.163). However, soon, she realizes that she has to work through her body, rather than transcend it in order to succeed with her painting, because the mind is not able to grow without the body. On the contrary, “bodily experiences” can help extract the “vision”, the ability to paint (Koppen, 2001). Thus, in the end, Lily succeeds in avoiding this attempted separation of body and mind, and incorporates both of them in the process of painting when she sees the deceased Mrs. Ramsay sitting in her chair:

Suddenly the window at which she was looking was whitened by some light stuff behind it. At last then somebody had come into the drawing-room; somebody was sitting in the chair... Mercifully, whoever it was stayed still inside; had settled by some stroke of luck so as to throw an odd-shaped triangular shadow over the step. It altered the composition of the picture a little ... Her mood was coming back to her ... One must hold the scene—so—in a vise and let nothing come in and spoil it. It’s a miracle, it’s an ecstasy. The problem might be solved after all ... Mrs. Ramsay ... sat there quite simply, in the chair, flicked her needles to and fro, knitted her reddish-brown stocking, cast her shadow on the step. There she sat. (Woolf, 1990a, p.169 - 170).

After the apparition of Mrs. Ramsay, Lily has her ‘vision’ and completes her painting because of the dual existence of Mrs. Ramsay: ‘the existence in body and the existence in mind’. She manages to move away from the absolute separation of body and mind, and include them both in her painting of Mrs. Ramsay, an androgynous work of art, suggesting “a spiritual or psychological state of wholeness and balance arrived at through the joining of masculine and feminine conceived of as complementary and symmetrically opposed” (Weil, 1992, p.63). Virginia Woolf ends the novel with Lily’s vision that femininity and masculinity are separate, but equal and personal at the same time. Woolf’s point is that women should not lose their femininity, and also should not be limited to it if they really desire to write or paint. For her, one must be in a natural state of mind, whereby the communication between the two powers is firmly established:

I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man’s brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman’s brain the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of his brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her (1929, p.82).

Androgyny, to which Virginia Woolf has always aspired, is a relatively new formula for personal development that offers the integration of the feminine and masculine qualities into a balanced whole. According to Woolf, through an androgynous mind, both women and men might get “the chance to write without consciousness of their sex – the result of which would ideally result in uninhibited creativity” (Wright, 2010, p.1). Woolf’s idea of androgyny becomes evident in *Orlando*, in which the protagonist Orlando experiences a miraculous sex change almost halfway into the novel:

Orlando had become a woman — there is no denying it. But in every other respect, Orlando remained precisely as he had been. The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity (Woolf, 2010, p.65).

Readers of *Orlando* have no choice but accept that “[Orlando] was a woman” (ibid, p.65). Not having been identified with only one sex, but with both now; Orlando achieves the fully developed mind that is “man-womanly ... womanly-man” (Woolf, 1929, p. 82). Through this androgynous state of mind, Orlando is able to complete her/his poem, ‘*The Oak Tree*’, having been carried for so many years “in the bosom of her shirt” (Woolf, 2010, p. 110). The artistic potential that has been already with Orlando from birth finds expression only once s/he bridges the opposing powers through the mind, which is not “purely masculine” anymore (Woolf, 1929, p. 82).

Despite not experiencing a radical transformation like Orlando, the female protagonists of Erendiz Atasü also have to set off the “journey to the interior ... an acceptance of darkness” (Stewart, 1981, p.109) to be able to achieve the ‘whole personality’ that embraces both the feminine and masculine traits. However, this ‘feminine’ is not the traditional image of woman defined in accordance with the Cartesian tradition, which promotes and perpetuates a sexual dualism through masculinizing the ‘mind’ and feminizing the ‘body’, where “[e]mbodiment ... [is] feminized, and the mind ... [is] masculinized. That the mind, the social and the public are not only privileged but also masculinized means that subjectivity itself is implicitly masculine” (DiQuinzio, 1999, p. 11). Erendiz Atasü rejects the dichotomous distinction of Cartesian rationality that assigns dominance to the masculine at the expense of the feminine. For her, the masculinization of the mind and thought and the feminization of body and emotions destroy the wholeness of female existence and “split [it] up in such a way that her body, mind, willpower and consciousness are ignored” (2009, p.vii). For instance, in *That Scorching Season of Youth* (1999), AyşeAysu “stand[s] aghast like pieces of a broken body swept away” (p.75) when Fethi scolds her: “Women do not touch, but are felt up!” (ibid, p.75). Feeling her body objectified and reduced to a controllable

form for male desire, AyşeAysu loses her mind/body unity. She cannot decide which to choose within a split identity: is she the virtuous and sexless 'Ayşe', shaped by her 'mind', or the unchaste and vamp 'Aysu', living in a 'body' defined by male dominant ideologies? However, she shows a great deal of courage in adversity and "the conflict between the two parts come[s] to an end" (Koyuncu, 2014, p. 183). Rejecting all the rigid patriarchal binaries, she succeeds in becoming a whole woman – AyşeAysu – with her mind and body. She turns the page to a new life, and puts an end to "the inconsistency persistent between the fleshly desires of her body and rational mind" (Atasü, 2009, p.47). Like AyşeAysu, Feride, the protagonist of *A Midlife Dream*, finds the way of bringing her split selves together with Kamuran, who helps her to break free from the patriarchal chains and make a fresh start with her 'visionary body'. With this homosexual character, Feride resists being the 'body for others' and remembers the fact that she is "a whole" (Atasü, *MD*, p.146). She is not a body, satisfying Ferhat, or just a mind, pleasing Sedat, but rather a complete woman with her mind and body. That is, Feride achieves personal autonomy and integrity by 'kill[ing] the false woman' inside her. Only then does she achieve the "creative, incandescent and undivided" (Woolf, 1929, p.82) consciousness of mind, like Orlando, Lily and AyşeAysu, and "recreates herself, her text the site of her resistance from within her captivity to the patriarchal symbolic order" (Bryce-Okula, 1991, p.213).

In this respect, I think, Atasü's insistence on 'body and mind unity' echoes with Woolf's theory of androgyny, as they both suggest achieving a spiritual balance and union – 'wholeness' – through combining the masculine mind and feminine body. Consequently, the individual gets liberated from the confines of the appropriate and experiences a kind of reconciliation. However, in this process, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü seemingly favor the feminine side of their 'literary androgyne' over the masculine; as Brown also asserts, in Woolf's concept of androgyny, "femaleness is plainly its ideal" (1984, p.200). Atasü also confesses the difficulty of writing without considering "one's sex and sexual orientation" (2009, p.146). That's why they both regard the physical body, and in this case the 'female body', as a point of origin for knowledge. For them, it is through bodily awareness that one gets to know and experience knowledge, because "it [is] one's body feeling, not one's mind" (Woolf, 1990a, p.148). That's why Atasü's Feride in *A Midlife Dream* (2013) cries out in pain and terror after a total hysterectomy:

I am a woman... I had a woman's body. Now, I have an incomplete woman's body: no uterus, no ovaries, a defective vagina. I would have liked to have been accepted as a complete body when I had one, as well as being accepted the way I am now. You cannot abstract my personality and my temperament from my body... You cannot take them independently of each other. I am a whole (p.146).

It is that moment of 'bodily awareness' that generally comes after a dramatic change or trauma shapes women's consciousness and encourages them to join in self-affirming dimensions of thought and feeling. The woman, resisting expulsion from the realm of knowledge just because of her female body, "reject[s] the mythic woman of literature written by men, reject[s] a stereotype of the "animus" conceptualized by Jung, ignore[s] the theory of penis envy postulated by Freud, fight[s] an identification with her mother in order to individuate, . . . to create the artist/woman, the task seems Herculean rather than feminine. She must die as this mythic "feminine" woman in order to give birth to herself as an artist, a creator of myths" (Stewart, 1981, p.109). Once she achieves this innovative glorification of womanhood, which is possible through body and mind unity, she is ready to create, thus giving her an opportunity to influence the norms of society with her works of art. Through art, all ideologies can be reconstructed, as Griselda Pollock explains in the following quote:

Not only do we have to grasp that art is a part of social production, we also have to realize that it is itself productive, that is, it actively produces meanings. Art is constitutive of ideology; it is not merely an illustration of it. It is one of the social practices through which particular views of the world, definitions and identities for us to live are constructed, reproduced and even refined (Pollock, 1988, p.30).

Believing in the power of art as a challenge to the patriarchal discourse, Woolf and Atasü encourage women to express their experiences through art, where they have previously been ignored or trivialized. Despite the widespread belief that "women can't paint, women can't write..." (Woolf, 1990a, p.41), Woolf and Atasü make much of creating women tradition, whereby they can express themselves, find their own voices and revitalize their self-esteem. They are well aware that there has been a longstanding male bias within the aesthetic and the philosophy of art, and women "ha[ve] no tradition behind them, or one so short and partial that it [is] of little help" (Woolf, 1929, p.64). Unless they challenge the norms created within androcentric art, men will keep promoting women as being painted or written rather than them performing the acts of painting and writing. However, the dominant forms of patriarchal power, perceiving women as objects without voices can be de(con)structed: "Women, having been silenced for thousands of years, need to find their own voices, not to repeat what they have been taught and dictated so far. They need to express and transfer their demands, repressed feelings, opinions and lives – trapped inside the patriarchal system – to the collective consciousness of humanity through their own words (Atasü, 2014, p.33).

Since the field of art is traditionally male-dominated and gender-biased giving importance to mind over body, reason over emotions and male over female, the female artist/writer must seek ways of bringing split selves together, which is only possible through art – a primary means of resistance to all patriarchal norms violating the individuality of women. That's why, to subvert the objectifying lens of the male

gaze and challenge the historical passivity of women, Woolf and Atasü create female characters dealing with art in their works. These artist figures transmit their personal visions, values and opinions through symbols including various mediums, melodies, colors, or words that emanate from the ‘semiotic’ – associated with maternal and feminine aspects in Kristeva’s term, because they cannot express and articulate their experiences with the man-made language, which is “too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman’s use” (Woolf, 1979, p.48). Atasü voices a very similar observation: “one has to face the challenging rudeness of ‘man-made language’ which needs to be broken in order to create a female discourse; let alone the difficult task of shaping into words an age old silence of feelings and sensations (no date, *Bir Kadın Edebiyatı Var mıdır?*, erendizatasu.com) (italic is mine). Thus, in order to de(con)struct the man-made nature of language in the symbolic order, in which men cannot escape their appetite for possessing, both writers try to find reconciliation between the semiotic and symbolic in order to create pleasure without possession. Having similar views, Woolf and Atasü assert that a woman embraces all that considered ‘other’ within her being and lets all of them flow through the medium of art that integrates both the symbolic and semiotic mode of communication. As a consequence, their readers grasp the art as an expression of the desire to find unity, stability and meaning. Indeed, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü regard ‘art’ as the valuable source to achieve unity; as they put it:

One has a profound, if irrational, instinct in favor of the theory that the union of man and woman makes for the greatest satisfaction, the most complete happiness. But the sight of the two people getting into the taxi and the satisfaction it gave me made me also ask whether there are two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness? And I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man’s brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman’s brain the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating (Woolf, 1929, p.82). My mind and emotions has begun to create texts when the pressure of the life reaches unbearable dimensions. I haven’t chosen to write, but writing has chosen me. It has become a physical need, such as drinking water or sleeping! Like an irresistible love... I have been writing to be able to resolve the dilemmas existing between real and imaginary worlds; to make sense of the experiences (Atasü, 2014, p.32).

Comprehending that life itself is comprised of “a constant dialogue or tension between the semiotic and the symbolic” (Brown Walker, 1997, p.35), traditionally associated with maternal body and paternal mind, Woolf and Atasü try to remain included within the dominant mainstream and give voice to what cannot be articulated through their female artist figures, who succeed in translating “*inarticulate words* into art” (Williams, 2000, p.13-14) (emphasis in original). In the end, they all – Lily, Orlando, AyşeAysu and Feride – go through a metamorphosis and turn into the female speaking subjects from the silenced madwoman figure. Atasü illustrates this metamorphosis as in the following lines:

Just as the metamorphic rocks in the bosom of the earth, all the cells of the tunnel have also experienced a change ... The ice crystal has turned into a piece of diamond... And you have attained the eternal youth! ... It is sturdy, you can trust it... your creativity never melts away. A diamond is the most enduring mine. (Atasü, 1999, p. 153)

After completing their “journey into ‘the cratered night of female memory’” (qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar, p.99), the female artists of Woolf and Atasü obtain the enduring creativity through mind and body unity and become a perfect example of what Kristeva calls a ‘subject-in-process’, one capable of dissolving similarities and differences in the body, and hereby, de(con)structing all kinds of binary mechanisms to create fluid identities. These new identities destabilize the Cartesian subject and its man-made language. From now on, they do not have to adapt, mediate or subordinate their beliefs and opinions in accordance with the allowable forms of patriarchal structures that consider them nonsensical or hysterical, but rather produce those in a safe place operating like a ‘free zone’, which allows women to express things that are “unspeakable” in the dominant culture (Ardenner, 1975, Showalter, 1981). Realizing that “... *the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house*” (Lorde, 2007, p.112) (emphasis in original), Lily with her painting, Orlando with her poem, AyşeAysu and Feride with their writings, learn to redefine the world in order to flourish and speak their female language: “Woman, who has been sentenced to confinement and dispossession, to staying in the parlor of domesticity and keeping off the grass of culture, will now sentence herself to freedom” (Marcus, 1987, p.210).

Thus, as a conclusion, the overall message of Woolf and Atasü is to subvert the man made language and de(con)struct the rigid boundaries between body and mind, female and male, self and other to be able to multiply the experiences of the self. For them, women should stop serving “as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size” (Woolf, 1929, p.30), and get the other side of the looking glass and be one with their image instead of seeing it from the outside as ‘other’. This all-encompassing female state of existence, putting an end to “the inconsistency persistent between the fleshly desires of her body and rational mind” (Atasü, 2009, p.47), defies totalizing discourses on history, science and culture and proves that identities cannot be fixed in gender stereotypes, as identities are fluid, idiosyncratic and susceptible to change. Tomris, growing into “a licentious man” (Atasü, 2000, p.71); AyşeAysu, turning the ice crystal “into a piece of diamond... and ... attain[ing] the eternal youth!” (Atasü, 2000, p. 153); Feride, realizing “a new and foreign *homosexual* identity coursing through her whole being” after a dream in which “she was making love to a woman without a face” (Atasü, 2013, p.290-91) (italic is mine); Orlando, getting “the greater ecstasy” (Woolf, 2010, p.74) following her famous transformation; Lily, “hav[ing] had [her] vision” (Woolf, 1990a, p.175) after finishing her androgynous work of art, creates a dynamic feminine world, where all

aspects of life blend. Through their fluid personality, constantly dissolved and merged into each other, these female artists restart the life cycle not just for themselves, but for the readers as well. The readers also, along with the protagonists, reach a balance marked by mutually supported and appreciated entities.

As a closing remark, I could say that Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü challenge the generic dictums of the male canon by proposing a new, positive and liberated feminine world and female language, taking its source from the fluid and ongoing nature of female personality. They both “deconstruct, displace, demystify the logocentric, ethnocentric, phallogocentric order of things” (Hassan, 1987, p.445) to demonstrate how unstable the superegoized structures, onto which notions like maleness, phallic rule and authority have been built. By rejecting such male oriented definitions, Woolf and Atasü encourage women to speak and write beyond the order of binary opposition of the patriarchy through their bodies, as they both know that “body, as the actual physical entity of the artist... [and] text, as the words the artist uses or produces”(O’Dell, 1998, p. 45) are the realm of the self. However, Woolf and Atasü are conscious of the inefficiency of the language “contaminated with the cynic rhetoric that insults feminine body and the shared intimacy with a woman” (Atasü, 2009, p.149); thereby, they plunge into a quest of de(con)structing the man-made language in order to create “sexts” (Cixous, 1996), inscribed by the feminine body. Through this ‘sexual/textual’ writing, as Toril Moi calls it, they offer an alternative to the ‘Law of the Father’, and tear down all the hierarchies caused by this law. There is “no lock, no bolt...” (Woolf, 1929, p.63) in this poetic female language, but rather, just as feminine bodies are, it is open-ended and full of possibilities; as explained below:

It is of a more elastic fiber than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles, of enveloping the vaguest shapes ... It is a woman’s sentence, but only in the sense that it is used to describe a woman’s mind by a writer who is neither proud nor afraid of anything she may discover in the psychology of her sex. (Woolf, 1979, p. 191).

Women, having been silenced for thousands of years, need to find their own voices, so as not to repeat what they have been taught and dictated so far. They need to express and transfer their demands, repressed feelings, opinions and lives – trapped inside the patriarchal system – to the collective consciousness of humanity through their own words (Atasü, 2014, p.33).

5. CONCLUSION

In order to understand the philosophy behind the emergence of *écriture féminine* and the female language, it is essential to have knowledge about the phallogocentric patriarchal system and its hegemonic man-made language. Contrary to the common belief stating that language is just a medium for creating, communicating, and storing information, recent studies on language, especially women’s and gender studies, have proved that language is not simply a vocabulary shared by a group of people, but it is a structure that constitutes meaning. It is the main force behind the construction and continuation of any ideology as Francine Wattman Frank has explained in her book, *Language, Gender and Professional Writing*:

Language combines the functions of a mirror, a tool, and a weapon: [It] reflects society ... human beings use it to interact with one another ... [and] language can be [used] by groups that enjoy the privileges of power to legitimize their own value system by labeling others ‘deviant’ or ‘inferior.’ (1989, p.108)

In the light of such awareness, all values regarded as ‘universal’ have come into question and scholars and critics have focused on unveiling the hidden ideologies behind these ‘universal values’ that shape and limit one’s interpretation of the world. They have realized that language not only reproduces ideologies but also perpetuates them, and eventually creates repressive attitudes and atmospheres, in which people are divided easily into oppressors and oppressed. In this case, it has always been women that become the primary victims of oppression as they have always been defined in terms of their relations with men, who have been regarded as the breadwinners, heads of the household and decision-makers. Imposed to believe that they have to feed men’s egos by being passive, innocent, soft, graceful, nurturing and accepting, “women have so interiorized the ideology of self-denial that they feel it is illegitimate and presumptuous to demand things for themselves” (Tappa, 1988, p.33).

In fact, all of these particular experiences of women that stem from the phallogocentric patriarchal structure and the man-made language put women into the ‘no-choice choice’ situations, where women are judged against a masculine standard. As long as women are assessed by that standard, they are obliged to lose, whether they claim difference or similarity. This is what Marilyn Frye has described as the ‘double-bind’ of oppression, in which a woman confronts lots of difficulties and restrictions in her path. According to Frye, no matter what ways a woman chooses to think or to do, she is doomed to lose: “One of the most characteristics and ubiquitous features of the world

as experienced by the oppressed is the double-bind situations in which options are reduced to very few and all of them expose to penalty, censure or deprivation (1983, p.2). Therefore, the male oppression creates more constrained situations for women, so even the would-be liberated women realize eventually that they have to obey the demands of “femininity”, as Beauvoir explains in her famous work, *The Second Sex*:

The individual is not free to shape the idea of femininity as she pleases. The woman who does not conform to it devaluates herself sexually and, consequently, socially ... It is a bad move to choose defiance unless it represents a positively efficacious action: one consumes more time and energy than one saves (1989, p. 724).

Trapped in this double-bind situation, women are bound to fail. For instance, if a woman defies the norms of sexual restraint, she may be censured or punished for being ‘loose, promiscuous, or a whore’. On the other hand, if she abstains from sexual intercourse, she is threatened with labels like ‘frigid, bitch, or man-hater’. By going too far, the male discourse and its sexist language may charge her with lesbianism, because men have the power and the language that “perpetuates trivialization, marginalization, and invisibility of female experience” (Sheldon, 1990, p. 4). That is why this bind must be broken and de(con)structed. Women must stop defining themselves in accordance with the appropriate behavior and language created by men in order to change their submissive and secondary position. This is only possible through the de(con)struction and redefining of the man-made language that limits or excludes possibilities of exploring feminine ways of being.

Thus, by highlighting the significance of interplay between gender, language and power, this study has situated solidly in exposing how such concepts (re)construct, (re)produce and maintain the oppressive situation of women. In this respect, French feminist theory and its philosophy of *écriture féminine* has guided the study in order to “forge the antilogos weapon, to take apart the dominant male discourses that define woman according to man’s image of himself, and to articulate woman’s difference in and through language” (Martusewicz, 1992, p. 145). Reviewing Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva, my main premise, thus, has been to explore the ways that women writers challenge and de(con)struct the man-made language through their feminine texts written in a female language. Furthermore, I have also contended for providing an understanding of how phallogentric ideology influences women and how it is defied by women’s writing.

Within this respect, the works of Virginia Woolf, who is considered an important foremother in women’s writing tradition, have been chosen as a literary material to analyze first, because even today, feminist critics and writers have cited her works and followed her stand against the social and political forces silencing women’s voices. In fact, for centuries, the phallogentric patriarchy has placed emphasis on ‘ancestors’

rather than ‘ancestresses’; however, it is high time this ‘foremother’ or ‘ancestress’ replaced ‘forefather’ or ‘ancestor’ and emerged as a new figure in *écriture féminine*. Throughout the world, this new figure has become the ‘literary mother’, the source of poetic inspiration for women writers, as Woolf declares in *A Room of One’s Own*:

We think back through our mothers if we are women. It is useless to go to the great men writers for help, ... Lamb, Browne, Thackeray, Newman, Sterne, Dickens, De Quincey—whoever it may be—never helped a woman yet, ... The weight, the pace, the stride of a man’s mind are too unlike her own ... there was no common sentence ready for her use. ... That is a man’s sentence; behind it one can see Johnson, Gibbon and the rest. It was a sentence that was unsuited for a woman’s use (1929, p.64-65).

Personally experiencing the difficulties of having to manage a double-burden of domestic life and literary life in patriarchal societies, these ‘literary mothers’ have an essential role to pave the way for future women writers and help them break free from the confines of the phallogentric discourse and its man-made language. Keeping the works of their forebears in mind, women writers aim to create a female tradition of writing and give rise to the future generation with feminine texts written in a ‘new female language’, which subverts the prevailing phallogentric order and the patriarchal logic. In this way, they prepare the way for revolutionary change in women’s lives. Thus, by ‘thinking back through their mothers’, women writers overcome the ‘anxiety of authorship’ and begin to write as women, not as men. They create their own system of self-expression and release the energy of their female sexuality to achieve the true female authority. The feminine texts written with this energy of female sexuality and female language exceed themselves and become works in progress that are constantly evolving. Despite the generational, socio-cultural and historical boundaries, these texts provide further possibilities for a non-phallogentric writing practice for women writers throughout the world. This is the inevitable influence of women’s writing tradition, through which all women speak the same language – the ‘female language’ that allows the writer to subvert and de(con)struct the internalized traditional phallogentric notions and patriarchal modes of signification. Without differentiating between white/black, West/East or lower/upper class concerns, works of women writers interweave and interlace with each other and open new space for all this ‘oppressed group’, where difference is enveloped into the text.

It is precisely these similar concerns about women writing tradition have directed me to make a comparative study. I have realized that much has been written about what feminist critics and women writers say or think about the characteristics of a female language; however, little has been produced about how they say it, especially within the field of comparative women literature. That is why; I have shaped the framework of my study on the expression of that female language in the texts written by women writers who have different philosophic, religious and cultural perspectives in order to understand whether the female language shares common features despite all the

generational and cultural boundaries. Considering these facts, the primary sources of my study has been Virginia Woolf, a seminal figure in feminist thought and women's writing tradition, and Erendiz Atasü, Turkish feminist woman writer, who struggle for subverting and de(con)structing masculinist domination through their works. Refusing to “remain outside entirely, and thus communicate in incomprehensible babble ... *or* remain inside (or perhaps on the ‘underside’) of masculine discourse and imitate it” (Parkin-Gounelas, 1993, p. 142) (*italic is mine*), both Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü are concerned with the articulation of female desire and experience in a feminine way throughout their careers, because they assert that a woman's style of writing is different from that of a man's. Moreover, Woolf and Atasü are aware of the inadequacy of current language in expressing female desire and experience. Thus, they focus on finding an alternative way to reveal the relationship between dominant male ideology and language, which is only possible through creating a female history and tradition of writing with a female language. For these women writers, women must “alter and shape the current sentence” (Woolf, 1979, p.48) in order to “express and transfer their demands, repressed feelings, opinions and lives – trapped inside the patriarchal system – to the collective consciousness of humanity through their own words” (Atasü, 2014, p.33).

Nevertheless, establishing a new female discourse written in a female language is a long process, during which women need to overcome a number of serious problems. One of these problems is the cultural and economic aspects of male dominance on women. Woolf and Atasü point out that women must have economic and mental freedom in order to maintain individuality in their experiences as writers, and develop their own personal style in the area of fiction. In fact, for both writers, attaining economic and mental freedom is the essential step to achieve the ‘freedom of mind’, which is an indispensable characteristic of creative genius. Once a woman writer sets her mind free, she can achieve a personal autonomy and self-determination over her own body. As a matter of fact, reclaiming the body back and writing about it is the most important feature of women writing, because “if a person has no power of decision over her/his own body, s/he does not experience true freedom, but deception” (Atasü, 2009, p.133). Therefore, the primary concern of Woolf and Atasü is to explore that vast, private and unapproachable ‘dark continent’, in which a woman is not dead but kept alive in a death-in-life condition. Being deprived of any possibility of expressing the unspoken areas and verbalizing her female experience, she remains silent there. However, Woolf and Atasü remind women to “fill [their] breast with an urge to come to language and launch [their] force” (Cixous, 1976, p.882).

In fact, ‘writing the female body’ is the crucial element in the textual product for both writers, because the rules and practices of the phallogocentric patriarchal structure are

expressed on and through the female body. On the other hand, while inviting women to give voice to their silenced bodies, Woolf and Atasü also admit the difficulty of ‘expressing the female body’. They assert that there are too many obstacles, one of which is the inexpressibility of the female body through a borrowed man-made language. In addition to the lack of feminine words, for Virginia Woolf, the fundamental reason lying behind this problem is the fact that there are still “many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome” (1979, p.62). Upon my question regarding the inexpressibility of female body in the texts of women writers, Erendiz Atasü summarized the statements of Woolf into one phrase: “internalized shame and guilt” (2016). Then, she clarified further why a woman/woman writer cannot articulate her female body as in the following:

Fault, evil, taboo and internalized shame and guilt... These are the disciplining forces of women's subculture. I think this is what Virginia Woolf has meant in her claim stating that women have too many ‘internal obstacles’. Internalized shame and guilt! This shame is not solely concerned with sexual intercourse. The patriarchally assigned roles – being a wife, a mother and a woman – are also the reasons of that shame. As a result, the wholeness of female existence is destroyed and split up (Atasü, 2006).

What both Woolf and Atasü intend to clarify is that women have always been suppressed and exploited within and through their bodies, which are regarded as the sources of male pleasure and fantasies. Being reduced into the male-defined feminine bodies, women lose their mind/body unity and thereby acquire a split identity. That is why; Woolf and Atasü are in a constant search for bringing split selves together, which is merely attainable through ‘androgynous’ state of mind, in which all aspects of life blend, dissolve and merge into each other to achieve a spiritual balance and union – ‘wholeness’ – through combining the masculine mind and feminine body. In this respect, this study, one of whose aims is to reveal the common features of female language used by women writers in different eras and cultural contexts, has shown that Woolf's theory of androgyny overlaps with Atasü's insistence on ‘mind and body unity’. In fact, Erendiz Atasü agreed with my argument with regard to this association and gave further explanation about it during our interview:

In my opinion, this is the nature of human existence. Every individual embodies both the ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ traits named by civilization. In fact, both female and male hormones are present in the human body (Atasü, 2016).

By consolidating masculine and feminine elements, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü create a “synthesizing unity” (Kristeva, 1984, p. 237) by moving beyond the fixed confines of sexual differences. With this unity, they not only facilitate a new writing practice written in a new poetic language, emphasizing the connections rather than the oppositions between woman and man, but also create a ‘fluid personality’, embracing all that is considered ‘other’ within her being. According to Woolf and Atasü, this ‘fluid personality’ or ‘subject-in-process’ in Kristevan term disrupts the fixed and the hierarchical structures of language in favor of a more fluid, sophisticated and heteroglossic discourse. Indeed, this is another important common feature of their

feminine writing, which does not exist, or is rare if any, in canonical and male-centric texts. For example, Virginia Woolf pays tribute to James Joyce and admits that “the final beauty of [his] writing is never felt by contemporaries” (1982, p.200), but she adds right after that she was not “bowled over” (ibid, p.200) by Joyce. For Atasü, this is because Joyce’s novels do not create “a sense of fluidity and liberation in Virginia Woolf” (2009, p.151). Then, she provides valuable insight into a woman’s way of thinking as in the following:

Joyce’s novels are really formed on compartmentalized structures. Compartmentalization and fragmentation... However, life is not like that! There are also moves towards integration and unity... I was also got bored by James Joyce since I could not find this unity in his novels. We are looking for that unity and trying to find its clues. Joyce is merely interested in testing, analyzing and breaking into small pieces. Virginia Woolf’s novels also seem like having scattered plots, but there are such associative and intuitive notions among them that they integrate into unified whole in an interesting way (Atasü, 2016).

As a consequence, what Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü desire to find is an all-encompassing unity, in which all differences are reconciled. This is one of the common features of the female language and feminine writing against the phallogocentric discourse and its man-made language, which objectifies and disintegrates woman and her body for the pleasure of a male gaze. Through this unity, both Woolf and Atasü propose to subvert the symbolic structures of language, meaning, and writing and reclaim autonomous ‘wholeness’ back to women and their female bodies. Nevertheless, despite advocating an all-encompassing unity, Woolf and Atasü favor the feminine side in their works, because they both acknowledge that the phallogocentric patriarchy would force a woman to either sacrifice her selfhood or remain as a negative ‘other’ existing within the male. Thus, in this unity, “femaleness is plainly its ideal” (Brown, 1984, p.200) and this is very natural since one cannot write without considering “her/his sex and sexual orientation”, as Erendiz Atasü asserts in *The Distance Between Body and Mind* (2009, p.146).

In order to achieve their idea of unity, Woolf and Atasü get back to the starting point: ‘writing the female body and sexuality’. They know that the ‘wholeness of female existence’ is destroyed by the phallogocentric patriarchy, which silences, represses and ignores the female body in order to sustain its hegemony over women. Therefore, they both assert that writing the female body and sexuality is of great importance for women writers to unveil the unspoken and disrupt the established norms and structures. Personally experiencing the inexpressibility of female body and sexuality due to the restrictive man-made language and also the “internalized shame and guilt” (Atasü, 2016) imposed by patriarchy, Woolf and Atasü dwell on a poetic and figurative language, which “combines the sexual desire and affection; the dream of lust and act of flesh” (Atasü, 2009, p.40) to be able to bear out the sexual hypocrisy and double standards of the phallogocentric discourse and language. With this new poetic language,

used as a tool to feel and experience sensation through rhythm, sound and color, the female body moves beyond the limitations of man-made language, and “feel[s] ecstasies and raptures spontaneously and intensely” (Woolf, 1985, p.68). Eventually, by creating a new form drawing from the language of parables and metaphors, both Woolf and Atasü diminish the “distance between ‘sensual’ experience and a language” (Atasü, 2009, p.55).

The comparative analysis of the writers concerning the poetic and figurative language, which makes the unspoken voiced and the unseen visible, has revealed that although Woolf and Atasü share similar purposes, they differ from each other in their articulation of the female body and sexuality. In my opinion, unlike Virginia Woolf, who hides the female body and its sensuality behind the “veil of words” (Woolf, 1979, p.76), Erendiz Atasü depicts and articulates the bodily experiences of a woman through bold and unfettered expressions. However, according to Erendiz Atasü, it may be the consequences of changing attitudes toward gender roles and sexuality. In fact, Erendiz Atasü enabled me to gain a different point of view with her detailed explanation to my question about the bold interpretations she uses in her works, as in the following:

Actually, I do not think I am so brave. I got different reactions about this issue. For example, Pınar Kür and Duygu Asena are much braver than me... We are quite a conservative society. [...] Certainly, there have been so many changing public attitudes towards sexuality since Virginia Woolf’s time, and this variability in sexual attitudes and norms should be considered effective on this issue. The reactions I got were so different. For example, I think I have written *That Scorching Season of Youth* then, some said that “there was no body and sexuality in your writings”. Perhaps, readers could not grasp what kind of sexual connotations the expressions have due to the inwardness of poetic expressions. It is an inward language; I also came to that conclusion later. In fact, this inward language implies that I am not brave. I used bolder expressions in my works then. This time, some people criticized my ‘bolder expressions’ by claiming that “it does not befit your dignity”. That is, all of these various reactions showed me that there are so many contradictory ideas on sex in our society, where there are so many blindfolded people. Furthermore, as you get older, you become freer. I mean, growing away from the experiences of sexual life sets you free from the cloud of shame and leads you to thinking objectively (Atasü, 2016).

As a consequence, Erendiz Atasü’s explanations have revealed once more that the concepts of ‘female body’, ‘female sexuality’ and ‘female language’ are intertwined with political, ideological, socio-cultural and emotional charge. Even though these issues and corollaries have been discussed for a long time by many people, inside and outside the feminist literary field, women are not fully equal players yet, because all patriarchal structures unite in a vicious cycle to reinforce men’s control over women and women’s bodies. Nevertheless, there are still women challenging and writing against hegemonic masculine power and patriarchally constructed notions that concern female body and sexuality. These women are Arachne’s daughters, who use their ingenious artistry and female autonomy in order to give rise to women’s voices. Through their text(ile)s, which are never-ending complaints against the phallogocentric order, they articulate an ageless sense of feminine resistance to the rule of the Father. Indeed, these are the tasks and challenges for Arachne’s daughters – even in the twenty-first century,

because the degrading male gaze still regards women as something ‘belly’ having no brains; as illustrated in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*:

Her head shrinks, her whole body is so small. Instead of limbs, slender fingers cling to her side, the rest is all belly, from where, however, she spins a thread and, as a spider, she exercises her old art of weaving (2004, Book 6, p.142-145).

For many feminist critics, Arachne’s huge belly and shrunken head can be interpreted as a way of visualizing male fantasies. For instance, according to Patricia B. Salzman-Mitchell, “Arachne’s enormous *venter* [is] an allusion to women’s primary function [...], pregnancy and reproduction [and] the ‘minimization’ of her head [...] a symbolic ‘decapitation’ and suppression of female identity” (2005, p.138) (emphasis in original). In this respect, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü carry the double burden of being both a woman and a woman writer in a patriarchal society. They are “torn not only between life and art but, more specifically, between [their] roles as a woman, demanding selfless devotion to others and [their] aspirations as an artist, requiring exclusive commitment to work” (Huf, 1985, p.5). The undeniable link between her real life as a woman and her career put Woolf and Atasü in a double-bind situation, in which they are first assigned a restricted place in the male-dominated society, and then condemned for occupying it. That is, becoming a writer is restrained by the gendered roles of ‘woman’, which means that Woolf and Atasü have to de(con)struct and demystify the patriarchally imposed gender roles in order to rewrite their female destiny. Through writing, they achieve “not only [their] imaginative freedom but also [their] freedom in the real world” (Howells, 1987, p.47) and express their ‘female gaze’ in their works.

Built on these arguments, this study has aimed to reveal how Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü have substituted the traditional male gaze with a ‘female gaze’ to unsettle the patriarchal definitions of the female body and sexuality assigned by the man-made language. Acknowledging the fact that the difference between a woman’s gaze and a male gaze influences the writers’ pens, both Woolf and Atasü emphasize the importance of creating a ‘female language’, a voice that is different from the dominant male language, which is “too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman’s use” (Woolf, 1979, p.48). With a similar view, Atasü insists on exploring, discovering, asserting and realizing their female self-consciousness through ‘female language’, because for her, it is this female language that de(con)structs the phallogocentric discourse and its man-made language. According to her, there are two possible ways:

[The] gendered norms and roles keep the man-made language present and powerful... How would you subvert and de(con)struct that language? There are only two ways: either you will establish a poetic language and express your desires through metaphors, or create a ‘women’s slang’. My personality, shaped through the beliefs and values in my family, drives me to the poetry and the poetic language. However, another woman writer may produce distinguishing works by creating a ‘women’s slang’. It is also possible (Atasü, 2016).

Using ‘slang’ is generally restricted to men as there is “a sense of masculinity permeates the slang concept” (Martin, 2005, p.168), and this may be the underlying reason why more sexual and derogatory slang exists to describe women. In fact, being a woman or more precisely, being ‘a lady’ has been closely linked with speaking “properly” (Holmes and Meyerhoff, 2003, p.104) for a long time. Thus, when a woman attempts to use slang, they are regarded as rebellious and mannish. This stereotype is portrayed in the ensuing exchange quoted from Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*:

‘Jo does use such slang words,’ Amy observed, with a reproving look at the long figure stretched out on the rug. Jo immediately sat up, put her hands in her apron pockets, and began to whistle. “Don’t, Jo; it’s so boyish.” “That’s why I do it.” “I detest rude, unlady-like girls.” “I hate affected, niminy piminy chits.” (2001, p.46-47).

Readers’ attention is drawn to Jo’s mannish behavior, which implies that slang is not for women. Nevertheless, recent studies, especially the sociolinguistic ones carried out across generations and cultures, suggest that slang belongs both men and women equally. According to research findings, the long-established belief claiming that males are slang dominators and females slang eschewers (De Klerk, 1992) does not operate at present time any longer. This may be the inevitable consequences of the changing gender roles in the twenty-first century. In fact, “the girls in question are their feminist grandmothers’ progeny” (2009, p.85), says Michael Adams. However, in my opinion, a woman writer cannot write outside and against phallogocentric representation through ‘slang’, because using slang reinforces the ideologies that sustain gender stereotypes inequality. That is, even if a woman writer can perform the ‘new double bind’ and put men into a new trap through a women’s slang, this new form is inconvenient for the all-encompassing female state of existence and the female language, for which achieving ‘wholeness’ by de(con)structing all the patriarchal binary oppositions is of great importance. I think such wholeness cannot be developed with a women’s slang and its new double bind since it perpetuates dualism and creates new oppressive categories for men, which are steadily used to oppress women. It is not what women writers struggle to realize with their works. In fact, they are aware of the fact that this wholeness is also crucial for men, as Erendiz Atasü stated in our interview: “The wholeness of body and mind will also help men as the patriarchy creates devastating effects on males, too” (2016).

As a result, in order to become a ‘subject-in-process’ that achieves ‘wholeness’ by ‘speaking all’, women must go beyond the fixed confines of sexual differences and create a feminine culture written in a female language. This study aims to prove that it is only through ‘female language’ women can cross borders, which separate cultures and de(con)struct oppositions between woman and man. Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü are vivid examples of this argument. Their works transcend both generational

and cultural boundaries and become the voice of women as both Woolf and Atasü write in such a way, in which “the mind is fully fertilized and uses all its faculties” (Woolf, 1929, p. 82) to disrupt the fixed and the hierarchical structures of man-made language. Their works blur phallogocentric dichotomies and cultural boundaries and create future possibilities for a non-phallogocentric writing practice. There may be still a long way to go but their works keep on claiming the below fact:

Here we are: women. What are our lives to be about? Who are we? Domesticity, personal relations, personal intimacies, stories...’ The novel is that creation by the woman of the woman or by the subject who is in the process of becoming woman (Mitchell, 1974, p.100).

Consequently, this is a long and painful process, because patriarchy is still alive and powerful as all recent research on gender and women studies have revealed. However, through their works, Virginia Woolf and Erendiz Atasü succeed at transcending the man-made language barrier and prove that creating a new world, where all sexes and genders will be equal, is not an impossible dream to be realized as long as both women and men rely on the power of ‘all-encompassing female language’.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Ethics Committee Approval

APPENDIX B: An Interview with Erendiz Atasü on 'Virginia Woolf and Female Language'

APPENDIX A:

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 12/01/2017-294



T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

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Onayı Hk.

12/01/2017

Sayın Muzaffer Derya SUBAŞI

Enstitümüz Y1112.620011 numaralı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Doktora programı öğrencilerinden Muzaffer Derya SUBAŞI'nın "THE DE(CON)STRUCTION OF THE MAN-MADE LANGUAGE AND IDEOLOGY THROUGH FEMALE SEXUALITY AND TEXTUALITY IN THE NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF AND ERENDİZ ATASÜ" adlı tez çalışması gereği "An Interview With Erendiz Atasü on Virginia Woolf and Female Language" ile ilgili soruların 09.01.2017 tarih ve 2017/02 İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Etik Komisyon Kararı ile etik olarak uygun olduğuna karar verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Özer KANBÜROĞLU
Müdür V.



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APPENDIX B

This interview was held in Erendiz Atasü's home on June 3rd 2016. I am grateful for her hospitality, sincerity and amiability. Her straightforward answers and evaluations, which she provided during the interview, enabled me to gain different perspectives. Thus, this interview helped me a lot during my study, especially in the section titled "A Comparative Analysis of the Writers", where I compare the styles and ideas of two writers concerning the female language.

- In the introduction part of your novel, *The Other Side of the Mountain*, you thank to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Nazım Hikmet, and Virginia Woolf. Then, you honestly profess that "Woolf has made [you] get closer to the writer within [you]" (2012, p.11). Why not any other woman writer, but Virginia Woolf?

Erendiz Atasü: I guess, people who like Virginia Woolf's works share similar personality traits with her, or we can say this for all writers. I mean, you can read and like a literary work objectively, or you are deeply stirred by that work as it touches your heart. In my opinion, this devotion is emanated from having similar personality traits – either you know or you do not know. I think people who are fond of Virginia Woolf usually have continual interior monologues in their minds. That is, they are like having two different lives simultaneously. Perhaps, it is a bit schizophrenic idea... I mean, you participate into the social life, take parts in relations, and also have a second life in your dream world, consisting of memories, presumptions, sensations and dreams. This situation is not so obvious to everyone or it is not a continuous event. Virginia Woolf always keeps that interior monologue with herself. Her narrative technique of stream of consciousness relies most on interior monologues. Not any other woman writer, but Virginia Woolf has touched my heart. There are differences, of course, between us when you consider the passage of time and the entire experiences that shape you as an adult.

- With your permission, I would like to move on to 'interior monologues'. Both Woolf and you have succeeded in breaking away from the mainstream novelistic tradition that has forced women writers to articulate and internalize the masculine beliefs and values. In addition, you have both established a new, female-oriented literary tradition, providing women an organic structure that allows their silenced voices and ignored bodily experiences to be expressed

and passed along to their targeted readers with efficacy and candor. To be able to make it more influential, like Woolf, you also use various types of figurative language to create a dream inside the mind of the reader. Moreover, the narrative techniques you use, such as interior monologues, abandoning strict linear time to record the internal consciousness, using free indirect style, bear resemblance to those of Virginia Woolf. Considering all these similarities, do you mind if I define Virginia Woolf as the shaping spirit of your professional life as a writer?

E.A.: I think we can't make such an exaggerated portrayal. It seems to me that the source of my professional life as a writer comes directly from the life itself, which are the surprising pace of life, my lonely childhood without any siblings, reading a lot, my dreams... Apart from these, of course, I've been fascinated by many authors. Being influenced is unavoidable, but it is not a deliberate choice every time. Sometimes, the thing that completely slips out of your mind may have an influence on your writing – something you have witnessed in your life or a literary work you have read. After a long time, you realize that an event which is similar to what you have written has happened before and you have witnessed that, but you have totally forgotten. For example, there is a similar scene in another writer's novel. I realized that when I read this novel for the second time. Maybe, I read that book thirty years ago and I really do not remember that scene within this context. I have totally forgotten, but it influenced me in such a way that I wrote a similar scene in my work. Such influences and interactions are inevitable in literature. Furthermore, when I started to write, my primary concern was just writing, not women's literature. However, Virginia Woolf was highly conscious when she started to write... She was educated in literature and the classics at home, that is a literary-oriented education. I did not get a literature education. I got a science education. I was writing just I felt. I mean, I did not make a conscious effort to create women's literature. However, I think I have contributed to the creation of a women's literature. ... While writing about the sensual experiences of a female body in "That Scorching Season of Youth", the language challenged me – I love Turkish language; in fact, it is a very rich language. Its vocabulary may not be very rich, but it is full of poetic and figurative expressions. You can articulate everything in Turkish language. However, the expressions concerning female body and sexuality are either vulgar or blasphemous... Thus, you have to create a different discourse for those. I have tried to use a poetic language, but some people criticized me about that. They said, "You could have created a women's slang". It is also possible, but slang language is not my style. I grew up in a different kind of cultural environment, where there was no place for slang.

- While speaking, you have mentioned about 'poetic language'. Concerning this issue, Oya Batum Mentese points out that "[your] style is so close to Virginia Woolf's poetic prose" in her essay, "A Backward Gaze from 'The Real Life

of Güneş Saygılı': The Fiction of Erendiz Atasü" (2014, p.78). Do you think having been associated with another writer, depending on his/her similar use of narrative techniques, style or plot, is an obstacle for that writer?

E.A.: No, it is not an obstacle. Styles may resemble each other. In fact, I do not write in that manner every time. I sometimes need poetic imagery, so I have no problem with that.

- I would like to go on talking about the similarities between writers by reading a quotation if you do not mind. "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead" (1982, p.37), says T.S. Eliot in his famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent".

E.A.: Yes, it is absolutely true...

- In this respect, I think you agree with T.S Eliot. You have asserted that having similar narrative techniques, style or plot with another writer is not an obstacle for you.

E.A.: No, it is not. I know that culture tends to flow. I mean, the cultural heritage of the world, involving national and international culture, intermingles with each other and contributes to the cultural flow. It is a cross-cultural interaction. I agree with Eliot's argument.

- As a result, you believe that the preceding ones broaden and expand their descendants' intellectual horizons...

E.A.: Certainly...

- As well as the similarities, you have also striking differences from Virginia Woolf, especially considering your depictions of a female body and its sensual experiences. I think, they are so brave, seductive sometimes, but they are all your own of idiosyncratic style of writing. Relying on Woolf's confession in her diary, you have also mentioned that "Woolf is stranded to voice the bodily experiences" (2009, p.55) in your essay, "The Distance Between Mind and Body".

E.A.: Woolf herself confesses that. "I could not tell the truth about my own experiences as a body, because the obstacles against [the body] are still immensely powerful...", says Woolf.

- Yes, she writes that in her work titled *Women and Fiction*. So, why do you think you are braver than Virginia Woolf at depicting and articulating bodily experiences of a woman? And, do you think this may be your most distinctive feature?

E.A.: Actually, I do not think I am so brave. I got different reactions about this issue. For example, Pınar Kür and Duygu Asena are much braver than me... We are quite a conservative society, so I am not very sure that I am very brave... Certainly, there have been so many changing public attitudes towards sexuality since Virginia Woolf's time, and this variability in sexual attitudes and norms should be considered effective on this issue. The reactions I got were so different. For example, I think I have written *That Scorching Season of Youth* then, some said that "there was no body and sexuality in your writings".

- Are those remarks for *That Scorching Season of Youth*?

E.A.: Not specifically for that one, but yes, I received these kind of critiques for my works. I think I have written *That Scorching Season of Youth* then. Perhaps, readers could not grasp what kind of sexual connotations the expressions have due to the inwardness of poetic expressions. It is an inward language; I also came to that conclusion later. In fact, this inward language implies that I am not brave. I used bolder expressions in my works then. This time, some people criticized my 'bolder expressions' by claiming that "it does not befit your dignity". That is, all of these various reactions showed me that there are so many contradictory ideas on sex in our society, where there are so many blindfolded people. Furthermore, as you get older, you become freer. I mean, growing away from the experiences of sexual life sets you free from the cloud of shame and leads you to thinking objectively.

- Do you think Woolf's sexual abuse by her half-brother and/or her sexual orientation may be the reason why she cannot present the body as a stable identity or a locus of self-actualization?

E.A.: Yes, you are right, but we should not also forget that women are alienated from their own bodies through the dictations of traditional patriarchy.

- "If any person does not have the competence or power to decide about her/his own body, her/his freedom is a kind of illusion", you say in *The Distance Between Mind and Body* (2009, p.33). In some ways, the body is the realm of the self for you.

E.A.: Yes, because our existence consists in the identity of our bodies.

- To prove this, and to light up areas of historical darkness concerning the female body and its sensual desires, you have focused on a woman-centered inquiry, considering the possibility of relaying the shared concerns to future generations, because you strongly believe that "words fly, writing remains...". Here, the central question has been stated by Elaine Showalter: "What would history be like if it were seen through the eyes of women and ordered by values they define?" (1981, p.198) How would you answer this question?

E.A.: It would be a completely different world. What would it be like?... I need to think hard about it to be able to give an answer... I do not know what it would be like, but it would be different. Of course, this difference would not be established through a few women who managed to gain status and power. I mean, there have been women administrators since ancient times, such as Queen Elizabeth I and Catherine the Great... We had a strange kind of management style, directed behind the scenes by a sultan's female relatives like Hürrem Sultan, Kösem Sultan... However, these women do not make any difference in history, because they adopt patriarchal values and its man-made language and behave in accordance with them. If women had had an equal voice in their enactment and administration since those times, everything would be different now.

- It is difficult to guess... 'Wholeness' is another issue. For you, achieving the 'wholeness' in a literary work is one of the most important features of women writing.... You praise "the integrity woven between the lines" (2009, p.149) in your work, *The Distance Between Body and Mind*, and add that "Virginia Woolf's novels, having scattered plots, integrate into unified whole in an interesting way" (2009, p.149). Do you think such integrity may have a de(con)structive effect on the patriarchal discourse and its long-established hierarchical classification of bodies by reordering the positions of sexes?

E.A.: We do not know whether achieving integrity can de(con)struct patriarchy completely. Time will tell. I am also not quite sure if we will be alive then. It is an undeniable fact that patriarchy rules through gender division. We, women – even the would-be liberated ones – live in the disciplining force of women's subculture. This is not merely specific to rural. Among the educated section of the metropolitan middle class, women's subculture is slightly being destructed. There is a greater degree of household task-sharing between the spouses... However, women's subculture is still out there. It begins with menstruation, which is regarded as dirty and disgusting, and continues with birth-control methods. Then, women acquiesce and internalize all these childbirths, unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages and abortions... In addition to these facts, there is another decisive issue: the unseen and unsung 'labor force' of women,

who contribute to the daily life. Women's subculture both makes use of this labor force and suppresses female body and sexuality! 'Fault, evil, taboo and internalized shame and guilt'... These are the disciplining forces of women's subculture. I think this is what Virginia Woolf has meant in her claim stating that women have too many 'internal obstacles'. Internalized shame and guilt! This shame is not solely concerned with sexual intercourse. The patriarchally assigned roles – being a wife, a mother and a woman – are also the reasons of that shame. As a result, the wholeness of female existence is destroyed and split up. Women's literature is a struggle to overcome that division, disunity, and fragmentation in female existence through words. You integrate your fragmented self in another space, which is composed of words and literary creation. I believe that real women's literature questions and transforms the patriarchy by relying on feminine consciousness in any case. This wholeness of body and mind will also help men as the patriarchy creates devastating effects on males, too. I do not know whether a completely different world would be established one day as the current defense mechanisms of the patriarchy are so strong.

- I would like to carry on the issue of 'wholeness' and ask a few questions about *That Scorching Season of Youth* and AyşeAysu. You object to the Cartesian tradition, which promotes and perpetuates a sexual dualism through masculinizing the mind and feminizing the body. For you, the masculinization of mind/thought and the feminization of body/emotions destroy the wholeness of female existence and "split [it] up in such a way that her body, mind, willpower and emotions are ignored" (2009, p.vii). For instance, in *That Scorching Season of Youth* (2000), AyşeAysu "stand[s] aghast like pieces of a broken body swept away" (p.75) when Fethi scolds her: "Women do not touch, but are felt up!" (ibid, p.75). Feeling her body objectified and reduced to a controllable form for male desire, AyşeAysu loses her mind/body unity. She cannot decide which to choose within a split identity: is she virtuous and sexless Ayşe, codified by her mind, or unchaste and vamp Aysu, living in a body defined by male dominant ideologies? In this respect, I think, your emphasis on 'mind and body unity' echoes with Woolf's theory of androgyny, as you both suggest achieving a spiritual balance and union – wholeness – through combining the masculine mind and feminine body. Consequently, the individual gets liberated from the confines of the appropriate and experiences a kind of reconciliation. Do you agree with my conclusion? I mean, do you think there is a kind of similarity between Woolf's theory of androgyny and your emphasis on body/mind unity?

E.A.: Yes, you are right... Such a connection is possible... There are so many fragmented selves because of different reasons... 'AyşeAysu' evokes two different women in one body: Ayşe is the traditional and Aysu is the modern one. In the same

way, Fethi has a split identity. That is, although he is man, the patriarchal structure also splits him up. He is torn between his modern education and traditional upbringing. In fact, he also suffers from the patriarchal dictations.

- There is also another male character, Kamuran, in *A Midlife Dream*. For you, Kamuran combines the characteristics of Sedat and Ferhat. In fact, he is gay, but Feride finds both Ferhat and Sedat's aspects in Kamuran... Thus, while reading this novel, Kamuran reminds me Virginia Woolf's character Orlando.

E.A.: Does he? Yes, why not? It is conceivable.

- As a result, you accept the similarity between Woolf's theory of androgyny and your emphasis on wholeness.

E.A.: In my opinion, this is the nature of human existence. Every individual embodies both the 'feminine' and 'masculine' traits named by civilization. In fact, both female and male hormones are present in the human body.

- Even though you and Virginia Woolf advocate the unity of the masculine mind and feminine body, you both seemingly privilege the feminine side of this literary androgyne over the masculine. Relying on your confession about the difficulty of writing without considering "one's sex and sexual orientation" (2009, p.146), could I deduce that I am on the right track considering my study?

E.A.: Of course, it is a natural reaction. We all have split identities and our feminine side predominates the masculine one.

- In *The Distance Between Body and Mind*, you compare Virginia Woolf and James Joyce and reveal their differences with regard to the issue of wholeness. Virginia Woolf pays tribute to James Joyce, who also abandons the conventional usages of realistic plot structure, characterization and description in his works to achieve the unity and epiphany. However, while admitting "the final beauty of [his] writing is never felt by contemporaries," Woolf continues that she was not "bowled over" (1982, p.200) by Joyce. For you, this is because Joyce's novels do not create "a sense of fluidity and liberation in Virginia Woolf" (2009, p.151).

E.A.: I got too cocky... (She is laughing...). Where is it? Can I see the text?

- Here it is. *The Distance Between Body and Mind*, page 151.

E.A.: Hmmm... Virginia Woolf is talking with Katherine Mansfield – I do not remember exactly where I read that, but most probably, I read it in Katherine Mansfield's diary. "There is so much criticism on Joyce's writing, but he will leave a mark in literary history", say some people. Upon this comment, Virginia Woolf makes some critical remarks, but I cannot remember now what she said.

- She said, "I was not bowled over" (Woolf, 1982, p.200).

E.A.: Oh really? Have you found the original? (She is reading...) I see... Virginia Woolf wrote these statements in *The Crowded Dance of Modern Life* and then, I translated them in this way. Joyce's novels – in fact, I read *Ulysses* twenty years ago. I should read it again – are really formed on compartmentalized structures. Compartmentalization and fragmentation... However, life is not like that! There are also moves towards integration and unity... I was also got bored by James Joyce since I could not find this unity in his novels. We are looking for that unity and trying to find its clues. Joyce is merely interested in testing, analyzing and breaking into small pieces. Virginia Woolf's novels also seem like having scattered plots, but there are such associative and intuitive notions among them that they integrate into unified whole in an interesting way. Woolf is disappointed with Joyce, and so am I.

- Therefore, do you think the underlying reason of this is a woman's gaze is different from a man's?

E.A.: Yes, yes... It can be...

- For instance, in one part of *The Real Life of Güneş Saygılı* (2011), in which the sexual relationship of men and women is defined, you have perfectly exemplified that difference between a female gaze and a male gaze:

He - tiny, impatient, zippy, left out in the cold – is longing for acceptance leering his tail by standing near a round and calm egg cell. (...)

Think it is so feminine? Here is the masculine one! The dauntless creature rushed forward cracking the whip, and turned up to the portcullis to be invaded by canonizing of his ancestors! (...)
You liked it? (p.289).

As a consequence, I think, that difference will influence the ways in which the two genders view the world and art.

E.A.: Impressive portrayal... (She is laughing...). Yes, I agree with you.

- Finally, the difference between a woman's gaze and a male gaze will influence, both directly and indirectly, the writers' pens. You especially underline the

fact that women cannot articulate themselves through the man-made language due to its "insulting aspects of intonation" (2009, p.65) and ignorant attitude towards a female body and its sensual experiences. Then, you add that "as long as a woman writer gets through the patriarchal discourse, she will be able to get into women literature" (2009, p.144). In a similar way, Virginia Woolf asserts women a woman writer is "locked in" (1929, p.21) by the man-made ideologies and its sexist and discriminatory language whenever she attempts the pen, as that language is "too loose, too heavy, too pompous for a woman's use" (1979, p.48). Briefly, you both insist on creating a "female language", a voice that is different from the dominant male language, but right after, admit the difficulty of defining that language: "Women's discourse is not a kind of formula with a certain definition and limitations" (2009, p.144). "A woman's writing is always feminine; it cannot help being feminine: the only difficulty lies in defining what we mean by feminine" (Woolf, 1979, p.70). Although you both mention about the difficulty of defining a common female language, there are so many similarities between your works, such as a figurative language, modernist attitudes, images, and narrative techniques. In fact, Oya Batum Menteşe points out that "[your] style is so close to Virginia Woolf's poetic prose" in her essay, "A Backward Gaze from 'The Real Life of Güneş Saygılı': The Fiction of Erendiz Atasü"(2014, p.78). Considering that you and Virginia Woolf are from a different period and a culture, do you think the reason of all these similarities is the unchanging gender roles, despite the passage of time, and therefore, the reflections of the common concerns of women writers into the language?

E.A.: Yes, you may be right on this point. In fact, these gendered norms and roles keep the man-made language present and powerful... How would you subvert and de(con)struct that language? There are only two ways: either you will establish a poetic language and express your desires through metaphors, or create a 'women's slang'. My personality, shaped through the beliefs and values in my family, drives me to the poetry and the poetic language. However, another woman writer may produce distinguishing works by creating a 'women's slang'. It is also possible.

- Realizing that seems a bit difficult to me as long as women cannot de(con)struct the man-made language and ideologies...

E.A.: Yes, it is difficult... Maybe, we can do that...

- Thank you very much for your time and sincere answers... It is a great opportunity for me...

E.A.: I also thank you. It was nice talking to you.



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