



**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**EXAMINING SILENCE AND GENDER THEMES IN FEMINIST
BILDUNGSROMANE IN THE LIGHT OF *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE*: CLARICE
LISPECTOR'S *NEAR TO THE WILD HEART* AND ANGELA CARTER'S *THE
MAGIC TOYSHOP***

Master's Thesis

Nidanur YILDIRIM

Department of English Language and Literature

Master of Arts in English Language and Literature Department

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DEDICATION



*To all daughters and
Angels in my house*

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Clarice Lispector'un *Yabani Kalbin Yakınlarında* (1943) ve Angela Carter'ın *Büyülü Oyuncak Dükkanı* (1967) adlı romanlarında sessizlik ve toplumsal cinsiyet arasındaki ilişkiyi *écriture féminine* (dişil yazın) kuramı çerçevesinde incelemektedir. Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva ve Luce Irigaray'ın teorik yaklaşımlarından yararlanılarak, her iki yazarın da tarih boyunca kadınların bastırılmasıyla özdeşleştirilen sessizlik kavramını nasıl bir direniş, ifade ve öz-inşa alanına dönüştürdükleri araştırılmaktadır.

Tez, Lispector ve Carter'ın kahramanları olan Joana ve Melanie aracılığıyla klasik *Bildungsroman* türünü yeniden biçimlendirdiklerini; doğrusal olgunlaşma ve topluma uyum yerine içsel yolculuk, bedensel farkındalık ve parçalanmış bilinç temalarını öne çıkararak onu bir feminist *Bildungsroman*'a dönüştürdüklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Romanlarda sessizlik, kadın kimliğinin eril söylemin ötesinde beden ve dil aracılığıyla ifade bulduğu üretken bir yazı biçimine dönüşür. Cixous'nun "bedensel yazı", Kristeva'nın "semiotik chora" ve Irigaray'ın "mimicry" kavramları temel alınarak sessizliğin bir yokluk değil, üretken bir anlam alanı olduğu savunulmaktadır.

Yakın okuma yöntemiyle yapılan analizler, sessizliğin hem direnişin hem de özerkliğin bir yazı biçimi olarak işlediğini göstermektedir. Lispector'un içe dönük anlatımı ve Carter'ın mitleri tersyüz eden dili, *écriture féminine* aracılığıyla eril söylemi yıkarak kadın sesinin, kimliğinin ve yazarlığının sınırlarını yeniden tanımlar. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, sessizliğin *écriture féminine* bağlamında yeniden ele alındığında, patriyarkal normlara karşı çıkan ve kadın öznesinin ifade alanını genişleten radikal bir feminist stratejiye dönüştüğünü ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sessizlik, *Écriture Féminine*, Feminist *Bildungsroman*, Clarice Lispector, Angela Carter

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the intertwined relationship between silence and gender in Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* (1943) and Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) within the framework of *écriture féminine*. By employing the theoretical perspectives of Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray, the study explores how both writers subvert patriarchal discourse by transforming silence—a concept historically associated with female oppression—into a site of expression, resistance, and self-construction.

The analysis demonstrates that Lispector and Carter, through their protagonists Joana and Melanie, reformulate the traditional *bildungsroman* structure, turning it into a feminist *bildungsroman* that privileges interiority, fragmentation, and the body over linear social integration. Silence, in their novels, becomes a linguistic and bodily practice through which the female self articulates identity beyond the symbolic order. Drawing on Cixous' concept of body-writing, Kristeva's semiotic chora, and Irigaray's mimicry, the thesis argues that both writers employ silence not as a lack of speech but as a generative form of feminine language.

Through close textual readings, this research reveals that silence functions as a mode of writing that inscribes resistance and autonomy into the female experience. Lispector's introspective prose and Carter's myth-reversing narratives illustrate how *écriture féminine* dismantles masculine language and redefines the parameters of voice, identity, and authorship. Ultimately, this study concludes that silence—when reframed through *écriture féminine*—becomes a radical feminist strategy that challenges patriarchal norms and opens new possibilities for expressing female subjectivity within modernist and postmodernist traditions.

Keywords: Silence, *Écriture Féminine*, Feminist *Bildungsroman*, Clarice Lispector, Angela Carter.

1.INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Aim of The Study

This thesis aims to examine the gendered attribution of silence to women in Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* (1943) and Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) in light of *écriture féminine*. While silence has traditionally been interpreted as a symbol of women's silencing and oppression within patriarchal systems, this research examines how both authors transform silence into a powerful form of feminine expression and resistance. By examining these two seminal *bildungsromane* through the lens of French feminist theory—particularly the concepts developed by Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray—it aims to demonstrate that silence functions not as absence or lack, but as a complex yet compelling linguistic strategy that challenges phallogocentric discourse and creates alternative spaces for female subjectivity. This thesis explores the strategic usage of silence in the feminist *bildungsroman* from the perspective of *écriture féminine*, centering on two profoundly distinct yet thematically interconnected female protagonists.

The primary aim is to analyze how Lispector and Carter's protagonists utilize various forms of silence—bodily, linguistic, existential, and resistant—as manifestations of *the écriture féminine* in their journeys of self-discovery. Central to this research is the examination of how both novels subvert the traditional *bildungsroman* genre, which has historically focused on masculine models of development characterized by linear progression, social integration, and the achievement of a coherent self. In contrast, *Near to the Wild Heart* and *The Magic Toyshop* present feminist *bildungsromane* that reject patriarchal narratives of female maturation and instead depict growth journeys marked by fragmentation, resistance to social assimilation, and the prioritization of inner consciousness over outer achievement. This includes examining how Joana's nonlinear, introspective narrative and Melanie's traumatic awakening to patriarchal constraints use silence to articulate experiences that transcend the boundaries of conventional language and reject the development expected in traditional *bildung* narratives. The study examines how both novels utilize bodily writing, interrupted temporality, a connection to nature, and the privileging of the semiotic over the symbolic as strategies for writing female identity beyond patriarchal definitions. By analyzing these texts as feminist *bildungsromane*

employing the *écriture féminine*, the study demonstrates that women's maturation cannot be adequately represented through masculine narrative structures and instead requires alternative forms that honor the multiplicity, fluidity, and bodily experience of women's development.

Additionally, this study aims to fill gaps in the literature research in Turkey. Despite its importance in understanding the importance of *écriture féminine*, women's writing, it has not yet been sufficiently studied in Turkey, and only one thesis has examined this concept in relation to different authors. Furthermore, this study will be the first in Turkish academia to provide a comparative analysis of the works of Angela Carter and Clarice Lispector, to examine the concept of the feminist *bildungsroman* specifically considering *écriture féminine*, and to provide the first in-depth analysis of the theme of silence in these authors' works. By establishing the methodological and theoretical foundations for analyzing silence as a feminine form of writing, it aims to open new avenues for research on alternative forms of expression for women outside of speech and to contribute to both national and international discussions on feminist literary practice.

While “voice” and “silence” are often positioned as binary opposites in discussions of women's literature—with voice representing empowerment and silence signifying oppression—this study challenges such reductive dichotomization by demonstrating how silence itself can function as a form of voice within the context of *écriture féminine*. The fundamental distinction between these concepts lies in their relationship to patriarchal discourse: “voice” refers to women's participation in phallogocentric language systems, often requiring them to articulate experiences in masculine terms that cannot adequately accommodate feminine difference, whereas “silence” represents a refusal of this inadequate language and constitutes an alternative mode of expression that communicates through bodily inscription, narrative disruption, and the privileging of interiority over external articulation. This thesis distinguishes between imposed silence—the systematic silencing of women by patriarchal structures—and chosen silence, which operates as a strategic deployment of *écriture féminine*. Furthermore, the study examines various manifestations of silence: corporeal silence (the body speaking what language cannot), existential silence (experiences exceeding verbal expression), linguistic silence (gaps and fragmentation within narrative), and resistive silence (deliberate refusal to speak in the language of oppression). Methodologically, this research employs close textual reading informed by French feminist theory to identify moments where silence operates as feminine writing in both Lispector and Carter's novels, analyzing narrative

structure, linguistic choices, and characterization to reveal how these authors inscribe silence into the fabric of their texts.

As a result, this thesis aims to challenge conventional interpretations of silence as merely oppressive or passive, and instead demonstrate how it can function productively as an expressive and generative force that subverts patriarchal language systems and enables the expression of women's experiences that resist reduction to masculine norms. Through close textual analysis informed by feminist theory, the study aims to illuminate how Lispector and Carter's innovative narrative strategies, with the tools of *écriture féminine*, offer models for writing female subjectivity in ways that honor multiplicity, corporeality, and difference. Furthermore, in doing so, it contributes to more feminist literary scholarship and offers insights into how women writers from diverse cultures develop sophisticated techniques to assert linguistic and narrative authority despite their systematic exclusion from phallogentric discourse.

1.2 Importance of Analyzing Silence and Gender

Throughout history, the systematic silencing of women has functioned as a mechanism of patriarchal authority, reinforcing hierarchies based on gender and restraining female subjectivity not only in real life but also in its fictional representations. Although these representations are not always explicitly depicted, their existence within the vast body of literary works is indisputable. In recent years, research investigating these representations in literature has increasingly gained academic attention, especially with the proliferation of gender studies that emerged alongside women's studies. The spread of these studies strengthens the question: What is gender? Before investigating gender roles, the meaning of the word "gender" should be clearly understood. According to the *Cambridge English Dictionary*, one definition of gender refers to the state of being male or female, expressed through social or cultural differentiations rather than biological ones — the cumulative characteristics related to or imposed upon a particular sex. However, gender cannot be restricted to a single dictionary definition. According to Linda Nicolson, emeritus professor in Women's Studies at Washington University, the term refers to the socially constructed distinction between men and women produced by society (289). In addition, Sarah Gamble defines it as "socially acceptable male

and female behavior is regulated” (209). Most definitions of the term are therefore associated with social and cultural norms assigned to individuals according to their biological sex.

In addition, some definitions conceptualize gender as a “tool,” a notion introduced by Judith Butler. She rejects the idea that there are only two separate and inherent categories—male and female—and critiques the binary framework of gender. In one of the earliest studies in this field, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), she explains gender as a system through which concepts of the feminine and masculine are created and naturalized. At the same time, she argues that gender itself can function as a tool for questioning and dismantling normative definitions of identity (42). In Butler’s theory, gender is conceptualized as a mechanism that governs social roles and identities. Nevertheless, because gender is often perceived as an inborn characteristic rather than an organized system, its formative role in constructing and legitimizing identity is frequently disregarded. These systems of belonging are so deeply internalized that those who fail to conform risk exclusion or even social stigmatization. Moreover, those who do not fit into socially constructed roles often face institutional sanctions that reinforce the idea that gender is not an innate identity but rather a disciplinary mechanism. For these reasons, gender has become one of the most controversial and widely studied topics in recent years.

Another notable definition of gender belongs to French existentialist philosopher and feminist Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986). Her most notable work is *The Second Sex* (*Le Deuxième Sexe*, 1949), which is a pivotal text in terms of feminist theory. In this work, she contributes to the idea of gender. Like Butler, she also claims that gender is a social structure shaped by cultural and social influences rather than suggesting the conventional notion that gender is an established biological or natural state. In her book, she expresses her idea of gender, especially in terms of femininity, by saying “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (293). By this saying, she nearly summarizes the central arguments of feminists. She debates those genders are shaped by external impacts like education and communal expectations. For this reason, she rejects one of the most common ideas that womanhood is an innate or biological fact. She uses “become” instead of “being” because being a woman comes from birth biologically, but actually “becoming a woman” is a process that is managed by “others”. It’s also challenging that Beauvoir criticizes these patriarchal constructions since they locate women as “other” and push the female sex into the background by marginalizing them (293). This point of view provides a basis for many feminist critics, including Judith Butler.

In addition, Sarah Mills' studies principally focus on how language reflects, perpetuates, and occasionally opposes sexism and discrimination based on gender. She aims to draw attention to sexism or gender discrimination. Her research mostly focuses on how language reflects, perpetuates, and occasionally opposes sexism and discrimination based on gender. In her opinion, patriarchal society has a significant impact on the language used. One of her important books is *Feminist Stylistics*. In this book, she focuses on feminist stylistic analysis. She gives examples from different kinds of texts, such as newspapers and advertisements. Then, from the different writers' points of view, including Virginia Woolf, Roland Barthes, and Hélène Cixous, she examines the texts. While examining them, she pays attention to both grammatical structure and meaning as a discriminative expression style. This is because feminist stylistics is a "theorized concern," along with the factors outside of the text. She also thinks the term "context" requires a revision since even if gender can be perceived out of the text, it can also be evaluated through the text. This is because it can leave a trace in the text (Mills 22). Besides, she highlights the messages in the texts. She thinks that every text has a message, either obvious or implicit (Mills 52). By doing this, she examines the term "dominant reading" thoroughly, since gender dominance can be seen in the texts from different social media sources. Additionally, in another book, *Language and Sexism*, she talks about one of the most debated topics in the 1960s: the issue of sexist language. For her, feminist theorists and activists were concerned about the desire to shift language, which discriminates against women and ignores women's activities, in media outlets, because they were not content with women's naming and addressing in text and interaction, as Noori Awad says (3). According to Mills, sexist language encompasses a broad range of linguistic patterns, from gender-specific suffixes like -ette to generic pronouns like he, as well as distinctions in naming practices and insult phrases between men and women. She contends that these language patterns serve to both reflect and perpetuate stereotypes about women (*Language and Sexism*, 10).

With the rising of new definitions of "gender" along with the spread of feminism, the investigation of gender in the literary world has been expanded by examining different genres such as silence, body, and some critical theories like Marxism, post-colonialism, etc. Among these thematic explorations, silence has received dramatic scholarly attention as a crucial site for investigation. For centuries, women and silence themes have been studied together. There are multiple strong reasons for explaining these themes together. But the most prominent one is the relationship between women and silence. Because over the course of history, women have been compelled to remain silent, and this situation has shown a remarkable continuity until

today. Moreover, not only are they forced to stay silent, but it also makes them believe that this is how things are meant to be. This situation has been tacitly imposed on women as if they have to stay silent because there are other people whose voices are deemed more worthy than women's to be listened to. These dominant voices inhibit women from expressing themselves by repressing them. Even if the country or society's culture changes, there is almost no society that allows women to speak loudly. They prefer to use women to satisfy a need, and this need can be anything, whether political, social, or economic. This satisfaction can be observed in various ways, ranging from restricting women's agency through conventional expectations to giving them "symbolic" positions in public discourse. Indeed, they learn. French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu is one of the critics who investigated this issue. The focal points of his works are generally power structures and social hierarchies. In one of his works, *Masculine Domination*(1998), he clarifies the term "symbolic violence", which is a form of violence that is exerted directly on bodies and without any physical force. Moreover, he uses this term for genders by saying, "If women, subjected to a labour of socialization that tends to diminish and deny them, learn the negative virtues of self-denial, resignation, and silence, men are also prisoners, and insidiously victims, of the dominant representation" (49). It can be understood that both genres are the victims of social and cultural institutions, and both develop negative virtues as a result of these institutions. These manifest as silence and resignation in women, whereas they turn men into prisoners. This is because these institutions are so strong that both genders are compelled to conform to their imposed roles. In addition, he uses the word "learn." They learn these negative virtues from others. When they're compared in terms of their restrictive impact, women's burden seems more profound because they are compelled to lose their voices, which means becoming puppet-like characters. That's why many critics who recognize this point, including Bourdieu, have decided to investigate this issue in their studies. From Bourdieu's perspective, it can be understood that women's voices are not only silenced but also intentionally used to further larger systemic goals.

Cultural anthropologist Edwin Ardener and feminist scholar Shirley Ardener theorize gender as a structural power relation wherein dominant groups possess the linguistic and cultural apparatus to articulate their worldview, while subordinate groups—specifically women—are rendered "muted" not because they cannot speak, but because the dominant symbolic systems available for expression do not accommodate their experiences or perspectives. This anthropological approach reveals that silence is not merely an individual condition but a systemic feature of how cultures organize knowledge and communication along

gender lines, with women's ways of perceiving and knowing the world systematically marginalized or made inexpressible within male-dominated discourse. According to their theory, this silent group is under the pressure of the dominant group. The dominant group keeps the muted group under control as well. When they deepened the experiment, they realized that this theory cuts out genders to express themselves in society. In reference to this theory, the dominant group can be read as “males”, whereas the silent group symbolizes “females” (Spender 77). This kind of experiment strengthens society’s role in women’s muteness. Because this muteness is not only considered as their speech for expressing themselves, but as an innate aspect of their fate.

Analyzing gender in terms of linguistics is another new research field which is very significant to understand gender's meaning from a different point of view. For instance, feminist linguists like Robin Lakoff and Deborah Tannen have examined how societal norms and gendered communication styles influence women's silence, whereas theorists such as Dale Spender and Sara Mills have highlighted how discourse and power contribute to framing silence as a gendered issue. Linguistic professor Robin Lakoff defends the idea that women are thought to use language that is more polite, tentative, indirect, and self-doubting. And that makes them quieter in a male-dominated communication environment. Moreover, for her, silence is a socially acquired behavior. Women are taught to “listen rather than speak,” which in turn reinforces conventionally given social roles. Furthermore, women's vocabulary tends to be very different from men's, especially when it comes to politeness techniques. In order to adhere to socially imposed standards of femininity, women are typically characterized as employing more tactful, subtle, and sophisticated modes of speech; they frequently refrain from using slang or foul language (Lakoff 58-59). Another linguistic professor, Deborah Tannen, talks about different communication styles and explains this with the term “genderlect” in her book, titled *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. Silence, in the case of women, usually serves as a communication tactic to avoid conflict or maintain interpersonal relationships rather than as a lack of speaking. According to her, she also emphasizes that silence is a type of communication. Moreover, this communication can be different in places like the home. For example, men and women have different definitions of comfort when it comes to the house. Women see the house as a place where communication is both important and freeing, but men tend to see it as a place of linguistic freedom, where they are no longer compelled to express themselves verbally. Many women view their homes as secure spaces where they can express themselves without worrying about being judged, particularly in close

connections. This disparity illustrates how gendered norms influence both private and public communication styles (Tannen 86). Women feel free to talk in their private place, the home. It's their safe zone for speaking, since there is no one to listen to them profoundly outside. In addition, they prefer to talk at home, maybe because they feel compelled to sustain the communication.

There are also critics who argue that literary language is patriarchal, as French feminists have argued, like Dale Spender. The construction and control of the language belong to men. In this linguistic structure, women are consistently precluded from agency as subjects, and their voices are compelled to silence or their existence rendered linguistically imperceptible. Moreover, she thinks that the discursive space has become monopolized by males, which leads to the subjugation of their speech. Their voice is suppressed; even if they speak, they are not taken seriously. For her, silence is a situation of being silenced or muted (Spender 77). Her opinions have impressed not only people but also publishers. As an example of that, Pandora Press devised a literary study led by Spender's opinions. It is *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers Before Jane Austen* (1986), which includes twenty novels by sixteen authors between 1986 and 1989. When her contribution to speaking out for women is considered, it can be said that she has helped many women writers avoid becoming "disappearing grandmothers," which is a term coined by Ursula Le Guin for female writers who get lost with the four techniques used by mostly male writers to exclude women's fiction from the literary canon (88-94). In a world where women are silenced, she does not remain indifferent to this situation and not only strives to make their voices heard but also paves the way for this.

When examining the novels of Clarice Lispector and Angela Carter, one of the critics to be taken into consideration is Claudine Herrman, in order to understand why the images of silence and sound are used so effectively in Carter and Lispector's works, considering the cultures from which the authors come and the difficulties they experience. In her book, *The Tongue Snatch*, translator of the book Nancy Kline states that the book focuses on themes including the need to appropriate or reshape language and culture, the suppression of marginalized voices, and the inherent conflict that arises when trying to communicate effectively via a linguistic system that has traditionally excluded them (xxv). Furthermore, she also talks about women's isolation and alienation. Herrman concludes that women have experienced two forms of social alienation: first, as members of a culture that is different from their own, and second, as individuals forced to conform to a male-created paradigm. Furthermore, education either suppresses women's language or causes them to adopt men's

language (Richardson 318). In *New French Feminism: An Anthology*, Herrman seeks the women's language in patriarchal society. She believes that if a woman embraces masculine disciplines like imperialism and coldness along the way, she will undoubtedly be mocked (Herrman 89). She evaluates this situation as the success of women, because they will find a place in this male-dominated world, but there will be no trace of their own selves left. She also focuses on the places of women and men. She says that society pushes males to the place where they are today (Herrman 88). She is one of the critics who believes that genders are centered by society. But while doing this, one of them has to sacrifice herself, and undoubtedly, they are females. This is because society already alienates them and aggrandizes males. She tries to create awareness of this discrimination between genders.

While all these studies emphasize the importance of analyzing silence and gender in literary works, many critics examine silence from very different perspectives. Before examining silence in Carter and Lispector's novels, it is important to examine studies on silence in women's writing, exploring how it functions as both oppression and resistance. The next section will examine works that provide a theoretical foundation for understanding how these novels utilize silence as a literary strategy.

1.3 Beyond Absence: Critical Studies on Literary Silence

Silence has long mesmerized writers, poets, and critics as a paradoxical element of literary expression; both as an absence and a presence, a gap that speaks volumes. Far from being only the opposite of the speech or a gap in narration, in literature, silence functions as a complicated communicative and aesthetic tool that shapes the meaning, creates tension, and reveals what words cannot express. The academic examination of silence in literary texts has evolved considerably, with researchers analyzing its functions across genres, its relationship to power and alienation, and its capacity to transmit trauma, resistance, or the indescribable. This chapter will investigate the critical and theoretical literary works on silence, tracing how critics have conceptualized silence as a narrative technique, a thematic concern, and a significant area for interpretation. This research, by synthesizing key contributions from literary theory, narratology, and critical discourse analysis, establishes a source for understanding how silence operates as a meaningful element within literary texts.

One of the first well-known books that researches silence from different perspectives is *The World of Silence* (1948) by Max Picard. For Picard, silence is not only a blank space between the words but a 'world' unto itself that comes before and beyond the language. Picard's persistence that silence has its own positive mode of existence is crucial for later literary criticisms, because it suggests that the unspoken in a text can be as meaningful and important as what is obviously articulated. In this regard, he asserts the idea that silence can refer to a space in which an alternative, non-dominant subjectivity might form, and this idea will be particularly significant for feminist readings of women's writings. Because, as an example, he talks about the "radio-noise" in his book (198). By focusing on the so-called silence in radio, he finds a deeper meaning in it. He even suggests that the feeling that the noise continues even when the radio is off is an important factor in changes in people's sense of trust. According to Picard, this steady noise, which persists psychologically even in the moments of technical silence, indicates how modern people rely on external rhythms to maintain continuity and stability. This insight is crucial to understanding the silences present in both *Near to the Wild Heart* and *The Magic Toyshop*. While Joana's internal monologues often occur at moments when the external voice recedes, allowing the unconscious and emotional aspects of her identity to surface, Melanie's silent retreats similarly reveal the extent to which her patriarchal environments attempt to regulate her inner world through a constant symbolic noise. In addition, the sounds of nature emerging from silence are another point worth emphasizing in Picard's work. Natural sounds emerge in the silence of the main female characters, like the roar of trees or the wind. Picard considers these as a rebellion of nature's silence. They seize and "invade" the human voice, further demonstrating that, along with nature, the female characters in the novel resist through silence (142).

In addition to Picard's work, Maurice Blanchot continues to investigate the silence from different perspectives with his book *The Space of Literature* (1955). For Blanchot, in literature, time is disturbed by a kind of neutral silence that resists mastery, identity, and explicit meaning. Through this, writing truly approaches what is unsaid. Thus, for Blanchot, a writer assumes the persona of a writer through the reflection of their silence. According to him, the place where a writer truly belongs is a language in which "no one speaks" and addresses nothing (or no one) (26). The real voice of the author lies in the silence between the lines. This allows the author to convey what they wish to communicate through the language of silence and its skillful use. This understanding of silence as a structural feature of literary language is particularly resonant in modernist and postmodernist narratives such as *Near to the Wild Heart* and *The Magic Toyshop*.

When these novels' masterful use of fragmentation, gaps, and interruptions, particularly in the speech or thoughts of female characters, is examined through Blanchot's lens, one can see how successful Angela Carter and Clarice Lispector are in writing about silence.

Another work that emphasizes that silence in literary works is not just any silence is by Susan Sontag. In her essay "*The Aesthetics of Silence* (1997)," she argues for the paradoxical use of silence in art, where the artist's quest for freedom represents not a withdrawal from expression, but rather a radical critique of it. Silence is also crucial in defining the artist. Being "a victim of the craving for silence" turns the artist into a person who is the most superior one (Sontag 7). Silence is outside of language, even beyond it. Therefore, an artist must know how to use silence effectively to prove that they are different from others, and even more valuable. Sontag also emphasizes the necessity of silence. For example, when a person cannot express a situation with words, they will inevitably find a way to express it (12). In other words, the person realizes they must remain silent, does not speak, but somehow, through their silence, they speak again and say what they want to say. This is crucial in examining both Lispector's and Carter's novels. Silence in both novels is an 'existential space' accessible only through language, as characters like Melanie and Joana can only achieve their own existence through silence. To create this existential space, the author must express silence through words that transcend linguistic comprehension. Both Carter and Lispector are so adept at conveying this silence through the sounds of objects like clocks and typewriters in the room, or the sounds of nature surrounding them, that the reader can understand the multitude of meanings inherent in each of the quiet sounds and silences present in the novel.

Additionally, George Steiner emphasizes the decline in the expression of silence. Steiner's *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman* (1967) provides a profound exploration of the periodic crises of language and turn to silence as a result of these as both an ethical and artistic response. It offers the primary sources of silence explored in both Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* and Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*. Steiner adds a powerful physiological and ethical dimension to his silence studies by examining in detail the silence that follows extremely violent events like genocide. Because such events are so brutal that they exceed the capacity of language and, more importantly, render it inadequate. In these situations, silence can emerge as both a symptom of crisis and a moral response to these events. By focusing on how to write after such violent events, it signals the point at which silence acknowledges the limitations of language and perhaps its complicity in them. The impact of silence on writing not only extends beyond this but also informs trauma theory, which argues

that the unspeakable is not merely a psychological pressure but also an acknowledgement of the impossibility of fully representing certain forms of suffering. In other words, silence bears witness to what language cannot express, allowing it to be heard, just as in the thoughts of Melanie, Margaret, and Joana. For these characters, silence is both a boundary and an alternative way of confessing thoughts. Furthermore, since both Carter and Lispector witnessed events such as war and exile in their own time, their reflection in the work will naturally be through silence. Because, as Steiner argues, language is limited, so it is silence that conveys the remaining majority, that is, what is important (21).

One of the most well-known studies focusing on the silence of women writers in literary works is Adrienne Rich's *When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision* (1972). Here, Rich argues that women writers, in particular, have historically been erased from literary history or forced to speak in forms and languages not their own. Furthermore, according to her, silence is imposed on women because they are excluded from public discourse, and this can be considered the starting point for the act of revision. Because, as Plate mentioned, the revision mentioned here was to free women from patriarchal influences while gaining their own unique identity (392). The silence in Rich's works is linked not only to the erasure of women's experiences, but also to the possibility of breaking this erasure with new forms of writing. Rich likens this situation to "walking on the ice" (19). In literature, where patriarchal language and discourse are dominant, it is so difficult for women to search for their own language, their own writing, that it is necessary to struggle greatly to find a language that will support ourselves as women. As a result, the female body and women's writing are expected to be highlighted by telling the unspoken through silence. Furthermore, this essay introduces a feminist poetics of silence and speech that directly illuminates the gendered dimensions of silence and self-expression in both Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* and Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*. It is an extremely illuminating work for understanding Joana's struggle with silence because Lispector narrates Joana's thoughts in fragmented language, which represents a rejection of the traditional patriarchal narrative. At the same time, Melanie's literal silence under patriarchal authority and her gradual awakening to resistance are also crucial in understanding Melanie's struggle. The novel's female characters' identities are held in the hands of Uncle Philip—that is, their manipulation by the male character, yet their rewriting by Angela Carter as rebels against Uncle Philip—are among the most compelling examples of the rewriting Rich advocates. Examined from all these perspectives, Rich's essay will become a cornerstone for subsequent feminist readings of silence in women's literature, exploring silence as both oppressive and liberating.

Another work focusing on women's silence in literature is Tillie Olsen's book, *Silences* (1978). This work considerably affected the study of silence in literature by criticizing the systematic and intentional silence of women and working-class writers. One of the most significant points of the book is its distinction between natural silence and unnatural silence (24). She examines key figures in the literary world, by using quotations from writers' letters and diaries, from Herman Melville to Virginia Woolf. She examines how parenthood, financial difficulties, and household duties prevented her ability to be creative, drawing on her own experience of being silent while raising her children. The book is an important guide in examining Carter and Lispector's novels. For example, women subordinate their own needs for expression and development to the emotional and domestic needs of men and children, accepting what Olsen calls the "essential angel," a role that leaves no room for creativity or thought (34). Joana, too, appears to accept the role imposed upon her by marriage, but remains silent and later challenges this role, just as Melanie challenges Uncle Philip's authority through silence. Both characters appear to be forced to live their lives under the dominance of patriarchal authority, yet they resist it through their silence. This distinguishes them from the female characters written by mostly male writers of the period. By creating protagonists who exist on this delicate threshold between voice and silence, Lispector and Carter show us women who possess the capacity for expression but face material and social conditions designed to prevent this from happening, thus making visible the processes of silence that Olsen argues have been naturalized and rendered invisible in literary history. Thus, both novels achieve Olsen's demand: they disrupt the silence about silence itself, refusing to accept women's absence from literary discourse as inevitable or natural, and instead revealing it as a product of systemic oppression that can be named, analyzed, and potentially resisted. For all these reasons, the book will be very useful future studies of silence and quietening in literary history, influencing contemporary debates about multiculturalism and the literary canon.

Another significant exploration of silence in literature since Olsen can be found in Leslie Kane's *The Language of Silence: On the Unspoken and the Unspeakable in Modern Drama* (1984). In this work, Kane examines the silences exhibited on stage in modern drama, demonstrating that silence, rather than simply the absence of speech, is a more powerful form of communication than dialogue on stage. She argues that modern drama uses silence to express psychological tension, social critique, or existential disintegration, and this assumption provides a foundation that can be applied to narrative fiction. Kane distinguishes between various forms of theatrical silence such as pauses, interruptions, ellipsis, and the unspeakable; and also,

experiences are so traumatic or profound that they resist linguistic expression. Lispector's frequent use of ellipsis, breaks, and moments of silence (literal gaps in the text) formally reflects the dramatic silences that Kane analyzes and transforms the dramatic pause into narrative rhythm. Kane's distinction between chosen and enforced silence also becomes crucial in Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*: Melanie's silence under Uncle Philip's authority represents the suppression of voice through force and intimidation; but Melanie also employs strategic silence as a form of resistance, keeping her inner life hidden from Philip's surveillance. Thus, the psychological violence of the unspoken and patriarchal control are revealed, and this is the character's "response," as Kane puts it (20).

Gayatri Spivak's definition for silence in her article "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" (1988) is also significant. Spivak specifically questions whether colonized women can have a genuine voice within dominant patriarchal structures. Silence is not merely the absence of speech, but also an inevitable consequence of a linguistic and ideological order that denies the feminine subject. In this article, Spivak emphasizes that subaltern women are not "unable to speak" because they cannot form sentences, but rather because they are socially and politically impeded in their speech (68). She argues that when women do begin to speak, their voices are often mediated, distorted, or even erased entirely by discursive systems that define them as "other" (66). In this respect, Spivak is a compelling resource for examining silence in literary works from a postcolonial criticism perspective. Spivak's focus here is on lower-class women. This sheds light on the silencing of women by both imperialism and patriarchy in postcolonial contexts, while her theoretical framework provides important data for analyzing silence in literature more broadly.

One of the critics who analyses silence from different perspective is Cheryl Glenn. In *Rhetorical Feminism and This Thing Called Hope* (2018), Glenn examines silence through the lens of 'rhetorical feminism'. Building on her earlier work, *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* (2004), Glenn argues that traditional rhetorical theory has privileged masculine forms of intervention over feminine strategies such as silence versus counter, passivity versus activity, and indirection, withholding, and silent resistance. Silence, as an activity generated by silence, has been widely considered the industrial "rhetorical arts" (Glenn 81). Examining this from this perspective is crucial for strategically examining silence in both Lispector's and Carter's novels, as they, too, use silence as a tool of resistance, as Glenn argues (81). Lispector's prose style itself reacts a form of rhetorical feminism: rather than directly advocating for women's liberation or explicitly criticizing patriarchy, the novel cultivates an alternative form of

feminine subjectivity through its texture and structure. Through Lispector's persistent efforts to articulate female experience despite the inadequacy of language, she experiments with form and style to create a unique form of expression, and in this form, she uses silence as a powerful voice. In *The Magic Toyshop*, Carter intentionally hides Melanie's thoughts and feelings from Uncle Philip, denying him access to her inner world even when she cannot speak aloud. Glenn's strategic use of silence demonstrates that Melanie saves her rhetorical agency even when she is not truly given a voice. Moreover, while her inability to speak stems from trauma and oppression, Carter demonstrates that Margaret develops an entirely alternative discourse, comprised of gesture, expression, and bodily presence, that communicates effectively with those who choose this form of communication, particularly Francie and Melanie. Margaret's 'body rhetoric' demonstrates Glenn's expansion of rhetoric beyond verbal speech to encompass forms of communication and resistance. The novels demonstrate a rhetorical feminism that refuses to privilege speech over silence or accept patriarchal definitions of what constitutes meaningful communication, insisting instead on the multiplicity of ways women express themselves, resist, and claim space, particularly through the strategic use of silence as a rhetorical and political resource.

Another significant writer whose works address women's silence in literature is Anaïs Nin, especially in particular in *The Diary of Anaïs Nin* (1966). These diaries are perhaps one of the most obvious examples of a woman writers' struggle with freedom, self-censorship, and the search for a distinctive voice within patriarchal literature. Unlike her theoretical essays, the difficulty of writing these diaries in privacy, their exploration of the tension between public and individual selves, presents them as both a refuge and a response to the systematic exclusion of women from the literary sphere. These diaries demonstrate the simultaneous silencing of becoming a writer, the almost complete absence of examples of feminine literary authority, and the need to speak out. In fact, silence is sometimes what allows him to bond with his friends. In his letter to Nin, Antonin Artaud notes that their silences are similar; moreover, Nin's loneliness is "vehement silence," which makes his relationship with Artaud even more profound (233). Nin's eloquent portrayal of the silence she experienced as a female writer is significant for the analysis of Carter and Lispector's novels. In the diaries, silence emerges not as the absence of voice but as a narrative strategy through which women express their desires, fears, and creative impulses that cannot be openly expressed within dominant social frameworks. This allows Melanie's silencing and Joana's inner turmoil to be examined as conditions rooted in societal constraints rather than individual choice.

Finally, these studies show that silence is a complex semiotic, rhetorical, and emotional force that influences literary expression throughout cultures and historical periods rather than just the lack of speech or a gap. These theorists provide a valuable resource for the literary study of silence, from Picard's analysis of language as a space of existence to Sontag's development of silence as both withdrawal and radical critique. Feminist scholars such as Rich, Olsen, Glenn, and Spivak have further exposed the gendered politics of silence, demonstrating how patriarchal and colonial structures systematically silence marginalized voices while simultaneously demonstrating how silence can function as a site of resistance and alternative forms of communication. In addition to Steiner's ethical examination of silence, Kane's dramatic analysis provides methodological tools for distinguishing various forms of silence, in addition to Steiner's ethical analysis of silence. When taken as a whole, these theoretical perspectives provide a rich conceptual framework for comprehending how silence functions in modernist and postmodern women's literature, especially in books like Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* and Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart*. In these novels, silence functions as oppression and liberation, absence and presence, the limits of patriarchal language and the possibility of alternative feminine expression. All these texts reveal silence as a strategy of defiance, demonstrating that in literature, especially in women's literature, what remains unsaid speaks loudest through silence.

1.4 Female Silence in Literature

Gender and silence have always been interconnected in literature, reflecting broader sociological issues while also serving as a thematic element. In gendered discourse, silence often becomes a symbol of oppression, marginalization, and exclusion—especially for women—even though it may indicate tranquility or contemplation in other contexts. There are many female characters in the literary canon whose voices are suppressed and whose identities are defined not by what they say but by their inability to express themselves. This silence is a culturally produced and ideologically maintained muting, rooted in patriarchal institutions rather than simply being the absence of speech. Examining the intersection of gender and silence in literature uncovers the power structures that impose this muting, as well as the subtle acts of resistance that allow suppressed voices to be heard—often in the spaces between words. Implicitly or consciously, almost all writers use these silent voices. Some of them render them even more silent, whereas others make them shout and scream. Clarice Lispector and Angela

Carter are among the most prominent of these writers. It is crucial to utilize the theories of critics such as Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray in examining the works of these two writers from the perspective of silence. In *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Hélène Cixous calls for women to write themselves through *écriture féminine*, a language of the body that transcends patriarchal boundaries. Her metaphor of “white ink”—the maternal milk—symbolizes a mode of writing that expresses what cannot be spoken (881). For Cixous, silence becomes not an absence, but a space of creation where women reclaim their suppressed voices through the act of writing. Julia Kristeva’s concept of the semiotic chora represents the pre-linguistic realm of rhythm, sound, and affect, which resists the rigid order of patriarchal language. For Kristeva, silence carries the traces of this maternal, bodily expression that underlies all discourse. Thus, women’s silence signifies an alternative form of meaning—a nonverbal language that disrupts symbolic order rather than a lack of speech. Luce Irigaray’s notion of mimicry proposes that women can subvert patriarchal discourse by imitating it ironically and exposing its inherent limitations. Through mimicry, silence becomes a strategic tool—a form of resistance that undermines masculine authority from within. For Irigaray, women’s apparent submission or silence conceals a subversive echo that destabilizes the very language meant to contain them.

Since gender roles have historically been assigned to individuals based on their sex, the manifestation of these roles has become an important field of research. These roles determine the behavior, duties, and pursuits that are considered suitable for men and women in a particular culture or community (Gershon et al., 6). As a result, different behaviors are expected of individuals depending on their gender. Professor Mine Özyurt Kılıç explains this issue, stating that “these traditional roles demand that while girls remain emotional, boys should be more independent and thus more logical” (43). Consequently, readers seek out characters that embody these expectations. As society grows accustomed to such roles, it looks for a dominant, rational, independent, and headstrong man and an emotional, family-oriented, weak woman. However, many female writers have sought to subvert this. Even when they depict female characters as weak and desperate, they enable them to break free from these roles by fostering growth in their thinking and self-awareness. In world literature, there are numerous examples of women who come to recognize themselves both as women and as individuals.

One of the best examples of this kind of novel is Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (1899). In this novel, the protagonist Edna Pontellier’s identity discovery is narrated. This novel was ahead of its time. It was published in 1899, when women’s missions were clear: cleaning home, cooking, giving birth—preferably a boy—and serving their husbands. Edna was not that kind

of woman since she didn't obey the rules and dared to find her own identity. Edna's extramarital affair, overt references to her sexuality, and intense focus on her sexual desires became the target of criticism from the conservative section of society, probably for these reasons, the novel faced censorship according to scholar Francesco Pontuale (40). The main reason is that a woman, Edna, rejected her role or mission as a woman. She refused to be a mother; moreover, she refused her family. Furthermore, she chose death instead of obeying the roles or destroying herself. Yet, any normal woman in her time never did that because they went back to their home and continued doing whatever their husband said. Researcher Zolia Clark likened her to "a bird" (25). Because she refuses to stay in her cage, she becomes awake. She knows if she stays, she will fall asleep again. That's why she chooses to fly to awakening. For the writer, editor, and professor Martha Cutter, even after Chopin's death, her writings, which remain vivid depictions of women's erasure and silence, offer a "scathing indictment" of the social norms that encouraged and rewarded feminine passivity (34). The phrase "indictment" is a strong expression of Chopin's attitude towards social rules. Because speaking against the social rules is a guilt even for a woman. Society's expectation of her is to stay silent.

Another significant novel that includes gender issues is Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. In this novel, discrimination between genders is so obvious that there are numerous studies about it. Jane Austen was one of the leading female writers in her time because she ventured to challenge her time's gender roles. The 18th century is a period when women had few rights for themselves. However, Austen created female characters who fight for themselves. One of the most well-known of these characters is Elizabeth Bennet, who is the protagonist of the novel. Her mother is a typical 18th-century mother. Her only passion is to marry her daughters to wealthy men. In the novel, the opposite characters can be seen clearly. For instance, whereas Jane Bennet is known for her silence and modesty, which makes her a very appropriate candidate to be a wife for a man, Elizabeth Bennet challenges the societal rules through wit and verbal assertiveness, which makes her an unsuitable candidate for marriage. Women are described in *Pride and Prejudice* as being required to develop a variety of creative and social achievements, including languages, dance, and music, in addition to having a sophisticated style of speaking, walking, and presenting oneself in society (Austen 39). Women who do not have these socially expected traits are frequently excluded or marginalized. Elizabeth eventually finds love and fulfillment despite not fitting this stereotypical female ideal, indicating a complex balancing act between personal agency and social expectations.

As a consequence, the relationship between female gender and silence in literature is a potent instrument for challenging social mores and exposing the ways in which women's voices are suppressed or repressed. It is clear from the examination of several literary works that silence is a complicated concept that represents the meeting point of identity, power, and social expectations, rather than just being the lack of voice. While some characters, like Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, show the possibility of resistance, others represent the negative effects of adhering to gendered stereotypes. Women's continued marginalization in literature highlights their continuous fight for autonomy and acceptance, providing a prism through which to examine gender dynamics in the past and present. In this study, two of the best examples of novels, Clarice Lispector's *Near to The Wild Heart* and Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*, which includes female silence will be examined in detail in terms of these themes in chapters 4 and 5. By combining these novels, we can see how both writers use gender and silence to subvert traditional conceptions of feminine identity. In addition to showing how women's voices are stifled, Carter and Lispector also show how women negotiate, fight, and eventually recover their silenced identities through their characters, Melanie and Joana. These books provide a deep analysis of social norms, showing how silence—whether forced or voluntary—becomes a characteristic of feminine life that both challenges and mirrors the prevailing power systems.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Examination of the *Bildungsroman* Genre and Its Role in Narrative

Before outlining the historical and theoretical development of the *bildungsroman*, it is necessary to explain why examining this genre is crucial to this thesis. Because this thesis examines how female subjectivity is formed, fragmented, and transformed in *Near to the Wild Heart* and *The Magic Toyshop*, a genre specifically concerned with processes of formation, maturation, and self-constitution offers an indispensable critical lens. The *bildungsroman* not only traces a character's external development but also portrays the complex relationship between the social, cultural, and symbolic structures that shape selfhood and identity. Understanding the genre, therefore, allows us to situate the protagonists' struggles not as isolated psychological experiences but as narrative responses to larger systems of power, language, and gender. Furthermore, engaging with the *bildungsroman* tradition enables us to uncover how female development has historically been marginalized or misrepresented in literary discourse. While the classical *bildungsroman* typically focuses on a male subject whose maturation is determined by integration into society, feminist revisions of the genre reveal ways of being that resist closure, coherence, and normative progress. Reading Carter and Lispector within this framework allows the present study to examine how silence, fragmentation, and resistance reshape the *bildungsroman* from within, transforming it into a space where female identity emerges through disruption rather than adaptation. Because of these reasons, before analyzing the novels, investigating this affective genre is inevitably necessary.

Among the literary genres, one of the most salient ones is *bildungsroman*. Before a detailed analysis of the genre, starting from the word's origin may be more illustrative for understanding the novels. The term "*bildungsroman*" is a compound word that has its roots in German and is formed by the combination of two words in German, *bildung* and *roman*. In *The Oxford New German Dictionary*, "*bildung*" refers to education or formation (39), and "*roman*" refers to novel (175). There is a splendid semantic alignment between the term and the narrative structure it describes, because it exposes a genre fundamentally focused on the formation of subjectivity, in which the protagonist's quest for self-awareness frequently mirrors broader

philosophical and sociocultural discussions about moral growth, identity, and autonomy. This term was first used by Karl Morgenstern in the early 1820s in one of his lectures, *On the Nature of the Bildungsroman*. He explains this connection between the term and its meaning because it centres on the protagonist's growth from infancy to a particular stage of maturity. Furthermore, these novels—possibly more so than other narrative forms—make a substantial contribution to the reader's own process of self-cultivation through this depiction (Swales 12). This is because the reader has the opportunity to understand the character thoroughly. In a *bildungsroman*, since a character's inner development as well as physical development is explained in detail, the reader has comprehensive knowledge of the character's progression through almost every stage of his or her life. Some of the best examples of this genre in German literature are *History of Agathon* (*Geschichte des Agathon*) by Christoph Martin Wieland (Swales 19), *Das Glasperlenspiel* by Hermann Hesse, etc. Some critics, such as Martin Swales and Michael Beddow, place Wieland's work into their genealogies of the genre (Graham 283), whereas Esther Kleinbord Labovitz and many other critics see Goethe's work as "the archetype of the genre" (1). Furthermore, according to Franco Moretti, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* symbolizes the inception of *bildungsroman* (3). This is because of the structure, progress, and topic of the novel. It was published between 1795 and 1796 in the form of eight books. Along with the reflections of historical features of the time, readers are concurrently confronted with a carefully contemplated character development.

To understand the importance of feminist *bildungsroman*, knowing the traditional *bildungsroman*'s roots is the key. As an earliest examples, Wilhelm Meister's story is about a young bourgeois man who originally dreams of a career in theater because he sees it as a vehicle for idealistic fulfillment and self-expression. Wilhelm reluctantly gives up his artistic goals in favor of a more practical interaction with society after being disillusioned with the shallowness of theatrical life and the difficulties he faces along the road. As a result of his not only literal but also metaphorical journey, he is exposed to a variety of social classes, occupations, and beliefs, which enable him to go through a process of self-realization and individual maturation. Wilhelm transforms from a naïve dreamer into a more mature person who eventually tries to balance his own aspirations with the demands of the outside world through a number of relationships, struggles, and internal conflicts. Because the reader can discover almost all stages of his development, this novel can be seen as the first example of *bildungsroman*, as it harbors all the features of the genre. This is exactly why this novel attracts numerous critics' attention. Among them, Andrew Crumey alleges that this novel is not just a coming-of-age novel but

something more. According to him, the novel resists any restrictive categorization because it is a tale of education and disappointment and a work of literature, philosophy, and politics; moreover, it is a masterwork that defies these kinds of categorizations (Crumey). Perhaps because of all these reasons, it should come as no surprise that this novel is evaluated as among the four best novels by Arthur Schopenhauer, a well-known philosopher (58). Considering his opinions about literature and the nature of literary authorship, it should come as no surprise that he puts this novel alongside other greatest novels, like *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne or *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. However, he was not the only person who evaluated this novel among imperishable novels. In addition to Schopenhauer, Michael Minden also regards Goethe's novel as of utmost importance. In his study, he uses the word "seminal" to describe the novel (5). This is probably because of Goethe's expression of the main character's missteps and individual experiences. In the novel, imperfection contributes to the character's development; moreover, every failure carries significance in Meister's life and character formation. Because of all these reasons, these theorists, writers, and philosophers embraced a brand-new subgenre of novel. During that period, following the psychological and moral development of a character so intimately was a novel and distinct literary experience.

Another early example of traditional *bildungsroman* is *The History of Agathon* by Christoph Martin Wieland. This masterpiece was published between 1766 and 1767, but later, it was rearranged in 1773 and 1794. The novel tells the story of a young Greek man who lives in ancient times, searching for truth, virtue, and meaning in life and society. In the very opening pages of this book, the book's motto is written in Latin as "*Quid virtus et quid sapientia possit, Utile proposuit nobis exemplum*" (14). The introductory verse on the preliminary page of the novel is taken from Horace's *Epistles* (my trans 58). It is very important for the interpretation of the novel, even before starting to read it, as it provides a deep insight into the thematic direction of the novel. It suggests that the author offers a helpful illustration of what morality and wisdom may accomplish. In addition, this epigraph establishes not only the main character's journey as more than a personal story but also as a didactic example of both intellectual and ethical development.

While Christoph Martin Wieland's *Agathon* (1766–1767) is often celebrated as one of the earliest examples of the German *bildungsroman*, its portrayal of a male protagonist's moral and intellectual development also exposes the deeply gendered foundations of the genre. The novel reflects an Enlightenment ideal of *bildung*—an inward journey toward self-realization through reason and moral testing—yet this ideal is accessible only to male subjects. The

possibility of growth, as depicted through Agathon's philosophical and erotic experiences, presupposes both freedom of movement and intellectual agency, qualities traditionally denied to women. In the book, the character's journey towards maturity from a sensitive young man is clearly and profoundly drawn by the writer. Agathon, raised in a temple by priests within an idealized philosophical environment, embodies the classical Enlightenment belief in rational perfection. However, when he encounters the priestess' inappropriate advances, his idealized view of the world is profoundly shaken, initiating his *Bildungsreise* (journey of self-formation). This pivotal moment—marked by moral dilemma and self-questioning—reflects the genre's emphasis on individual agency and transformation. Yet for female protagonists, such autonomy is rarely possible within patriarchal constraints. Later female writers, such as Clarice Lispector and Angela Carter, would reclaim and transform this masculine narrative of *bildung* by relocating the struggle for knowledge and selfhood into the sphere of the body, emotion, and silence. Thus, Agathon serves as a revealing prototype: it shows how the *bildungsroman* historically privileged male experience and rational development, setting the stage for feminist revisions of the genre that sought to give voice to women's silenced inner journeys.

In the novel, the combination of ancient philosophy and some aspects of Enlightenment thought, such as freedom, reason, and human evolution, can be seen clearly. These events, which contribute to the formation of Agathon's character, make this novel one of the pivotal works in the *bildungsroman* genre. Wieland's language use also has another impressive feature. For Blackall, Wieland's usage of irony in the novel is one of the distinguishing elements. He believes that for Wieland, irony serves as a safeguard against both self-importance and self-immolation (417). Irony can be seen as an indicator of Wieland's wit, which can also be understood from the names of the characters, like Daphne, Hippias, and Psyche, whose names come from mythology or philosophy. These names are used in inappropriate events, such as the seduction of Agathon. Interestingly, although it was typical in novels of the period, Wieland does not give any specific moral message. This is another distinguishing element of the novel. With this work, Wieland contributes to the understanding of the genre, albeit unintentionally. According to Schrader, in *The History of Agathon*, the reader understands that for Wieland, the relationship between art and reality is not only one of imitation or reflection. Because he engages in arguments with contemporary theorists, a critical reevaluation of the term "mimesis," etc., paves the way for this understanding for Schrader (my trans. 8). Under these circumstances, this novel drew high attention in the literary community. According to Martin Swales, this novel is highly suitable for the theory of Blanckenburg. Blanckenburg considers

Wieland's novel a critical literary success because it is written in a different method from conventional novel writing (18). Lorna Martens also agrees with this idea. She believes that for the sake of the constantly altering passions or feelings of a young man, Agathon, Wieland played around with traditional style. She also discusses that Wieland's aim to combine existing narrative strategies is the formation of interiority and the creation of new ones (50). It seems that with his courage for all these new approaches, he managed to make a difference and gain a different place in the world of literature and writing. Most probably because of all these reasons, some critics regard this novel as the first *bildungsroman*, since they first encountered this kind of different narrative approach, such as using different techniques to explain one person's journey to maturity.

After these two pioneer novels, the *bildungsroman* genre has spread and gradually gained importance in the literary world. For many people, reading or, more specifically, discovering the protagonist's development step by step is like mirroring his or her self-discovery process through another person. Thus, for the reader, the act of reading becomes a profound personal and reflective journey. From the viewpoint of writers, they were also very impressed by this new genre since it inspired many of them to examine related themes in their own writing. Consequently, *bildungsroman* not only affected other genres, such as psychological novels and Künstlerromane (artist's novels), but also helped it spread around the world.

One of the most prominent examples of *bildungsroman* in French literature is Stendhal's *The Red and Black* (*Le Rouge et le Noir*), published in 1830 in two volumes. In fact, the full title of the novel is *The Red and the Black: A Chronicle of the 19th Century*. If we start with what the title says, it can be said that this novel gives clues about the 19th century. For the translator of the novel, this title holds a special meaning for Stendhal. The reader discovers France at the time with this book, and this discovery not only depends on the individual experiences of the writer during nearly seven years of life in France but also on his "well-placed" friends (x). In addition to Slater, Boes also believes in the title's secret meaning for reflecting the French of that time. For him, the main purpose of giving the work this subtitle was to emphasize the close connection between the "demise" of its hero and the Bourbon monarchy's death (285). In the novel, the psychological and moral development process of the protagonist, Julien Sorel, is followed. Julien is a person who has a humble background and tries to improve his position in the French community through ambition, education, and manipulation. In his story, the reader can understand his feelings and thoughts in detail because

of the detailed psychological descriptions. On the one hand, Julien wedges himself between the pragmatic desire for political power and the church's cerebral world; on the other hand, he tries to find his way through complicated paths of hypocrisy, class prejudices, and personal idealism. His personality development is shaped by contradictory desires, such as a desire for spiritual and romantic purity as well as a deliberate pursuit of social improvement. Julien's inner conflicts deepen as a result of his love involvements, especially with Madame de Rênal and Mathilde de la Mole, and finally lead to his tragic demise. The novel not only successfully portrays the protagonist's psychological maturation in detail but also presents a sharp critique of institutional power systems, social mobility, and the meaninglessness of ambition. By illustrating the protagonist's rise and fall, Stendhal both maps a person's moral development and highlights the fragility of identities created via performance and ambition. Thanks to this extraordinary character's awareness and the realistic depictions of Julien's rise and fall, Stendhal sharply differs from all of the other romantics (Lukács 81-82). These characteristics lead to the classification of *The Red and Black* not only as a psychological novel but also as a *bildungsroman*. Therefore, for Alison Finch, *The Red and Black* by Stendhal is the first complete nineteenth-century French novel that can be classified as a *bildungsroman* (44). In addition to all these features, this novel also became an important symbol in the *bildungsroman* genre by reflecting the characteristics of the bourgeoisie of the period. This new social class, motivated by the ideas of self-improvement and individual process, saw a mirror for its own hopes and fears in the *bildungsroman*. For Deppman, this genre turns into a kind of "symbolic" genre that represents and questions the important characteristics of the "refunctionalized" main traits of a once-aristocratic mindset (540). This novel is one of the best examples of this symbolic genre, and it is clearly understandable that it is one of the great examples of historical references in France. In the context of early 19th-century French literature, *The Red and The Black* unavoidably becomes a basic example of this genre due to its psychological depth, societal critique, and narrative structure focused on the protagonist's inner growth.

When the *bildungsroman* genre originally appeared, the male characters' intellectual and personal growth was the main narrative focus. On the contrary, female characters were frequently restricted to the home, considered their assigned "comfort zones" in compliance with the social and gender standards of the day. Weir draws the reader's attention, especially in nineteenth-century American novels. In American novels of this period, while women are in their safe harbor, men, as the phrase goes, are in the open seas. This reflects the period's America (427). However, some female characters defy the constraints placed upon them by

intentionally challenging the expectations of their gendered fates and going outside the bounds of their assigned household responsibilities. One of these courageous women is *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. When she wrote this novel in the 1840s, probably even Brontë did not expect that this character would be so lovable and simultaneously shed light on thousands of women trapped in their tiny worlds. One of the most extensively recognized examples of the female *bildungsroman*, or “female development novel,” is Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, which depicts the difference between male *bildungsroman* and female *bildungsroman*. In female *bildungsroman*, resistance is one of the most distinguishing themes. These female protagonists mostly try to dominate or, unfortunately, are suppressed by someone or some authorities. While doing this, they focus on “inner concentration,” as Lazzaro-Weis says (20). It is not customary for women to pursue self-realization or cultivate an independent identity within the nature of patriarchal culture. Rather, the prevalent ideology dictates that women should stay in domesticity—the house, garden, family, or any other space deemed appropriate—and submit to the authority of dominant power structures. During this time, daring to oppose this situation was almost a crime. The character of Jane Eyre, whose quest for self-awareness and independence represents a subdued yet potent kind of revolt, was one of the few who ventured to defy these strict social conventions.

Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) is examined as an early model of the female *Bildungsroman*, representing one of the first attempts to inscribe women’s inner growth and moral agency into a traditionally masculine form. Jane’s struggle to articulate her voice within patriarchal and class-bound constraints anticipates the later feminist concerns of Lispector and Carter. By revisiting *Jane Eyre*, this study situates their protagonists within a literary lineage of women who transform silence into a means of self-definition and resistance. Jane’s character valued herself so much that she not only tried to resist these patriarchal norms but also tried to develop herself emotionally and intellectually. When Brontë created this character, she took the risk of telling all this resistance and development in detail. It is the story of an orphan girl who grows up to be an independent, morally upright, and self-aware lady. From her childhood to adulthood, readers can see her multifaceted development comprehensively. Outside of the world of her fellows, she makes her own way. If she wants to make her dreams a reality, no matter what obstacles come her way, she achieves them, or if she wants to keep away from someone or somewhere, she stays away. For example, immediately after she learns she wants to go, even when she has no money, no relatives, or place to go, she moves away from Thornfield (456). Considering the period in which the event took place, leaving home in such

uncertainty, regardless of gender, is a situation that would create a huge impact among readers, especially female readers. And this is precisely what happened. *Jane Eyre* gave a voice to many women who were excluded and isolated like herself. However, she did this not only with the character of Jane Eyre but also with Bertha Mason, who is called the “mad woman in the attic.” Because Jane Eyre is not the only woman who speaks up in the novel, Bertha also finds her voice. This is again an important fact when the Victorian period in which the novel was written is taken into consideration. The reason for this is that Bertha Mason, as Akman said, represents the violent rebellion of Victorian women against patriarchal constraints and societal norms (41). Because of this comprehensive expression of the time through these extraordinary characters, this novel managed to make such a strong impact in the world.

One of the most significant factors in the popularity of these novels is the autobiographical elements in the novels, which allow readers to interact more intimately and relate to the protagonist’s development. Among these novels, *Jane Eyre*, for example, is one of the best novels that allows the reader to make a correlation between the protagonist and the writer. For LeFavour, the main reason behind this is its presentation as an autobiography and first-person narration, which creates a strong and steady intimate connection, especially through the heroine’s deliberate use of reading and books as instruments for introspection and self-definition (115). Meeting this woman, who had the courage to discover herself, which 19th-century women were afraid to even express, was an indispensable tool of faith and rebellion for women. In addition, Brontë’s efforts to be a governess in her real life and, at the end, to realize her dream are also some other reasons for the relation between Jane and the readers. In Gaskell’s *Charlotte Brontë’s biography*, titled *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Gaskell proves through her and her friends’ letters that she decided to be a governess (100). It is unimaginable to think that such a strong woman would give up on her dreams that she had pursued so determinedly. Readers can see her perseverance to be a governess in spite of her time’s rigid gender norms. As Stević expresses, Brontë is aware of the importance of using the figure of the governess as a powerful tool for the narration of social mobility (87). Because the governess was neither a real family member nor a servant, this in-between position in society had no constant place, considered both as a living place and a working space. For this reason, Brontë illustrated and questioned mobility in society through her ambiguous role.

In conclusion, the *bildungsroman* has functioned as a mirror of socio-cultural change in addition to being a story of personal growth. Early instances of this genre, which was mostly dominated by men, portrayed young men as the only ones capable of fostering moral,

emotional, and intellectual development, such as *The History of Agathon* by Christoph Martin Wieland and *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. But as literary traditions adapted to shifting feminist and ideological discourses, the genre grew to encompass the female subject, which required a rearrangement of the form's basic principles. After being restricted to passive or supporting roles for a long time, female characters started to assert narrative agency, allowing the genre to examine resistance, interiority, and many routes to self-realisation. In addition to diversifying the *bildungsroman*'s thematic and structural components, this change has questioned the patriarchal conventions embedded in previous narratives. In addition to being a historical artifact, the genre continues to shed light on the complex interactions between identity, gender, class, and autonomy by following the protagonist's growth through both social resistance and introspection. This makes it a timeless lens through which the human condition is comprehensively analyzed. Two of the most profound examples that can be considered under this lens – *The Magic Toyshop* and *Near to the Wild Heart* – will be examined extensively under the umbrella of *bildungsroman* in the following sections of this thesis, as they reflect the development of their heroes in great detail from childhood onwards.

2.2. Introduction to *Écriture Féminine* and Its Principles

*The world did not say to her as it
said to them, Write if you choose; it
makes no difference to me. The world
said with a guffaw, Write? What's the
good of your writing?*

(Woolf 39)

Understanding the theoretical framework of *écriture féminine* is essential to this study because it provides the conceptual foundation for analyzing how female writers use language, silence, and the body to resist patriarchal discourse. By examining the principles proposed by Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva, this thesis gains the tools to interpret Lispector's and Carter's narrative strategies as acts of linguistic rebellion and self-inscription. In other words, *écriture féminine* serves as the key through which the texts' silences, ruptures, and nonlinear expressions of identity can be understood.

A woman who was stuck in patriarchal society, of course, tried to find a place for herself, even though her place was clear: generally, at home or wherever her husband wanted. In fact, living in this restricted and alienated world was more precious to men. However, she was well aware that if she did not oppose this situation, it would continue forever, and she would never be able to express her own voice freely. Eventually, women started to challenge this condition in the 19th century, which can be regarded as the beginning of “feminism.” According to Rampton, the beginning of the first wave of feminism officially dates back to the publication of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 (Four Waves of Feminism | Pacific University). From this date onward, women continued to demand their rights on many issues, starting with the right to vote. This was a rebirth of a silent or unspoken problem for people: feminism. These brave advocates were called suffragettes, meaning women who actively fought for women’s voting rights, particularly in early 20th-century Britain (“Suffragette”). The leader of the suffragettes was Emmeline Pankhurst. Firstly, women came together in her home in October 1903 and voted for their new society, the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU). Along with this, they determined the motto of the group: “Deeds, not words” (36). The movement’s primary aim, as the slogan makes clear, was to put the promises made to them into action. However, at the same time, it functioned as a warning signal that if these assurances were not kept, something would be done, as Walker says (4). They were not women who could be easily deceived by simple words or empty promises, since they were very aware of the society they lived in and its rules. The suffragette movement made a tremendous impact on society because no one was expecting this kind of resistance. The extraordinary persistence of the women participating was one of the main sources of the movement’s power. This power came from an invincible confidence in their purpose rather than from physical strength. The subversive potential of this mobilization was well recognized by the patriarchal institutions of the day, which were controlled by male legislators and officials. Initially, these protests started with gatherings and small-scale demonstrations. However, as time went by, they became more violent. While authorities were describing these women’s tactics, they preferred the words “militant” and “hostile.” For Billington, the reason behind this was that the protesters, or suffragettes, were women (670).

The use of force by the suffragettes increased, forcing those in authority to face the movement’s increasing seriousness and urgency. By intensifying the force they used, they were trying to show how determined they were to demand justice for their rights. Nevertheless, politics also had its own determination to maintain control. That’s why, in order to show that

they would not give up their decisions easily, the suffragettes thought that if they increased the scale of their actions, the authorities would understand the seriousness of the situation and they would be able to have the rights they wanted. The protests, which began with gatherings or small campaigns, gradually turned into more violent and detrimental activities. As Purvis says, specifically after 1912, the movement adopted more extreme methods to gain political and public attention as a result of the government's ongoing opposition to women's suffrage. These activities ranged from burning uninhabited places to damaging letters by pouring special fluids (92). In fact, considering the extent of the protests' damage, it's obvious that all these women wanted was to remind others of their existence and their wishes, as well as to show that they still cared about people's lives, even when fighting for their own rights. According to Rover, they abstained from wounding people even by accident (81). However, as years passed, the economic damage caused in their pursuit of rights increased in proportion to their degree of violence. To determine the cost of the suffragettes' activities, numerous studies were conducted; however, one of the most comprehensive ones is C.J. Bearman's *An Examination of Suffragette Violence*. In this study, Bearman highlights the extent of the damage done by the suffragettes. In his opinion, although it is known as a hundred thousand pounds, it is suggested that it is much more than that since small actions are not among these figures (368). Their acts went beyond simply breaking windows and robbing buildings; they also used bombings and arson to cause substantial material damage. Fortunately, all of this did not go unrewarded. They were desiring to have the right to vote and gained it eventually, besides other things such as working under better conditions. Through persistent and well-coordinated efforts, the women's suffrage movement was able to accomplish its main goal: the right to vote. According to the UK Parliament (n.d.), women over 21 did not achieve the right to vote until the Equal Franchise Act of 1928, which gave them the same voting rights as males. And thanks to this act, the number of women voters increased to millions ("Equal Franchise Act of 1928") This is one of the most important examples of how a strong woman will persevere in pursuing her objectives in the face of many challenges, and how one woman's defiance can overcome hardship, inspire other women to support her, and ultimately win what she deserves. One may argue that the bravery to resist served as the impetus for later feminist movements, serving as a template and inspiration for following acts of disobedience and self-expression. This resistance provided them with the opportunity to obtain rights such as the right to vote and the right to hold office, as well as property rights, and was a very important example of courage in fighting against legal obstacles.

With the development of the feminist movement, women became aware that even if they had to fight for their rights, they should have equal rights with men, especially in legal areas. They chose to keep fighting rather than cease their activism because they understood that stopping could be a serious mistake. By persevering in the face of hardship, they not only strengthened their group's resolve but also gained wider support from other societal groups. This persistent commitment helped maintain the movement's momentum over time, guaranteeing that the struggle for women's rights would always be a vital and well-known issue in the public eye. Moreover, this fight continued as the "second wave of feminism" in the 1960s. In this wave, they focused on more comprehensive topics such as sexuality and family, as well as domesticity, workplaces, and inequalities within these spheres. According to Rosen, many things were beyond their power to alter, despite the fact that women in the first wave challenged nearly everything by bringing women's problems to a worldwide context (344). Their interests mainly involved rights or gender-based inequalities, ranging from family or reproductive rights to safe access to birth control (Aikau et al. 4). Their efforts served as a powerful symbol of courage for women, despite the fact that they did not appear to have the authority to address all of these problems. When examining this condition in the 1970s in her *Feminism or Death*, d'Eaubonne evaluates women as "the only group in society capable of leading dissident minorities." This is due to the paradoxical situation in which they constitute a majority yet are treated as a minority (99). This stance challenges the same structures of power that aim to silence women by enabling them to speak from both the center and the periphery of feminist discourse. The Second Wave feminist movement effectively reclaimed and expanded a number of previously challenged rights, making substantial progress toward the unfulfilled objectives of prior campaigns. Their tenacity not only changed the way gender equality was discussed in public, but also paved the way for later feminist groups to tackle the structural issues that still existed. Taking all of these into account, it can be said that the courage of the first suffragettes, like Emmeline Pankhurst and Millicent Fawcett, paved the way for other women to gather their courage, raise their voices, and demand their rights to oppose the existing order. This courage in resistance also set the stage for a larger feminist consciousness that would go beyond political activity and have a significant impact on the literary and artistic domains.

In addition to the political and legal restrictions placed on women, their disobedience also questioned the discursive and symbolic structures that had long suppressed the experiences of women. Questioning these structures is one of the key moments in the emergence of further literary movements, as they are some of the channels used to make women's voices heard.

However, the main problem in this situation is that these structures are male-dominated. The best example of this is literature. Considering the literary works of the time, the most famous ones undoubtedly belonged to male authors. The main reason behind this is that women were confined to areas deemed appropriate for them and expected to fulfill domestic duties. Nevertheless, with the rebellion of women, almost every woman began to question the place that was considered best for them. Women's role in literature was drastically reassessed with the emergence of the Second Wave feminist movement in the 1960s and 1970s—not just as characters but also as authors, critics, and cultural agents. The canon, literary language, and gendered presumptions ingrained in text creation and reception were all questioned by feminist theorists and authors. With this change, writing for women became not just a creative endeavor but also a highly political one, marking an important turning point in literary history.

One of the best examples of the books of the time which interrogate society's condition in terms of gender dominance is Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970). Millett delves into the male-dominated society in detail, marking a turning point in literary criticism theory. Interestingly, Millett does not rely heavily on abstract philosophy; however, the political aspects of literature are exposed by her, particularly the way patriarchal ideals are ingrained in the writings of classic male authors like Norman Mailer and D. H. Lawrence. She proves that literature not only reflects but also perpetuates gendered inequality by examining the power structures in both public and private domains. While doing this, she indicates how all sorts of power are in the hands of males (25). In such a society, it is understandable that women cannot find a place for themselves outside their homes. To examine this more effectively, she focuses on the smallest element of society: the family. For her, patriarchy is initially located in the family. Even if women have citizenship, they are ruled by males; in addition, they do not have any direct connection with the state (Millett 33). It may seem trivial to be ruled by a man when it is considered that each family consists of a small number of people and that society is hundreds or even thousands of times this number. But the real problem starts right here, because these small communities not only consist of their own members but also raise heirs, allowing the formation of future generations. Thus, an absolute and intergenerational sociological problem occurs. As well as sociological evaluation, she also examines this issue in terms of psychology in detail, and the person she consulted on this subject is Sigmund Freud, one of the founders of psychoanalytic theory and the first name that comes to mind when psychology is mentioned. Starting from the concept of "penis envy," she critically focuses on the ideas of Freud, which helped shape some feminist thoughts (Millett 179). Another important

philosopher and theorist whose ideas Millett consulted was Engels, who associated the sexual division of labor with capitalism to a large extent (Ticineto et al. 478). This comprehensive theory, which investigates gender differences—more precisely, certain privileges specific to genders—in detail, is one of the key books for understanding women’s resilience. For some critics and scholars, such as Arthur Marwick, Millett’s book is among the most prominent texts of feminism, and more importantly, radical feminism (687). Women who were already passionate about seeking their rights found a truly powerful supporter with the publication of Millett’s book. Thus, this book can be seen as one of the key tools that helped women make their voices heard.

During the same time period, another school of feminist thought developed in France, one that shifted the emphasis from external critique to interior reform, whereas Millett’s method revealed the patriarchal systems that influenced literary content and canon construction. This marked the start of *écriture féminine*, a literary and theoretical movement that aimed to reimagine language as a platform for feminine resistance and expression. Within the framework of French poststructuralist feminism, the term “*écriture féminine*,” or “feminine writing,” first appeared in the 1970s and provided a radical reinterpretation of subjectivity and writing. This theory is not only philosophical but also political, as it serves as a means of rebellion for women. It is an undeniable fact that women have opened up a wide space to make their voices heard, since *écriture féminine* encourages women to write and reject marginalized voices. Since the 1970s’ male-dominated literary sphere, which restricted their spaces, this theory opened a new space for them other than the domestic one. In this area, one of the biggest weapons that women have is language. In French feminism, theorists mostly focus on language and its power. When considered from this point of view, understanding what the author is saying is the key step for the reader. For *écriture féminine*, writing women’s experiences as well as their bodies is essential (Franks 10). Writing their own bodies is one of the most significant aspects of *écriture féminine*; however, because of that, it is criticized by some writers. By writing themselves—both their experiences and their bodies—women find a way to speak. Thus, speech is very important for *écriture féminine*, as well as silence. Because in literature, male writers form the majority, masculine language dominates; however, *écriture féminine* emphasizes feminine expression. There are many critical studies on this, such as Luce Irigaray’s *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), Susan Gubar & Sandra Gilbert’s *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), Elaine Showalter’s *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness* (1981), and Julia Kristeva’s *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984). These writers focus on the historical exclusion of women from

linguistically dominant systems and call for a feminine method of expression based on the body, plurality, and desire. For Barry, one of the foundations on which many French feminists base their ideas is psychoanalytic theory (119). To reveal how language, identity, and desire are gendered from the beginning, thinkers like Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva both significantly reference and defy Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. A linguistic space from which feminine expression may arise—although in fragmented and non-linear forms—is provided by Kristeva's concept of the semiotic, a pre-Oedipal, maternal realm that defies the symbolic order. Irigaray, on the other hand, challenges the phallogocentric framework of Western philosophy and psychoanalysis, arguing in favor of a multitude of feminine differences that are incompatible with masculine reasoning. Because they create the potential for a language based on the female body and unconscious, these psychoanalytic rereadings become essential to *écriture féminine*, enabling women to write themselves into existence outside patriarchal discourse.

While focusing on these aspects, their emphasis on women's textual and experiential diversity had a significant impact on the development of gynocriticism, a more historically and culturally grounded form of feminist criticism. Gynocriticism is a term coined by Elaine Showalter in her book *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1979). Roughly, it can be said that gynocriticism focuses on the creation of new traditions for women. With an emphasis on women's inner experiences, sisterhood, and subculture, it seeks to establish a new tradition in women's literature, history, anthropology, linguistics, and related fields. According to Showalter, instead of adopting masculine models and theories, the goal of gynocritics is to create a female framework for the examination of women's literature and to develop new models based on the study of female experience (131). It also helps in understanding women's literature; however, to achieve this, critics must be aware of certain issues. Showalter explains that in order to understand women's literary choices and professions, gynocritics must also consider the various trajectories and intersections of political, social, and personal history (Showalter 132). In fact, this is a situation that applies to all writers, because understanding a literary work relies on understanding the life and context of the writer. However, it can be thought that women were warned in this way because they were just starting to take an active role in the literary scene. The goal of gynocriticism is to uncover the depth and diversity of women's literary contributions by recovering, reinterpreting, and reframing the existing body of literature. Patricia Waugh delves into gynocriticism in detail in her book *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. For her, gynocriticism's preliminary aim is to make more female authors, including the forgotten ones, accessible to

readers with the help of Virago Press, which published these books at that time (328). In this way, the male-dominated literary canon of the time had to make room for female writers. Waugh also claims that for Showalter, reading women's art using traditional critical methods forces women's art into the mold of existing male art. Because women have their own way of reading, the difference between dominant male writing and female writing can be understood without relying on gender-biased judgments (329). Showalter and other gynocritics' persistent dedication started a gradual but important change toward seeing women's voices as essential to literary culture, despite the literary canon's deep-rooted opposition to female-centered perspectives.

Despite having developed at around the same time, *écriture féminine* and gynocriticism represent different but related schools of feminist literary criticism. According to Elaine Showalter's theory, gynocriticism examines the psychological, social, and historical backgrounds of women writers in order to create a tradition of female literature. In an effort to provide women with a literary history of their own, it places a strong emphasis on content, authorship, and cultural placement. The emphasis of *écriture féminine*, on the other hand, shifts from historical recovery to linguistic and psychological disruption, as argued by many French theorists. In contrast to gynocriticism, which studies what women write, *écriture féminine* focuses on how women write and how language must transform to reflect female subjectivity. The more experimental and body-oriented ethos of *écriture féminine* might be seen as a source of inspiration for gynocriticism, even if it is not a direct continuation. This is particularly true when it comes to the need for new forms of expression that challenge patriarchal literary norms. Given these methodological and theoretical similarities, it is impossible to avoid thinking of gynocriticism as a framework influenced by the principles of *écriture féminine*. Because *écriture féminine* encourages women to write, it enables many writers—especially Showalter—to expand upon this theory by drawing the attention of critics. *Écriture féminine*, which advocates that women write to the extent that they create their own language and writing style, has influenced numerous writers and allowed them to develop new perspectives and theories inspired by its principles. Its three main representatives—Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva—pioneered the dissemination of the concept of *écriture féminine*.

2.3 Perspectives of Hélène Cixous

To understand how silence transforms into a mode of resistance and authorship in the works of Lispector and Carter, it is first necessary to explore Hélène Cixous' theories of *écriture féminine*. Cixous provides a theoretical vocabulary—through concepts such as body writing, the white ink metaphor, and the call for women to “write themselves”—that directly illuminates how both writers subvert patriarchal language. By encouraging women to write from the body, Cixous dismantles the logocentric structures that have silenced them for centuries. In the context of this thesis, understanding Cixous' ideas allows us to trace how Lispector and Carter convert silence into a language of self-expression and resistance. In other words, by recognizing how Cixous redefines voice and authorship, we can better understand the strategies through which these two novelists reclaim the feminine voice through silence. Hélène Cixous is one of the most important contributors to the evolution of *écriture féminine*. She is notable not just as a thinker but also as a writer who embodies the ideals she defends. That's why she is one of the most influential and courageous female critics of her time. Before delving into her theoretical contributions to *écriture féminine*, understanding her intellectual and personal background is also important for understanding her writing, just as she defends in *écriture féminine*. When her childhood is examined, it is clear that Cixous grew up in an environment that shaped her identity as Hélène Cixous. The societal and political environment in which Cixous was born presented her with two options: either she would adapt to externally imposed identities and norms in order to survive, or she would rebel against those institutions and set out on a path toward creative liberty and self-definition. Cixous chose to be defiant rather than submit to the systems that attempted to define her. Her father was prohibited from practicing medicine under the Vichy regime, her mother had fled Nazi Germany, and the family eventually left Algeria during the independence war (Simons 119). They were forced to flee and search for a new home. That's why Cixous became a profound witness to her family's escape and quest for belonging. In addition, even after Cixous' family found a new home, they still felt alienated because of the sociohistorical conditions of the era. In this sense, it would not be wrong to say that Cixous came from an already alienated or isolated family. The aspect which most strongly affects her literary imagination is her family's background, which is full of exile, displacement, and cultural alienation. Cixous' literary style and themes revolve around recurring motifs of loss, alienation, and the pursuit of a “lost paradise.” That's why it can be said that her personal history is inseparably linked to her creative writing, because it influences the philosophical and

emotional foundations of her works. Despite all these struggles, Cixous never gave up on her intellectual journey. She pursued studies in English literature and later founded Le Centre d'Études Féminines et de Genre in 1974, through which she challenged the dominant patriarchy of her time (Simons 119). The foundation of the institute marked a major advancement in the spread of feminine writing perspectives. Even today, the institute is among the most prominent research centers authorized to grant degrees in gender studies (Le Centre D'Études Féminines Et De Genre). Cixous' determination to advance gender studies among women intensified with the founding and development of the Centre d'Études Féminines, because this not only embodied her theoretical vision but also gave her the confidence to explore more boldly the poetic and political dimensions of feminist writing.

The effects of this situation were most effectively felt in her seminal essay *The Laugh of Medusa*, published in 1975. This article is highly significant for women in the literary world—in fact, not only for women who are already a part of it but also for those who aspire to write. In her seminal work, Cixous encourages women to “write themselves” by transforming personal suffering into an empowering creative force. By doing this, she urges women to reconnect with their own bodies and desires. According to Cixous, writing becomes a kind of protest against symbolic and linguistic structures that have long distorted or excluded women, just as in her concept of *écriture féminine*. This is because *écriture féminine* emerges from a dynamic that embraces diversity and seeks to subvert phallogocentric systems of thought. From this point of view, it can be said that Cixous reflects her *écriture féminine* concept throughout this article. However, according to Bray, *The Laugh of Medusa* is far more complex and comprehensive than that (42). In her essay, she questions Western literature's phallogocentric traditions, which have historically constructed language as a means of logic, control, and binary oppositions—elements she identifies with patriarchal power. For her, the exclusion of women from this linguistic structure is a matter of existence, since being denied language means being denied subjectivity. In that sense, if women are deprived of language, it is as if they never existed.

In addition to encouraging women to write, Cixous also encourages them to write through their bodies, emotions, and desires, as these elements have long been ignored within the male-dominated discourse, leading to the erasure of women's voices in the literary world. For her time, this is a kind of revolution, because for a woman, writing about her body was considered shameful. A woman's body was expected to remain hidden or mysterious. However, doing this was not as easy as it might seem. Cixous believes that the “New Woman” must free

herself from the “Old Woman” because she must find her own way, like an arrow that breaks free from its inherited female identity (Cixous 878). The metaphor of the arrow is important for understanding her writing style. As it is known, when an arrow leaves the bow, it moves directly toward its target without being distracted by the things around it, and no one has the power to stop it. That’s why her greatest expectation for the New Woman is that she will find her own path without being silenced by any pessimistic voices. It is now time for women to be visible and active in almost every field, because they were previously excluded from nearly all areas of influence. Cixous gives an example of this in one of her interviews, referring to a paper that lists the pioneer thinkers who shaped French thought—none of whom are women. Cixous expresses her dissatisfaction with this situation, emphasizing that this is not the first time such exclusion has occurred (svsugvcarter). For a thinker like her, it is difficult to accept that a woman cannot lead or at least contribute to French thought. Thus, she envisions a New Woman who does not have a fixed or rigid identity but is instead an active, courageous leader—like a free arrow.

One of the most significant metaphors in the essay is “laughter,” and it functions not only as a radical revolutionary metaphor but also as an emotional response. In fact, Cixous sees laughter as a feminine act of revolt, a voice that resists oppression, breaks the silence, and undermines the rough voice of patriarchy. In the essay, through laughter, Cixous depicts a moment in which women claim their own voice, body, and desire. A laughing Medusa can be seen as unusual or unexpected because, for centuries, Medusa was depicted in pain, with her bleeding neck, snakes for hair, a terrifying story, and a gaze that turns men to stone; thus, she was seen as an ugliness that could never impress a man, which reflects a patriarchal worldview. Yet, in Cixous’ seminal work, *The Laugh of Medusa*, Cixous presents Medusa as a normal woman who is happy, contrary to the mythological stories that have persisted for centuries. Alban claims that she is in no way connected to death; moreover, her force is erotic and strongly rebellious. In addition, she despises men through her laughter (117). From a male-centered perspective, it is undeniable that being ignored by a woman, whether mythical or not, is profoundly humiliating. Considering all this, the metaphor of laughter is highly meaningful within the framework of *écriture féminine*, because laughter is uncontrollable, irrepressible, and non-linear. Through laughter, women can write themselves into existence as subjects who live, think, express their feelings, and, most importantly, resist.

Cixous further explores the importance of laughter in another notable article, *Castration or Decapitation?* (1981), describing it as women’s eternal laughter following tears, even after

intense suffering (55). It is akin to victory after a long war against a powerful enemy, a triumph won through tears. It is possible that Cixous wants to share this victory and joy with the reader. One of the most striking comments on this topic comes from Verena Andermatt Conley, who argues that *The Laugh of Medusa* represents Cixous' own acrimonious, humorous, sharp, yet convincing laughter (34). In this article, Cixous is not only sarcastic and sharp in her critique of male-dominated discourse, but also highly persuasive in encouraging women to write and challenge this discourse.

Another significant metaphor in *The Laugh of Medusa* is Medusa herself. Medusa is conventionally a monstrous figure in Greek mythology, with snakes for hair, and most importantly, the ability to turn men to stone with her gaze (Hamilton 201). She symbolizes feminine monstrosity and wildness, and, most importantly, represents the "Other" from which men should flee. In many depictions, she is interpreted as very ugly and terrifying, with blood gushing from her neck and a face filled with pain, anger, or wrath, as in Caravaggio's *Medusa* (Caravaggio). However, Cixous strongly challenges this male-centered interpretation. Instead, she portrays Medusa as beautiful and asserts that she is not as frightening as traditionally described. She emphasizes that Medusa is not fatal; she is not ugly, and contrary to the expressions on her face, she simply laughs. To perceive this beauty, there is one condition: look directly at her face (885). According to Cixous, Medusa is far from monstrous. She uses Medusa as a symbol of women's imprisonment or mutedness in a male-dominated literary and linguistic space. Nevertheless, Medusa laughs despite all these oppressive voices. This also exemplifies the reconstruction of writing in a feminine style. In male-dominated literature, women are described as monstrous and dangerous, often differently from their reality, especially regarding the female body. Cixous counters this by presenting the beautiful, laughing Medusa. She encourages women to write through their bodies, thereby rejecting phallogocentric discourse that depicts the female body negatively (Bizzell and Herzberg 1522). According to Cixous, women must invent a language that transcends rigid patriarchal discourse (886). Because this phallus-centered discourse restricts women's voices and bodies. Therefore, she encourages women directly: "Write" (Cixous 876, 889). This is less a recommendation than a command, or guidance from a leader of resistance.

Medusa as a metaphor represents not only resistance to stereotypical phallus-centered writing but also opposition to Sigmund Freud's theory of Medusa. Freud's essay *The Medusa's Head* (1922) interprets Medusa as a symbol of castration from a psychoanalytic perspective. He connects Medusa to the castration complex within the Oedipal framework. According to

Freud, the power of Medusa's gaze symbolizes the fear a young boy experiences upon seeing female genitals and realizing the absence of a phallus, reflecting a primitive castration complex. Freud supports this idea by equating decapitation with castration. Therefore, the terror associated with Medusa essentially represents a fear of castration triggered by a visual encounter (273). Additionally, the snakes on her head are interpreted as phallic symbols meant to alleviate anxiety caused by the absence of a penis, and turning to stone symbolizes the erection. Freud interprets the myth as a psychoanalytical drama, where Medusa does not embody a strong, monstrous woman but rather projects masculine lack and fear. As expected, many female critics, including Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray, strongly criticize this view, arguing that Freud reduces the myth to a passive symbol within a male-centered narrative, thereby diminishing both the myth and the female body. Interpreting Medusa from this male-centric perspective erases her desire, subjectivity, and agency. However, some critics, like Isador Coriat, support Freud, suggesting a correlation between castration and the Oedipus complex, with the latter resulting from castration (285).

For Cixous, psychoanalysis is always a serious concern. Because it is such an important field, it is criticized by many theorists, writers, and scientists. One of the key representatives of this theory, Sigmund Freud, proposed many extraordinary ideas about the conscious and unconscious. This theory has formed the essence of many studies and research for many other critics and theorists, as well as attracting the attention of Cixous and has played an important role in the formation of many concepts, including *écriture féminine*, and in the criticism of many of them. For Cixous, psychoanalysis is a very serious topic to deal with. That's why she not only chooses to play with it meticulously and steadily, but also criticizes the theoretical severities and blind spots, especially in terms of scientific objectivity (Dawson et al. 157). In addition, the theory of *écriture féminine* can be understood both as an answer to Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis's essential evaluations and as a radical deviation. As explained before, Cixous completely rejects this symbolic economy, whereas Freud's classic interpretation of the Medusa myth focuses on castration anxiety and portrays the female body as a passive location of masculine fear and absence. She actually challenges the essence of the psychoanalytical discourse, which considers femininity only in a negative way, for example, as absence, as lack, and most importantly, as the other of the man. According to Cixous, these frameworks deprive women of linguistic agency, desire, and subjectivity and instead turn them into objects within a masculine symbolic order. As a result, she not only reclaims Medusa as a strong, laughing figure in *The Laugh of the Medusa*, but she also rewrites the psychoanalytic narrative by

claiming that women are defined by their creative, expressive, and physical ability to generate meaning outside of patriarchal language rather than by their “missing” phallus.

Moreover, Cixous was highly influenced by another psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, who is the second pioneer critic of psychoanalytic theory. Whereas Jacques Lacan reevaluates psychoanalysis by emphasizing the addition of symbolic order to the phallus and by interpreting the unconscious as a thing which is configured by language, Cixous severely challenges the insistent defense of the feminine absence and lack in that order. She believes that women do not have to resurrect the father’s religion because they do not want it (884). In addition, one of the key assumptions of Cixous is that the main position of the woman or the feminine is on the edges of the Symbolic and therefore it is less roughly anchored and controlled by the symbolic order. Her strict source for this assumption is the idea of Lacan, who claims that the structure of language is centered on the phallus, and it is processed by only one steady signified (Klages 48). Moreover, Freud believes that as humankind, because we live in a patriarchal world, the phallus must be the main signifier, as Lacan supports in his critiques (581). And for Creed, Freud’s position about this idea is problematic (222). But according to Klages, Cixous gives a solution for it: writing via *écriture féminine*. Because *écriture féminine* has no limitation, it’s open to all games; that’s why it can be seen as a deconstructive force (49).

Furthermore, Lacan in many aspects considers the father as a primary factor, especially in desire, not only for the woman’s but also for the children’s desire, too. In Lacanian psychoanalysis, when it comes to the phallic subject - the male -, women are frequently positioned as “Other”. Because this otherness is created by a male subject, she has no consistent place in the symbolic order. Lacan claims that men can be taken into consideration as a relay in embracing the otherness of women (616). In this assumption, it can be stated that women internalize this otherness through a lens that is determined by males. But for Cixous, this kind of framework erases the female subject’s autonomy and reduces her to a tool of male desire. And as a response to this idea, she suggests feminine writing, a literary style that allows women to articulate their subjectivities, bodies, and desires outside of the phallogentric, symbolic framework. According to Cixous, these ideologies prevent women from expressing themselves freely unless they obey masculine standards, and therefore their symbolic oppression continues. *Écriture féminine*, on the other hand, is her call to free themselves from this linguistic captivity; it manifests as a means for women to write from the body, to challenge rational and linear discourse, and to embrace excess, fluidity, and variety. As she writes, “There is always within her at least a little of that good mother’s milk. She writes in white ink” (Cixous 881). The milk

metaphor here is highly significant. This can also be considered as an answer to Lacan in terms of seeing the female body just as a sexual jouissance, which means enjoyment in French. As a result of analytic discourse, Lacan claims that the female sexual organ can only be interpreted if there is the body's jouissance (*On Feminine Sexuality* 7). This concept reduces female sexuality to a highly passive position of an object that raises male pleasure instead of being a source of independent desire or subjectivity. This perspective is inextricably linked to Lacan's insistence on using negation or absence to define gender. He establishes a symbolic framework that excludes feminine agency by limiting women's bodily actuality to a role inside masculine jouissance. However, Cixous, as a nearly direct opposition to Lacan's phallogocentric idea, defends the *écriture féminine*, writing through their bodies. Cixous suggests the flow of milk as an embodiment of a distinct form of linguistic and creative abundance, but Lacan views the Phallus as the primary, structural signifier that arranges meaning within the Symbolic Order, frequently leaving the woman as a liminal and unsymbolizable entity. Inherently connected to the female body and its distinct experiences, this metaphor highlights generativity, fluidity, and an unrestricted expression of the female body. In contrast to rigid binary logic, which depends on the phallus, the milk is continually flowing and feeding. That's why female jouissance cannot be reduced to male desire for it. However, in poststructuralist feminist theory, it can be described as a sexual desire which not only creates a game in language but also subverts the symbolic order, according to Klages (46).

In addition to being a reaction to the phallogocentric frameworks of psychoanalysis, Hélène Cixous' *écriture féminine* also represents a larger rejection of the inflexible framework of binary oppositions that dominates Western philosophy. Similar to Jacques Derrida, Cixous challenges the hierarchization that comes with binary concepts like male/female, rational/emotional, culture/nature, and speech/writing. In these cases, the masculine word is usually given preference while the feminine is reduced to a position of inferiority or lack. Nevertheless, Cixous uses the body and literary language as means of disruption, whereas Derrida uses philosophical investigation to try to deconstruct these oppositions. In fact, as Ginette Michaud evaluates, this situation can be explained as an exchange. She claims that even if this exchange is mostly hidden, it is sometimes more obvious, both Cixous and Derrida provide a highly remarkable back-and-forth (135). Even, they reflect their connections to their works. The titles of some of their books confirm this situation, for instance, Derrida's *H.C. for Life, That is to Say* or Cixous' *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*. It can be said that they make contact through their writings. The connection between the two writers

should not be seen just as a continuation or development. Most importantly, as Frédéric Regard interprets, by writing continuously, Cixous and Derrida not only maintain the psychoanalytic theory but at the same time reject it or even reinvent it (256). Nevertheless, it can be said that both critics' main starting point is the oppositions in psychoanalytic theory. As an example, in *The Laugh of the Medusa*, she summons women by saying "write" many times. She says that through her own actions, the woman must put herself into the text as a way of standing in the world or history. In doing so, she not only opposes the symbolic understanding of Lacan, which supports the objectification of women, but also rejects the theory that reduces women to the definition of only the man or the phallogocentric mentality. It can be said that for Cixous, adopting binary logic is to accept one's own limitations within a language that was never intended for women. Therefore, her goal is to completely eradicate current structures rather than find a place for women inside them. Because it rejects patriarchal standards of coherence and logic, this type of writing, feminine writing, is emotional, chaotic, poetic, and excessive; it resists classification, linearity, and control. To reject them as explained previously, she mostly uses binary oppositions in her works, such as *Inside* (1986), a novel which includes reconstructed binary oppositions such as masculine/feminine, reader/author (Juncker 427). One of the best examples of these works is *Sorties*, which is part of *The Newly Born Woman*. In this essay, Cixous' criticism of the binary oppositions that structure Western metaphysics can be obviously observed. In fact, in the very opening lines of the essay, after a short question, she directly sorts the binaries. In these binaries, the first one is culturally privileged or superior compared to the other, for example, Sun/Moon, Father/Mother, Man/Woman (63). In this work, according to Cixous, these dualisms systematically subjugate the feminine and confine women's subjectivity to a space of otherness, silence, and absence. Moreover, as Abigail Rail says, according to Cixous' opinion, not only the symbolic order's central phallus, but also it is maintained through these opposite hierarchies. And it's no surprise that these hierarchies keep men in a privileged position (Rail 1). Because of this reason, Cixous opens her essay with a really meaningful question: "Where is she?" (*Newly Born Woman* 63) By asking this, she highlights how women are consistently given the binary's negative side, making them silent inside a symbolic hierarchy that only identifies them by their difference from the norm for the masculine. In addition, the question resonates as an echo of centuries of female silence within the phallogocentric order. In her view, this silence is not natural but constructed — a sign of exclusion that can only be undone through writing, through transforming the silence itself into a form of feminine expression. By deconstructing oppositional thinking, Cixous not only exposes the inequity of patriarchal systems but also advocates for a radical rethinking of

language and identity, a shift toward *écriture féminine*, where the feminine completely escapes binary logic. It can be said that with all these renovations, more precisely revolutions in language, male-dominated thinking, and man-centered literature, Cixous not only opens her own way in her times, but also illuminates almost every woman's path, even today.

To sum up, Hélène Cixous offers a radical and revolutionary vision of writing that subverts patriarchal conventions and reclaims female subjectivity by questioning the systems that have historically silenced and removed women from the symbolic order. Her idea of *écriture féminine* subverts the larger system of binary oppositions that have influenced Western metaphysics and literary heritage, in addition to opposing some psychoanalysts, such as Freud or Lacan's phallogentric psychoanalytic framework, which limits women to a position of lack and marginality. According to Cixous' works, women must rebuild language in ways that represent their bodies, desires, and lived experiences because it is not neutral and is firmly rooted in cultural and ideological masculine authority. As might be expected, of course, it cannot be expected to happen immediately. Fulfilling certain important conditions is undoubtedly the most important condition for rebelling against the male-centered symbolic order that has existed until now and is dominant almost everywhere. As an example, for Rosalind Jones, although women need to get rid of the stigmatizing and condescending attitudes towards their sexuality that have greatly impacted their language and culture, this strategy and resistance, *écriture féminine*, is vital (258). Considering the success that they will achieve and the freedoms they gain in writing, women doing everything they can to ensure that *écriture féminine* is adopted and maintained is one of the most obvious scenarios that those who want to watch it will encounter and even have encountered. Reaching this point depends on women's cooperation with their fellows. But for this to happen, those who defend this new structure must shoulder very serious responsibilities, as in the case of Rosalind. One of the most insightful and accurate critics on this subject is Madeleine Gagnon. Gagnon argues that understanding ourselves can be easier as long as we allow the body to flow from within and block out anything that might undermine new forms of writing (180). The flow of the body is a very significant expression in terms of fluidity, which is one of the key themes that *écriture féminine* supports. By speaking of the body flowing, Gagnon actually symbolizes the rebellion against the patriarchal reality that is persistently imposed on language and restricts as well as represses it, through the liberation of inner sensation. According to Gagnon, writing is a type of corporeal transcription in which the author allows her body to immediately inscribe her own knowledge onto the text by opening herself up to the visceral. From this point of view, this notion resonates

strongly with Hélène Cixous' idea of writing the body, which likewise insists that women must write through their bodily intuition, cycles, and sensations rather than imitating phallogocentric discourse. With the flowing body, women are capable of creating writings that are not only original in form but also deeply truthful.

In spite of providing a definitive description of the feminine, Cixous suggests a continuous process of being that is fluid, excessive, emotional, and diverse. In this way, *écriture féminine* is a kind of ontological and political resistance in addition to being a type of writing. Because it not only resists the male-dominated literary world but also masculine authority, which reduces women to an object in almost all fields of life. Cixous refuses to be confined within inherited, even traditional, linguistic structures, asserting the possibility of a liberated female self or subjectivity. Her works clearly demonstrate that women are not ordinary objects—that is, they are not objectified—but that they continue to write as creators of history and even the future, as they are today. Recognizing how Cixous redefines silence as a site of resistance rather than absence enables us to better interpret the ways in which Lispector and Carter reclaim female subjectivity through their writing — turning what was once a mark of exclusion into a mode of empowerment.

2.4. Julia Kristeva's Semiotic and Symbolic Theory

Exploring Kristeva's semiotic and symbolic theory enables us to see how silence functions not as a mere absence of speech but as a subversive, pre-linguistic force through which Lispector and Carter articulate feminine experience beyond the limits of patriarchal language. Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian-French philosopher, literary theorist, and psychoanalyst, is one of the most significant psychoanalysts for the contemporary understanding of feminine writing. She also studied the concept of female identity and the process of discovering and understanding it. Some of the terms she puts forward are revolutionary in terms of literary evaluation and understanding. When considered from this point of view, she brought many innovations and critical concepts to critical philosophy. In her studies, she was highly influenced by Lacanian psychoanalysis, and as a consequence of this influence, she introduced new, groundbreaking terms in literary theory. Among these terms, the most used ones are abjection, the semiotic, and the symbolic. One of the things that has made Kristeva a leading theorist and critic is that she does not limit herself to a single theory or discipline in her work.

Linguistics, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and literature are intersecting points in her studies. If a general evaluation is to be made, it can be said that essentialist conceptions of femininity are questioned by her. According to her, in the subject construction, there is a dynamic understanding. She also studies how some unconscious processes, such as motherhood and physical dimensions, shape language and meaning. Her extraordinary style attracts another important critic, philosopher Roland Barthes. In his May 1970 essay in *La Quinzaine littéraire*, he praises Kristeva for her style and emphasizes how she is brave in using her force to change stereotyped rules or styles. The essay's name *L'Étrangère*, which means "foreign" in English, is an important indicator of Barthes' ideas about her ("étranger"). In his article, he criticizes Kristeva's style with the word "displacement", which is closely associated with the destruction of the established intellectual certainties. He claims that Kristeva displaces the foretold actual authority of the genealogy of monological science (Barthes, *L'Étrangère* 19). Identifying her as a foreigner in this article establishes a position which challenges established hierarchies and introduces new ways of thinking that go beyond academic boundaries. These disruptive approaches cause the transformation of French theoretical discourse. Kristeva stands behind this evaluation of herself. In 2019, in one of her interviews with *Philosophie Magazine*, she actually says that she agrees with Barthes and that she has difficulty in integrating. And for her, this situation will never change and will always remain so (Philosophie). Her resistant stance against all strict rules in society can be considered a clear indication that she will not give up her decision, no matter what difficulties or obstacles she faces, and that she is also happy with this condition.

In addition to this, the environment in which she grew up also played a significant role in shaping her mindset. The sociopolitical and cultural environment of Julia Kristeva's early years in Bulgaria had a profound influence on her intellectual development. When she was born in 1941, during a period of severe ideological control under a Stalinist regime, Kristeva was exposed to a strict school system based on a Marxist-Leninist dogma. One of the schools that she went to when she was 6-7 years old, a maternity school, had an important influence on her. There, she not only learned the French language very well, but also met the French literature's pioneer authors or poets such as Colette, Hugo, and La Fontaine (Jardine 42). Learning the language first deeply helps her to understand the literary works better. However, her only luck was not this maternal school; she was also a witness to the foundation of the Sofia office of the Alliance Française, which aims to spread the French language. But her luck does not come from the foundation's aim; instead, it was considered a place of peace and open communication

despite the violence and political unrest of those days (Jardine 43). This early exposure to linguistic discipline, structural ideology, and openly expressing different ideas prepared her for her subsequent interest in language, subjectivity, and power. After moving to France, she came across a more intellectual society, including Roland Barthes, Lucien Goldmann, and Tzvetan Todorov. It was the contrast between the extremely authoritarian upbringing she endured from childhood and the poststructuralist and liberatory currents of Paris that enabled Kristeva to develop a distinctive voice that destabilizes linguistic certainties and explores the unquestioned undercurrents of identity and meaning. All these early experiments form a fruitful basis for her contributions to feminist and psychoanalytic theory. In this chapter, three concepts that are Kristeva's greatest contributions to these theories will be examined: semiotic, symbolic, and abjection.

One of Kristeva's most significant contributions is the idea that meaning is made up of two components: semiotic and symbolic. Julia Kristeva's semiotic theory is a central element in the reconceptualization of meaning, subjectivity, and language, particularly within the context of feminist literature. Kristeva's semiotic is closely linked with the pre-Oedipal infantile period and Lacan's pre-mirror stage theory, and psychoanalysis. For Kristeva, semiotic indicates a pre-linguistic, pre-Oedipal component of meaning. According to Birgit Schippers, along with the semiotic, which is feminine or maternal, it deals with sounds made by the child that lack meaning and structure (26). It represents a sub-flow in language, which can mostly be identified with musicality, repetition, rupture, and affective intensity.

Semiotic emerges after Kristeva's interaction with Lacanian analysis, especially the separation between the imaginary and symbolic orders. However, it goes beyond the Lacanian analysis framework because it adds a material dimension that highlights the physical, emotional, and rhythmic components of meaning. Whereas semiotic works through what Kristeva refers to as the "chora," which means a drive that precedes symbolic classification, symbolic works through differential relations and grammatical structures. Chora is an important term in the true understanding of the semiotic and symbolic. This chora is borrowed from Plato's *Timaeus* and only resembles either a vocal or kinetic rhythm (*Poetic Language* 25-26). This brings us to the mother-child relationship, where direct verbal communication is absent at first and is understood only through sounds and signs, and these are mostly emotional exchanges between them. That's why this is where semiotics is essentially connected to the mother-child relationship. It is precisely at this point that the maternal dimension challenges the patriarchal structure of existing symbolic language, putting elements of jouissance at the

center of meaning production. From this perspective, semiotics represents a feminine form of specificity that operates outside of phallus-centered logic but is also an indispensable part of the process of signification.

The real potential of semiotics becomes obvious in the analysis of poetic language. In this analysis, she tries to indicate how avant-garde texts activate semiotic elements to challenge the conventional meaning structures. After examining the works of Mallarmé, Lautréamont, and Joyce, Kristeva demonstrates how poetic language activates the semiotic through rhythm, sound play, and syntactic disruption; she calls this process “signifiante,” and it plays an essential role in producing meaning between semiotic and symbolic elements. The importance of this process can be explained by the fact that it reveals the self-renewal capacity of language and its ability to transform itself. Semiotic is a process that constantly develops; thus, in this theory, it is unthinkable to speak of a fixed sense of identity.

In addition to semiotics, the symbolic also plays a crucial role in the development of Kristeva's psychoanalytic and linguistic theory, specifically in the formation of subjectivity, meaning, and social order. Similar to semiotic, the symbolic is also first introduced in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), and the symbolic refers to the fields of law, organized language, and paternal authority. Kristeva, who draws from Lacanian psychoanalysis in the creation of the symbolic, claims that the symbolic represents the infant's separation from the mother and the introduction to the sociolinguistic environment, which Lacan refers to as the Name-of-the-Father—the admission into language and culture. According to Lacan, the Name-of-the-Father is the essence of the symbolic order (230). This process is highly essential for transforming the infant into a speaking subject, but it comes at the expense of suppressing the semiotic, chaotic, rhythmic impulses as well as pre-linguistic connections to the mother's body. Drawing from this theory, it can be said that the symbolic reflects the Name-of-the-Father and requires separation from the mother along with the adoption of cultural laws, norms, and language. It can be said that it is a step in integration into society. In order to secure the heterosexual matrix, the mother must be placed outside of desire, which requires both a gendered denial of the maternal and a linguistic initiation to become a subject inside the symbolic.

The symbolic is mostly related to language and grammar; logic and syntactic norms govern it. Schippers argues that Kristeva's symbolic, like the semiotic, represents a stage of language as well as a stage in the psychosocial development of the individual (28). This evaluation reflects a very significant aspect of her psychoanalytic theory. Because the symbolic

is not only a linguistic structure but also a developmental stage in which an individual finds a place in the symbolic order and becomes a speaking subject. It necessitates the development of an identity that is distinct from the mother, or even as Butler says, the refusal of the mother as a sexual object (Butler, *Body Politics* 106). As can be understood from this evaluation, it's inevitable to say that comprehending the symbolic is the key to understanding how subjectivity is constructed in a cultural framework. This means that in order to guarantee the heterosexual matrix, the mother must be placed outside of desire, which requires both a gendered denial of the maternal and a linguistic initiation to become a subject inside the symbolic.

But, in Kristevan symbolic order, Lacan's mirror stage is an indispensable source. For Lacan, a person's psychological development includes the mirror stage. For Lacan, when a 6-18-month-old baby sees a mirror or mirror-like object that shows his or her own reflection, he or she starts to know himself or herself. Before this stage, the baby cannot separate his or her own desires and needs from the mother's, and these are not altogether. The baby seems to see her own body part by part, but thanks to a mirror or any reflective object, he or she encounters the image of him/herself. Although this image cannot reflect the whole of the baby, the resulting feeling of emptiness or incompleteness lasts a lifetime. As a matter of fact, this meeting with the mirror indicates the start of the Imaginary Stage, which is a pre-Oedipal stage in which the child sees himself or herself as an inseparable part of the mother (Moi 97). For Kristeva, this significant transition from the Imaginary stage to the Symbolic is at the center of identity formation. It is precisely at this stage that Kristeva introduces the concept of abject because this concept is related to the subject's separation from the mother and finding its own essence in *Powers of Horror: An Essay On Abjection* (1980). When the baby separates from the mother, he or she enters the symbolic space; at the same time, he or she is subjected to the law of the father (Pentony 1). Because this separation necessitates entering a new space along with the rejection of the mother. This is one of the stages between the baby and the mother's body. The other stage is abject, which functions somewhere between symbolic and material rejection according to Kelly Oliver (4). It is known as hideous, sickening. What is interesting is that the female body is a source of food once, but then, with the abject, it turns into a threat or a place of contamination. In this sense, it can be seen that the mirror stage is a precursor of abjection: as the subject embraces the consistent, whole subject that he or she sees, he or she begins to realize what must be excluded in this consistency. From this perspective, abjection is the shadow of the mirror stage; or the price of achieving identity or subjectivity is the erasure of what was once hidden from everyone and seemed most private.

When analyzed in terms of *écriture féminine*, there is an inextricable theoretical connection between *écriture féminine* and Kristeva's conception of abjection, which is the process whereby the individual subject expels that which is perceived as contaminating or threatening, particularly through the rejection of the maternal body. Both concepts emerge around the same time and arise from French post-structuralism. However, most significantly, both of them profoundly aim to annihilate the patriarchal symbolic order, especially regarding how it governs the female body and subjectivity. According to Kristeva, the abject is the thing that the subject must reject in order to join the ordered, rigid world of language, law, and social identity, which is known as the symbolic order. Abjection becomes a prior condition for subject development since this rejection mainly targets the maternal and her body—the fluid and formless—and it is also where all object relations begin (Smith 1). However, what the reader needs to know is that the abjected things never really disappear. They are always within the boundaries of subjectivity, and they pose a threat of return in the shape of bodily fluids, trauma, and boundary-transgressing habits.

Likewise, *écriture féminine* also tries to find a way to write these kinds of margins. The white ink metaphor of Hélène Cixous is the best example of it. In her unforgettable essay, *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous uses this expression to give an example of a form of writing that flows from the female body. Natalie Rose Dyer questions the reason why she uses it as a source of creation and finds that instead of red ink, which symbolizes menstruation, she prefers the white one, which symbolizes the mother's milk (89). The maternal and the physical are effectively reclaimed in this type of literature, and Kristeva claims that this is precisely what the symbolic order requires from us. As a result, *écriture féminine* and abjection share a common revolt against the inflexible, masculine structures of the symbolic.

Moreover, what is theorized as abjection becomes real through *écriture féminine*: the clean and meticulously drawn boundaries of rational discourse are disrupted, formal stereotypes are ruined, and perhaps most importantly, the bodily, the excessive, the inconsistent, the false, and even the abject are allowed to surface. By doing so, the processes of cultural exclusion and even repression that Kristeva speaks of become even more obvious. In addition, through writing about them via *écriture féminine*, the abject finds an owner again in women; what was once marginalized becomes a source of creative and political power. That's why it can be thought that abjection not only prepares the appropriate space for *écriture féminine* but also provides an opportunity to confront the boundaries of language and reintroduce the feminine body into discourse. Kristeva transforms silence into an analytical tool to read how female subjectivity

resists the symbolic order. Through the semiotic, silence becomes a form of revolt — a rhythm that destabilizes patriarchal meaning while offering new modes of feminine articulation.

In conclusion, although Julia Kristeva's significant theories of the semiotic, symbolic, and abject may seem sophisticated, they have provided a highly illuminating and useful framework for understanding female subjectivity, language, and identity formations within the dominant patriarchal symbolic order and, more importantly, against this order. Kristeva presents a mother-centered, pre-Oedipal space that disrupts rational, linear, and stereotyped symbolism through semiotics, revealing not only the emotional but also the physical dimensions of meaning creation. The symbolic, on the other hand, is the area of language coherence and social law, where the subject is molded by the exclusion of the maternal. However, this exclusion, indicated by the concept of abjection, determines the foundation of identity, because the subject becomes whole only by rejecting what threatens its boundaries, especially the mother's body. Kristeva, in fact, not only reveals the internal violence in the subject formation that occurs in this process of self-repression through solid and rational observations, but also opens the way for subversion or a return to the beginning. It is precisely at this point that it intersects with *écriture féminine*, because it also aims to reintroduce the suppressed femininity into discourse by embracing corporeality, fluidity, and every positive or negative moment that occurs in this process. In effect, from this perspective, *écriture féminine* makes what Kristeva theorized reality: it makes the abject visible, restores the sense of motherhood as it should be, and disrupts the seemingly unshakable dominance of the symbolic by revitalizing the semiotic. Because Kristeva offers the philosophical and psychological foundations for a feminist poetics that defies linearity, rationality, and exclusion, her contributions are not just diagnostic but also creative. Kristeva's work allows for a radical reinvention of language—a language that communicates with, through, and beyond the feminine body—by linking the fields of psychoanalysis, linguistics, and feminist theory. Cixous and Kristeva provide the essential theoretical grounding for understanding silence as resistance and transformation. Yet to grasp how silence becomes performative — a deliberate echo that undermines patriarchal speech — we must now turn to Irigaray, whose concept of *mimicry* expands this conversation within the feminist *bildungsroman*.

2.5 Luce Irigaray: Mimicry, Silence, and the Subversion of Patriarchal Language

Luce Irigaray is one of the most provocative and revolutionary voices in understanding contemporary feminist theory. Especially when it comes to her critique of Western philosophical discourse and its institutionalized rejection of the feminine, her voice can be heard more clearly. Irigaray, who studies philosophy and linguistics, challenges the phallogocentric structures of language, subjectivity, and cognition that have dominated Western traditions from Plato to Freud. The best example of this is her PhD dissertation on psychoanalysis, titled *Speculum of the Other Woman*, published in 1974. Her work necessitates a radical rethinking of ontology, epistemology, and linguistic representation rather than only being evaluated in pre-existing male-centered discourses. The idea that female subjectivity has been made invisible, not only by absence, but also by restriction and misinterpretation in masculine logic, is at the heart of her critique. Irigaray responds by presenting a lyrical, disruptive style of writing and thinking that rejects patriarchal conventions. Her study of psychoanalysis, especially Lacanian theory, allows her to reveal how masculine paradigms shape language, identity, and desire, and how women need to “speak” differently in order to be heard. As a result, she creates strong techniques like mimicry and mimesis that subvert prevailing representations from within. By doing this, Irigaray not only challenges patriarchy but also creates room for a plural, embodied, and feminine subjectivity that cannot be reduced to the masculine Other. From this point of view, her theories or opinions are invaluable in terms of evaluating and understanding the ideas of Kristeva and *écriture féminine*. Irigaray provides new opportunities for feminist politics, ethics, and language through her philosophical interventions that are based on difference rather than sameness.

When considering the underlying reason for Irigaray’s challenge to Western thought, it can be seen that this reason is the belief that the “feminine” has traditionally been constructed as the lack, absence, or Other of the male in philosophical and psychoanalytic systems. As she states in one of her best-known works, *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), the woman is defined piecemeal according to man’s desire and is reduced to the role of a mirror reflecting the male subject rather than expressing her own subjectivity (30). In fact, this criticism stems from the fact that it attempts to reveal phallogocentric prejudices that have been established and even stereotyped in language and symbolic structures, especially those perpetuated by Lacanian psychoanalysis. Irigaray also argues that the removal of distinctions between individuals has an undeniable power to transform philosophical discourse. Therefore, it is essential to re-evaluate

certain symbols of philosophical discourse (Irigaray 74). Irigaray, therefore, argues for the creation of a new symbolic order. This order does not invalidate female subjectivity, but instead allows it to emerge on its own terms. This can only be achieved by opening up a new space for sexual difference that respects the need not to restrict the “other” by being reduced to a mirror role. Irigaray was one of the rare female critics who dared to challenge this discourse. Her revolutionary intellectual journey was shaped by her desire to explore the multifaceted impact of sexual differences, which are real, as opposed to what is commonly known—that is, what society has constructed—and the multifaceted impact of preexisting perspectives on language and the symbolic order. She does not hesitate to seek a way to deconstruct the male-centered traditional culture. According to Junfeng Zhan, the only way to achieve this is to continue to dismantle the traditional phallogocentric structure and enable women to become aware of their own subjectivity by expressing their own bodily pleasure (22). As it is understood from this, Irigaray resists assimilation within the patriarchal order, and by doing so, she carefully approaches the structures that had previously been stereotyped. Rather than embracing them, she strives to subvert them. Her focus on a specifically bodily and poetic style of writing allows her to make significant contributions to feminine writing. This is precisely what *écriture féminine* aims to achieve. Furthermore, the surprising aspect noted by Moi is that despite some differences, Cixous and Irigaray’s views on feminine language and femininity are virtually identical (142). The most important aspect of those is criticizing the phallus. She states this situation with phallogocentrism.

The term phallogocentrism is one of the significant terms in analyzing Irigaray’s Western philosophy criticism. This term is a combination of phallus and logos, and it is a term that very definitively prefers masculinity and masculine discourse to femininity and bodily experience. As explained earlier, in Lacanian theory, the phallus is known not only as a biological organ but also as a symbol of power and meaning in the symbolic order. Irigaray also argues that the existing traditional symbolic order is phallogocentric. This is because the existing system has adopted a male-centered logic as the determinant of meaning and, at the same time, of the subject. This has led to the suppression and disregard of women’s existence by masculinity, and to women’s adoption of this role. Therefore, phallogocentrism is not only a framework in which men oppress women or, more accurately, govern them, but also defines identity and truth through the male subject and solidifies this in existing linguistic and epistemological structures. As Inahara points out, Irigaray argues that although women exist in a system where they are seen as mirror reflections of men and are not allowed to have an identity

or reflection of their own, women must have a mirror of their own in the shape of a bowl, that is a speculum, in order to be themselves (50). Even worse, according to Irigaray, females are a kind of product used for exchange and this makes them inferior in society (*This Sex* 84). According to Braidotti, Irigaray both approves and condemns the usage of women as a source of currency (223). From this point of view, it can be said that Irigaray observes and evaluates the society and the system in which she lives.

About the phallogocentric discourse, one of Irigaray's most stunning and remarkable theoretical contributions is mimesis, which is used as a feminist strategy to resist and restructure this discourse. Although traditionally understood as imitation, from Irigaray's perspective, imitation is more meaningful and even more intelligent than mere imitation. This is perhaps the only way for women to escape their current predicament. Moreover, it relates to the very thing imposed upon them, the very duty they are charged with. However, this time, it is not something a woman must do out of duty, but rather something she must do to escape her current situation. While women are currently forced to submit to their husbands, fathers, and all other masculine structures, for Irigaray, this represents an opportunity that is even more elusive. In Irigaray's theory, mimesis should be used consciously as a strategy employed by women. Thus, submission, a constant duty for women, becomes an affirmation, enabling these women to escape their current situation cleverly (76). Irigaray drew on Plato's concept of mimicry and transformed it into a feminist perspective (131). By imitating certain roles assigned to women, such as the hysterical, the seductive, or the irrational, she aimed to revitalize a new form of writing that not only embraced but also subverted the patriarchal text. From Naomi Schor's evaluation of mimesis, it can be inferred that mimesis is not so much a reversal of misogyny as a way of revealing femininity, which is buried beneath patriarchally defined femininity (Schor 54). As can be seen from this, true femininity is buried beneath the femininity defined by patriarchy. Irigaray, however, argues that this femininity is very different from what is known and, more importantly, that it can be freed from the new femininity that has been thrust upon it. A careful examination of Irigaray's writings on mimesis reveals that Irigaray's aim is not to reverse male dominance or to suggest that women should be superior. On the contrary, Irigaray proceeds in a more rational and logical manner. Irigaray's mimesis not only repeats the identity of women defined by patriarchy, but also makes visible the difference underlying that identity, or more clearly, the unique voice of femininity itself. While doing this, she uses mimesis, which has a playful quality, as Susan Kozel says, but it is again a much more powerful tool than is generally thought (116).

As a result, both Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva have fundamentally altered the flow and study of feminist theory by introducing innovative and simultaneously subversive forms of writing and subjectivity that challenge the phallogentric order. Through imitation and mimesis, Irigaray reclaims the maternal and the physical, expressing a feminine subjectivity that defies assimilation into male-centered language systems, whereas Kristeva highlights the semiotic as a pre-Oedipal, bodily force that upends the symbolic order. Although they approach it from different perspectives, both thinkers contribute to the application and theoretical interpretation of *écriture féminine*, which is based on the female body, affect, and excess just as in the method of Cixous. Both critiques converge on the common belief that language and symbolic structures have historically excluded femininity and that the only way to reclaim it is through fragmentation, displacement, and the creation of new forms of expression rather than through its totalization. While Kristeva exposes unconscious elements related to motherhood in language and Irigaray imitates the patriarchal order in order to subvert it from within, Cixous identifies the radical potential of women's writing as an act of both personal and political liberation. Together, these three critics shape the theoretical and aesthetic foundations of *écriture féminine*, encouraging women by attempting to create a language that speaks the unspeakable and writes the historically unwritten. Through Irigaray's concept of mimicry and *parler femme*, silence transforms into an act of both imitation and resistance. Within the feminist *bildungsroman* framework, this strategy reveals how female protagonists such as Joana and Melanie navigate patriarchal language not through direct confrontation but through echo and re-creation — rewriting silence as a generative space of voice, becoming, and subjectivity. In this thesis, I will draw on the theoretical ideas of Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Helene Cixous to analyze Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart* and Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*, two literary texts that interact deeply with the fundamental building blocks of *écriture féminine* and feminist psychoanalysis. In these novels, I will examine how language, identity, and most importantly, feminine subjectivity are shaped and at the same time corrupted within patriarchal structures. These texts, which come into prominence by rejecting fragmentation, poetic excess, and stereotyped narrative styles, not only reflect the kind of revolutionary and liberating expressions at the heart of *écriture féminine*, but also encourage the reader through the characters in the works.

3. AUTHORIAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

3.1 A Rebel in Whispers: Clarice Lispector's Life and Literary Impact

Clarice Lispector is one of the most salient novelists and short story writers in 20th-century Brazilian literature, evolving from modernism to realism. Her appearance in the literary world is unexpected and extraordinary. The reason behind this is that she challenges conventional categorizations with silence as a singular, mysterious, and sometimes uncanny force. To understand the inner meanings of this outstanding voice, it is inevitable to first examine her background. In Clarice Lispector's fiction, silence transcends the mere absence of speech and becomes a vital mode of expressing the unspoken layers of feminine consciousness. Her characters, often caught between introspection and repression, embody silence as both struggle and revelation. In *Near to the Wild Heart*, Joana's fragmented thoughts and shifting perceptions reflect an interior world where language fails, yet meaning intensifies—turning silence itself into a narrative voice. In this chapter, I will introduce this remarkable writer, her background, and her narration style.

Although there are not many sources about her life, the most well-known and reliable ones are *Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector*, written by Benjamin Moser, and, with translation by Margaret Jull Costa, *Too Much of Life: The Complete Crônicas by Clarice Lispector*. As a matter of fact, her life can be divided into two parts: Ukraine and Brazil. Ukraine played a key role in the formation of her identity. She was born in a small town called Chechelnyk, Ukraine, in December 1920, with the name Chaya Pinkhasovna Lispector, as the third daughter of Pinkhas and Mania Lispector (Jozef 24). The family already had two daughters: nine-year-old Leia and five-year-old Tania. The Lispectors had a Russian-Jewish background. During Lispector's infancy, the family moved to Brazil, first to Maceió, and eventually settled in Recife, a culturally rich and vibrant city. However, it was the aftermath of World War I, and she grew up in the shadow of violence. This condition deeply shaped her literary sensibility, and the effects of displacement and conflict are reflected in her works. She was not only a witness to her family's escape but also to the broader consequences of war. The

profound and often traumatic impact of these experiences will be analyzed in more detail in the following chapters.

Lispector's profound preoccupation with questions of identity, or the search for it, began at a very young age. When her family was in Maceió, they were faced with the Brazilianization of their names: Pinkhas became Pedro, Mania became Marieta, Leah became Elisa, and Chaya became Clarice. Tania, however, did not need to change her name because it was already common in Brazil (Moser 42). Although Clarice Lispector does not remember the name change incident, she was aware of losing a part of her identity. This, however, was not the only challenge the Lispector family faced. It marked the beginning of a conflict—perhaps lifelong—between their inherited identity and their new cultural identity, a tension between heritage and assimilation. As the family adapted to Brazilian society, they gradually moved away from their Jewish roots and adopted the Brazilian language and culture. This process of adaptation or assimilation can be traced in Lispector's works, often reflected through her characters' struggles with identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity.

This period was not the only aspect of her childhood that can be observed in her literary works; additionally, her mother's illness was another event that deeply affected Lispector. Moreover, her birth was closely related to her mother's illness. In fact, Lispector's birth carries a significant meaning: to heal her mother. At the time of her birth, there was a widely held belief or superstition that a woman could recover from illness by having a baby (Cooperman). According to Moser, her mother had already contracted syphilis, even though it is not entirely clear when the events that caused the illness occurred. From this perspective, it is understandable that Lispector's birth took place according to her parents' plan. However, their plans did not succeed, and her mother died when Lispector was nine years old. Although she was intellectually aware that her birth could not reverse her mother's worsening illness, she internalized this situation deeply and began to feel guilty. As Moser quotes from her, she writes: "But I can't forgive myself. I simply wanted a miracle: for my birth to cure my mother" (Moser 29). This emotional burden, though irrational, was unavoidable and reflects the early formation of a psychological consciousness in Lispector, in which even the desire to alleviate pain through silence, absence, and love could not be fully satisfied. Consequently, this is one of the strongest motivations behind her desperate writings, as she carried this guilt throughout her life. For instance, in one of her chronicles, she explains that whenever she feels happy, remembering her mother's illness evokes profound regret and grief (Lispector, *Selected Crônicas* 42). This emotional ambivalence clearly demonstrates a permanent emotional complexity regarding her

mother's suffering. Indeed, while her initial response to maternal imagery evokes joy, her emotional state consistently shifts to sadness and even pain. All of these emotions, along with their contradictions, find literary expression through Lispector's protagonists, who serve as tools to explore her unresolved maternal trauma and its impact on her literary consciousness.

Lispector's literary success does not depend solely on her characters' inner feelings; equally important is the transposition of these feelings through her unique writing style. Her narrative is intensely introspective, prioritizing existential and emotional discovery in her protagonists' lives over conventional plot structure. This suggests that readers focus on the psychological interiority of her characters rather than on linear narrative, which may explain why Lispector's skill in sophisticated plot construction is sometimes overlooked. Among critics who find this emphasis problematic, Earl Fitz is the most well-known. In his book *Clarice Lispector* (1985), he offers a critique of this reductive reading approach, calling Lispector's success in plot "highly overlooked" (17). Here, Fitz expresses mild reproach, arguing that the narrative dimension in which Lispector excels is plot construction.

Another significant aspect observable in her characters and narrative structure is existentialism, which serves as a key foundation for her writings. Existentialism, as defined by Sartre and other existentialists, posits that a person's existence precedes essence (20). Lispector was highly influenced by Sartre and his philosophical ideas, particularly those concerning existentialism. As Rita Herman notes, although her outlook aligns with Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, Lispector's perspective on humanity is notably more pessimistic (70). It can be clearly observed that Lispector's fictional works demonstrate complex relationships with existential concerns through the portrayal of highly introspective protagonists who struggle with identity issues, experience profound loneliness, and confront an underlying spiritual melancholy. Rather than creating fully developed or psychologically stable characters, she generally portrays protagonists in a state of constant becoming, searching for authenticity, identity, and purpose in a fractured world. These characters are closely aligned with Sartrean existentialism, which emphasizes that an individual must choose her or his own identity through conscious choices and responsibility. For example, in works such as *Near to the Wild Heart* and *The Passion of New Eve*, as well as *According to G.H.*, this existential struggle is particularly evident. Frequently, characters are confronted with the absurdity of existence and the absence of intrinsic meaning. Nevertheless, instead of providing clear resolutions or cohesive ideological guidance, Lispector immerses her characters in solitude and introspection, leading to self-reflection and metaphysical questioning. She often portrays the inner journey

through interiority, silence, and occasional inaction. In other words, her characters do not always act externally but instead feel, uphold, and think, as is frequently observed in her novels. According to Tace Hedrick, a close reading of Lispector's work, particularly with respect to the body, engages with the concerns of many Western philosophers, especially Sartre (65). Although Sartre emphasizes the notion of "nausea", Lispector reframes it based on her own lived experiences. As Moser quotes, the nausea in her novels is derived from personal experience, and is not merely a philosophical abstraction (135). In fact, Lispector does not aim to reject existentialism entirely; rather, she seeks to reconsider it in more subjective, emotional, and corporeal terms. Through this approach, she transforms existential nausea into a profound resilience against imposed meanings. In doing so, Lispector reshapes a traditionally masculine philosophical concept through a distinctly feminine consciousness. Her reworking of "nausea" becomes a metaphor for Joana's internal awakening — the bodily and emotional turbulence that accompanies her journey toward self-definition. This aligns with the feminist *bildungsroman* tradition, where maturation is not achieved through rational mastery, as in male-centered narratives, but through embodied awareness, affect, and silence as forms of knowledge.

Radical fragmentation is one of the defining features of Lispector's prose; it can be seen as a basic narration style that reflects the characters' ontological instability as well as their inner disconnection. Moreover, her stories frequently resist chronological development, and she prefers a fragmented temporal framework composed of memories, feelings, and transient ideas. Consequently, the plot in her works is often disturbingly disorganized and fragmented, just like her characters' mental worlds. Earl E. Fitz suggests that this extraordinary narration style reflects the influence of the famous writer Katherine Mansfield on Lispector's writings (4). Unlike conventional linear storytelling, Mansfield's narration conveys transient impressions and psychological discontinuities—a technique that Lispector both embraced and employed regularly. The extent of this influence can be illustrated by Olga Borelli's account. In her writings, she recounts a memory with Lispector: when they visited a bookstore during Lispector's early career as a journalist, she explored Mansfield's work. Upon glancing at a book, Lispector exclaimed, "*Isto sou eu*", meaning "*This is me*", pointing out that Mansfield's writing reflected her own developing literary voice (my trans. 66). This moment of awareness provides important evidence that Lispector was influenced by Mansfield from her first reading and recognized her own emerging style in Mansfield's work. However, whereas Mansfield

employs disconnectedness to reflect everyday life, Lispector takes it further, using it as a tool to represent her characters' fragmented consciousness and the uncertainty of existence.

In addition, the rejection of traditional plot structure is exceptionally evident in *Near to the Wild Heart*, where the protagonist Joana undergoes sudden internal changes and ellipses as her consciousness develops. In the novel, Lispector portrays her protagonist's life and experiences so fragmentedly that the reader cannot easily discern the protagonist's lifespan as pages are turned. This characteristic was particularly compelling to early readers. Initially, critics often interpreted the disjointed plot as a weakness rather than an intentional strategy. For example, Álvaro Lins, a prominent literary critic and journalist of his time, described the novel as "sem unidade íntima," meaning "lacking inner unity" (2). However, Lins' interpretation of incompleteness can also be read as a modernist rejection of narrative coherence. To convey the fragmented rhythms of awareness, the novel's unexpected structure, comprising sudden changes, incomplete reflections, and lyrical deviations, intentionally rejects linear coherence. Therefore, Lispector's philosophical and unconventional approach can be viewed not as a flaw but as an aesthetic choice. Indeed, as Oliveira notes, her apparent defect is not only the origin of her authorship but also a source of creative power (my trans. 76).

On the other hand, some critics recognize Lispector's distinctive narration strategy as a deliberate artistic choice. These evaluations, however, largely appeared after Lins' initial criticism. Ellen H. Douglass observes that this storytelling approach suits Lispector particularly well because it demonstrates her interest in the complex interrelation between language and reality (133). Similarly, Roberto Schwarz regards her as one of the rare writers who ignore the constraints of previous narrative rules, favoring an existential examination of inner existence over external events (my trans. 54). As he argues, Lispector prioritizes an in-depth, existential exploration of consciousness rather than external happenings. Thus, her first novel functions both as a literary experiment and an examination of narrative space constrained by traditional rules. Furthermore, Lispector's originality and her successful expansion of the novel genre, particularly the feminist *bildungsroman*, are evident in this work. In particular, her depiction of stream of consciousness is so striking that it evokes admiration in the reader. Indeed, the flow of consciousness constructs psychological experiences with great sensitivity (my trans. 55). This technique is highly influential because, although there is repetition and interruption of words, it enables the reader to follow the character's consciousness as it forms, capturing every nuance of thought. In this sense, Lispector aligns with the modernist stream of consciousness technique; moreover, she extends it further by examining existence ontologically rather than

merely psychologically. Therefore, her prose not only mirrors the fragmented structure of thought but also transforms it into a process that questions whether language can reconcile with existence.

In her novels, stream of consciousness is so conspicuous that it arouses amazing and deep admiration. Indeed, it is one of the key terms in critical literary theory. J.A. Cuddon explains it as a term “almost indispensable,” indicating the numerous ideas passing through the mind (919). It is described as a special kind of interior monologue, which differs from a standard interior monologue primarily in its depiction of the characters’ world of thoughts (Baldick 244). Considering her writings, Lispector stands out as one of the most ingenious practitioners of the stream of consciousness technique in 20th-century literature. To indicate the immediacy of consciousness, she uses unfinished sentences, sudden shifts, and fragmented syntax. However, this narrative form does not require fragmenting the mind or thoughts arbitrarily. The main challenge that most writers attempting this technique encounter is maintaining the necessary flow while depicting consciousness in a fragmented way. As I quote from Carvalho, the stream of consciousness resembles a vicious circle; the character’s mind must flow continuously. Moreover, the main aim of William James, who first coined the term, was precisely to indicate this situation (*my trans.* 57). Clarice Lispector, as can be seen from her novels, demonstrates extraordinary talent in handling this paradox between fragmentation and continuity. Instead of allowing it to collapse into incoherence, she employs disjointed perceptions, sudden and often sharp shifts in characters’ thoughts, and, more impressively, silent moments that, contrary to expectations, produce rhythm and cohesion. For example, in *Near to the Wild Heart*, the protagonist’s fragmented inner monologues become clearer through sudden interferences of sentimental images and metaphysical reflections. Nevertheless, these interruptions do not disrupt the flow; instead, they create a continuity that mirrors the protagonist’s experiential flow. As Pontiero notes, she is highly successful at balancing conceptual complexities (219). While explaining intricate contradictions, she uses language impressively, conveying intuitions and thoughts to the reader in delicate harmony rather than through direct description. Therefore, one of her novels that exemplifies her skill in using stream of consciousness is *Near to the Wild Heart*.

Lispector’s use of stream of consciousness is often compared with James Joyce. Joyce is one of the most accomplished writers in this technique, and his application is both radical and creative in modernist literature. His conception of consciousness is essentially linguistic; the mind functions as a mechanism constituted through language. This becomes evident in

Ulysses (1920). Although Joyce initially attempts to reflect his characters' thoughts through dialogues, he gradually allows readers to slip into the mind of the main character, Stephen (Steinberg 56). Indeed, Friedman explains that *Ulysses* is written almost entirely under the shadow of the stream of consciousness (222). Moreover, he argues that Joyce established a generation of novels defined by this technique (244). Friedman is not alone in recognizing Joyce's skill. Herry Levin, a leading critic, also emphasizes Joyce's ability to externalize inner dialogue at the stage of consciousness (108, 109). According to Levin, Joyce's observation is powerful, enabling him to convey the mind's inner workings in all their diversity and with complete mastery. In terms of form and interior monologues, Joyce and Lispector share similar perceptions of stream of consciousness. However, despite inevitable comparisons, her method differs dramatically from Joyce's stylistic density. In contrast, Lispector's stream of consciousness is less concerned with encyclopedic representations; instead, she emphasizes existence's metaphysical dimension. She adopts another strategy: rather than projecting consciousness outward, she bends it inward. Consequently, techniques such as fragmentation and introduced silence become privileged. By doing so, she narrates the main character's mind so fluently that the reader becomes intimately acquainted with the scenes, that is, with the character's consciousness (*my trans.* Schwarz 576). Unlike Joyce, Lispector employs methods such as silence, syntactic fragmentation, and incompleteness to approach existence. Therefore, while Joyce narrates consciousness through linguistic proliferation, Lispector pursues a phenomenological and existential minimalism, closer to Woolf's personal and rhythmical descriptions of subjectivity.

While Lispector's approach to stream of consciousness is compared with that of Joyce, it is most probably similar to Virginia Woolf, who is one of the most prominent feminist writers in modernist literature. Indeed, Lins evaluates this situation as she is closer to Woolf rather than Joyce (*my trans.* *Os Mortos* 188). Woolf is among the foremost writers whose works apply the stream of consciousness technique in its most powerful and compelling form, and for this reason, she has attracted considerable attention in the literary world. Especially, in her novels *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To The Lighthouse* (1927), this technique is more obvious compared with others. Moreover, she uses some grammatical tools to depict the characters' minds. These have attracted the attention of many critics and have been cited as one of the reasons why Woolf's stream of consciousness was so successful. For instance, Robert Humphrey, in his famous book *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel*, refers to her as one of the leading writers who professionally implements this technique. For him, it is another way of transferring

cinematic methods to the text (50). In many aspects, this interpretation can be clearly observed, especially in the opening pages of *Mrs. Dalloway*. The reader feels as if he or she is watching Mrs. Dalloway's mind on a superscreen. David Daiches explains this situation, noting that even when the reader passes from one character's mind to another, he or she can combine these two characters through the moment of time that ties them together (64). Therefore, not only does she depict psychological depth, but also allows characters to share experiences. In other words, she enables consciousness to connect through simultaneity and a shared temporal flow rather than leaving it isolated. Consequently, this narrative method shifts emphasis away from traditional plot progression and character construction, directing the reader toward the direct experience of characters' transient mental states. Thus, the novel's organizing principle is not causality or linearity but the convergence of consciousnesses within temporal and spatial frameworks.

What distinguishes Woolf's application of stream of consciousness is her ability to employ diverse narrative tools that render the characters' consciousness both authentic and accessible. These include subtle manipulations of time, the dissolution of conventional syntax, and the seamless blending of thought with sensory perception. In addition, she successfully and naturally narrates consciousness in the now, future, and past (Sang 178). Similarly, Dorrit Cohn conveys the minds of Woolf's characters in an unconventional way, and this conveyance is another factor that creates intimacy between the reader and the character. Because she uses "her imagistic excursions" while narrating the characters' vision moments (45). As can be predicted, this is not limited to just one main character. As Cui suggests, the narrative shifts between characters so that the consciousnesses of all characters are presented together (205). Another writer, Fernihough, notes how Woolf masterfully and quickly accomplishes these techniques, citing *Mrs. Dalloway* as one of the best examples (77). From these points of view, Woolf's use of stream of consciousness is not only aesthetically groundbreaking but also offers a new perspective from which subjectivity and the intimate connection between character and reader can be explored.

Woolf's success in exploring and depicting characters' minds in this way becomes a reference for subsequent modernist and postmodernist writers. In particular, Clarice Lispector's fiction not only establishes a profound bond with Woolf but also reprocesses the stream of consciousness to reflect her own philosophical and cultural concerns. Between the limitations of culture and language, she represents one of the most prominent examples of modernist literature with her unique narration style. While Lispector prioritizes fragmented syntax, abrupt

tone changes, and an almost mystical investigation of consciousness, Woolf frequently concentrates on the interaction between subjective experience and the outside world. Even though Lispector is mostly compared to Woolf in terms of writing style, especially after her debut novel, she rejects the similarity with Woolf. For example, after Álvaro Lins' criticism of *Near to the Wild Heart*, which compares her to Woolf, she writes to her sister that she read Woolf after she wrote the book (my trans. *Correspondências* Lispector 44). Although it seems Woolf does not influence Lispector directly, she has an indirect effect on her narration style. This impression, in turn, draws many critics' attention because Lispector's style, with its free-flowing ideas, fragmented sentences, and in-depth explorations of characters' inner lives, reminds them of Woolf's stream-of-consciousness approach, as seen in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). One of these critics, Benedito Nunes, a well-known Brazilian literary critic and philosopher, observes that her style is closer to Virginia Woolf than to James Joyce since she uses inner monologues, fragmented episodes, and digression—not as a fixed technique but as a new form of modern fiction (my trans. Nunes 13). Therefore, using the technique wisely turns Lispector's novels into “a kind of prose poetry” (Fitz 66). Readers feel as though they are moving through the protagonists' or characters' minds. All of these similarities, in turn, lead to comparisons between her works and Woolf's or to questions about whether she was influenced by Woolf. Even in her first novel, this impression is obvious. As Martha Alkmin quotes from Jorge de Lima, her first novel is so stunning that it makes a paradigm shift in Brazilian literature (my trans. Alkmin). Her use of stream of consciousness, highly reminiscent of Virginia Woolf—particularly in the way she employs language and grammar to capture detail with deep candor and ingenuity—makes this work one of her most significant novels. This experimental style allows Lispector to explore subjectivity, womanhood, and identity, which have profound roots in existentialist thought and her Brazilian cultural background.

One of Lispector's most influential feminist readings is presented by Hélène Cixous in her book, *Reading with Clarice Lispector* (1990). Cixous emphasizes the didactic nature of Lispector's books, arguing that the true meaning cannot be grasped upon first reading, and even likening Lispector to Kafka in this respect (Cixous 98). For Cixous, Lispector's prose is not merely experimental; it is a writing that listens to its own silences, a textual practice that allows for the explication of words that remain unspoken, half-told, or suspended at the margins of expression. In this sense, Lispector's silence is never an absence of meaning; rather, it is productive and instructive. She is also a writer who successfully implements the *écriture féminine*. In her works, she focuses on bodily experience, allowing her female characters to

explore themselves and their bodies, and sometimes employs "bodily music" (Cixous *Clarice Lispector* 151). Cixous also delves into Lispector's personality and its reflection in her work. This interpretation is particularly valuable for her analysis of *Near to the Wild Heart*, where Joana's inner monologue frequently straddles the threshold between speech and silence, suggesting the formation of female subjectivity.

In Clarice Lispector's fiction, silence emerges not only as a way of the absence of speech but also as a profound means of articulating the unspoken dimensions of feminine subjectivity, such as inner thoughts and the heaviness of domestic missions. Generally, her characters are on the edge of inner turmoil, which is reflected through a very impressive narration style. Joana, the protagonist of *Near to the Wild Heart*, is one of these characters whose inner turmoil is reflected with fragmented, complicated, and variable depictions. In this way, an attentive reader can make a connection between Joana's fragmented mind and silence, viewing it not only as a prison but also as a shelter. Moreover, Joana's character is so brave that she can rebel against the patriarchal language; by doing so, she simultaneously highlights the inability of traditional discourse. Silence is one of the important elements in this rebellion. "...it's enough to remain silent in order just to see beneath all the realities..." (Lispector 19). It is clearly evident from the very beginning that silence is among the most significant factors in Joana's journey. This is because there is a deep relation between it and her existence, and it can also reach the secrets that language cannot. In this context, silence in her works coincides with Kristeva's semiotics since it disrupts the symbolic order's linearity and also provides an opportunity for the appearance of subjectivity's indefinable intensity in characters' minds. Because, like semiotics, it lies outside the boundaries of language, and this is conveyed in Lispector's works through fragmented sentences, long pauses, and, more importantly, the unsaid. Therefore, what is left unsaid through language is still felt in these ways. In other words, Lispector's silence not only reveals the limits of symbolic language but also uncovers the gap within which semiotics comes into play. This phenomenon, which is especially evident in our main character Joana, can be shown as the reason why Lispector's novel is so successful. In fact, Lispector, who reflects Joana's thoughts in this way, loudly expresses the chaos in her mind with her silence, even though Joana does not speak.

To sum up, Clarice Lispector has a special, singular position in 20th century Brazilian literature. By breaking free from traditional writing styles, Lispector quickly attracted the attention of prominent critics of her time. Her unique style, fragmented narrative, stream of consciousness, and smooth, fluid delivery of inner monologue quickly earned her a place in the

literary world. Moreover, she has even been compared by renowned critics to prominent writers of world literature, such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Lispector's success stems from the background in which she was born and raised, the background she fled, and, more importantly, the very identity she was forced to change. Naturally, this condition is reflected in her books. With the help of her chronicles and letters, it can be seen that she writes in the light of her background. This means that her character in *Near to the Wild Heart*, Joana, reflects Clarice Lispector's inner feelings, so that while the reader reads the characters' minds, he or she reads Lispector's mind as well. Using silence is one of the methods that she employs to depict the characters' minds. Lispector asserts that reaching a condition of silence requires a considerable amount of expressive effort, implying that deep stillness is frequently preceded by a great deal of communication (G.H 169). She turns silence into a dynamic arena for self-expression by expressing quiet in her writings, breaking its stillness to create a unique voice. One of the best examples of this is her debut novel, *Near to the Wild Heart*.

3.2. A Rebel with A Pen: Angela Carter's Life and Literary Impact

She was the wolf in Grandma's nightcap.

Lorna Sage (Art of 21)

Angela Carter is another pivotal figure in contemporary English literature who challenges traditional narrative forms and cultural myths, as well as questions of gender norms imposed by society. She is widely known for her novels and short stories, which are crafted with a distinguishing blend of magical realism and feminist point of view, while simultaneously including elements of the picaresque novel. Moreover, she distinguished herself as a prominent journalist of her time, contributing remarkably to both literary and journalistic fields. In this chapter, I will examine Angela Carter's literary point of view and how her life is reflected in this perspective.

Born on May 7, 1940, in Eastbourne, England, Angela Carter, originally named Angela Olive Stalker, grew up in a middle-class family during World War II, which had a significant impact on her worldview and influenced the themes of disruption and reinvention in her writing. Alongside this, she studied English at Bristol University with the recommendation of her friend

Cecil Farthing, which gave her the opportunity to free herself from the role of housewife (Gordon 67). This marked one of the turning points in her life, as it shaped her writings in terms of the formation of her mindset within the society. In fact, her distinctive literary approach greatly impressed the university. Although she was already married when she went to university, she was feeling unhappy, as her aunt observed, at the time of registration (Sage *Flesh* 23; Gordon 67). At university, she was influenced by Medieval literature, folklore, and, through the freedom she gained there, feminist theory (Gordon 71). These subjects became the main themes of Carter's works; however, they are presented in a magical rather than a traditional way. Furthermore, her university education was not the only factor influencing the development of her writing style, which explores these themes with a captivating language. Equally important, the environment in which she was born and grew up also played a significant role in shaping Carter's later recognition. The impact of war on her life is visible in almost all of her works, even if they are not depicted as front-line narratives. For instance, she portrays war through the father figure in *Several Perceptions* (1968); depicts the necessity of rebuilding after devastation in *Heroes and Villains* (1969); and sets *Passion of New Eve* (1977) during the Civil War era, exploring both the psychological and physical effects of that conflict in detail. For Carter, wars play a pivotal role in shaping society, acting as a "catalyst" even when the war is not personally experienced (Maitland 211). The reason Carter is able to portray war so effectively is that she personally witnessed its devastating effects from a very close distance. The Second World War began shortly before Carter was born, and when bombs exploded near her home, it became clear that the area was no longer safe. As a result, she and her family were forced to leave their home and move in with her grandmother (Gordon 16). Therefore, the depiction of war and its violence plays a significant role in Carter's novels. However, instead of including it in every story, she prefers to reflect some of the most significant problems of her time, such as gendered power relations and the reconstruction of identity.

Taking an active role in the displacement and character formation of Carter, her grandmother, Jane Farthing, is another significant figure who turns young Angela into a prominent writer. This is because after she moved to her house, she was exposed to a domestic space that shaped her imagination and narrative sensibility. In her famous essay "*The Mother Lode*", Carter mentions her as a woman who imposes on Carter the idea of her sex's superiority, which Carter was very pleased with, even though she feels the heaviness and savagery in her words. The reason behind that is the society that Farthing came from (Carter *Sacred* 8). This expression shows how Carter exposes the emphasis on how the early family environment

functioned as a female authority area and how this place affects her perception of power dynamics depending on gender. Therefore, it can be said that her grandmother not only saved Carter from war, but also created an opportunity for Carter to build a strong identity that is aware of the beauty and the supremacy of her gender.

The matriarchal power evident in Carter's novels reflects her grandmother's profound influence, who—coming from a matriarchal society herself—functioned as the unquestioned authoritative figure in the family, raising Carter according to the same ideals and values with which she had been raised. This regime of maternal power became a foundational experience that Carter later internalized and inscribed into her literary imagination (Carter *Shaking a Leg* 4; Gordon 17). In light of this social environment, it is incontrovertible that Carter's literary imagination is deeply informed by the power of women and agency, with the grandmother figure arising as a predominant character in her novels. This is because she grew up with a highly strict grandmother who hates “tears and whining” and always advises her to stay strong and tough (Carter *Sacred* 11). She was aware of the importance of staying strong as a woman in front of this patriarchal society, just like Carter's female characters. As Alison Lee explains, with the exception of a few, Carter's female characters are so strong and brave that they are mesmerized by the uncanny and gloomy worlds she creates. Unlike the stereotypically passive women of the 1960s, Carter's heroines refuse to be suppressed or humiliated; as Lee quotes from Carter's own words, they are “wayward girls and wicked women” (55). These heroines represent Carter's feminist reimagining of Gothic and fairy-tale traditions, transforming terror settings into transformative ones.

On the other hand, in view of her environment where Carter was raised, it should not be ignored that the mother figure also played a crucial role in formalizing her writing style and feminist point of view. She was raised by a quieter, submissive mother who could never be as dominant as her maternal grandmother. Carter represents this important but pale figure quite impressively in her works. However, this representation frequently functions as a continual critique of motherhood and patriarchal myths. In accordance with conventional roles, the mother is not only a passive nurturer but also the indisputable symbol of moral purity; yet in Carter's stories and fiction, she is expressed as a source of power. As Rebecca Munford suggests, Carter explores the mother as a “figure of speech,” mostly in *The Sadeian Woman* (1979) and *The Passion of New Eve* (1977), whereas *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) and *Nights at the Circus* (1984) serve as striking examples of how a pure maternal figure can be transformed into something Gothic (22). Carter's redefinition of motherhood not only serves as

a wider commentary on the creation of existing gender roles in society, but also challenges the boundaries between compassion and authority, life and death, and nutritional control. By separating motherhood from its idealized moral purity, the maternal body, formerly blessed and, more to the point, silenced by myths and traditions, turns into a living metaphor for both oppression and liberation. Thus, unlike the common narrative, Carter not only captures the figure of the mother on her own terms but also transforms it into a mirror reflecting the challenge and complexity of female subjectivity. According to Mine Ozyurt Kılıç, Carter explains that she refuses to recreate these myths, even at the risk of being censured. Furthermore, in her works, she allows the daughter to discover the true owner of her mother's voice by challenging these myths. A significant example of this is her 1967 novel, *The Magic Toyshop*. In the novel, Melanie, who wears her mother's wedding dress, later realizes that the problems it creates are more challenging than she had anticipated, and she burns down patriarchal traditions to stop them (Kılıç *Demythologizing Business* 96-97). Carter's mothers are either more than known because they are tougher and crueler, or they are nonexistent. As Linden Peach examines, since Carter witnessed firsthand the separation of many children from their mothers because of the war, she portrays the absence of mothers in her works through characters who lose their mothers, often with brutal, sometimes hopeless, expressions, such as those in *The Magic Toyshop*, *Shadow Dance*, and *Love*. Moreover, Peach suggests that Carter's grandmother, who has replaced her mother, is a disturbing presence compared to her mother (16). Such absence of the mother, both in the literal and symbolic sense, becomes a symbol that consistently appears in Carter's works, and an important clue to further consolidate Carter's perspective on motherhood.

As well as these prominent themes, some other key themes can be obviously seen in Carter's works. Throughout her impressive and prolific literary career, Carter is known for her numerous works that explore recurring themes of gender, power, and identity in detail and depth. Unlike many contemporary writers, she not only attempts to reveal societal norms but also examines them from a feminist perspective; in other words, she tries to reverse all these constructed rules, and given her place in the literary world, she succeeds. Carter, through her thematic focus on gender, not only demonstrates how sexuality and authority are intertwined but also presents eroticism, or sexuality, as an area of struggle rather than mere submission. *Passion of New Eve* is an example of this. The novel presents the body as a powerful battleground between sexual politics and ideological authority. This collapse of the patriarchal system is demonstrated through Evelyn's forced transformation into Eve, demonstrating that

gender boundaries are not as rigid and tough as they are portrayed. Such topics were very difficult for society to accept because, for both the society of the time and the reader, women could not be perverse, and even less violent. At this point, Carter dismantles the stereotypes about women, proving that women are much more than just “Victorian angels in the house” (Makinen 9). Showing a woman who stays at home and follows the rules in such unconventional roles is the greatest testament to Carter’s courage. Furthermore, one of Carter’s novels that best expresses her critique of the commonplace, idealized roles of mothers is *The Sadeian Woman*. Sally Keenan argues that the mother figure in the novel is “partly a response” to the writings of writers like Cixous and Kristeva from the 1970s (134). For Keenan, she criticizes their ideas about maternity, though not overtly, through this novel (147). This condition shows how Cixous and Kristeva influenced her with their ideas. But when Carter’s novels and writings are examined, it is clearly seen that she is one of the best novelists who writes the bodies just as these critics recommended to female writers, and she does so by using sexuality or eroticism in her novels.

Another example of this is *The Magic Toyshop*, because of her thematic focus on sexuality, motherhood, patriarchy. In this novel, Carter also presents eroticism as a battlefield between authority and femininity. The toyshop is a highly meaningful setting for this battlefield because, although it is ostensibly a toyshop, it is full of darkness, fear, and shadows. This is not only a toyshop but also a house in which a happy family does not live. In this frightening house, almost every character tries to find a way to rebel against authority. For instance, his wife, Margaret, has a love affair with her brother, Francie, who is the most appropriate person to be a husband and a father, or Finn wants to get rid of Uncle Philip’s authority, and on all occasions, he rebels against him through his behaviors or words. However, the most impressive rebellion is Melanie’s rebellion against the swan, which is the puppetized Zeus. This is very significant for understanding Carter’s mindset about the rewriting of mythological figures or stories. For Gargano, this represents a reduction in Zeus’ strong and holy meaning; moreover, Carter succeeds in it even though she may not be aware of what she has done (Katsavos 12; Gargano 58). Carter breaks down patriarchal assumptions that are ingrained in ancient tales through these rewritings, enabling female characters to emerge as active actors rather than passive objects of fate. Thus, Melanie’s symbolic defiance of the puppetized Zeus represents both her own awakening and Carter’s literary dedication to redefining feminine identity via the deconstruction of inherited narratives, resistance, and invention.

Carter's usage of deconstructing conventional figures is not limited to *The Magic Toyshop*. She uses this theme as one of the most distinguishing characteristics in her novels; rather, it becomes a core of her myth-rewriting project. This rewriting technique is not restricted to myths; it also contains fairy tales, gods and goddesses, legendary figures, etc. Through this, she aims to refuse women's stereotyped "wholesome or pretty" images and to defy "conventional misogyny" (Warner 310). She refuses to accept the restricted thoughts about women and femininity; therefore, she questions the roots of everything. In this way, she believes that she can "demythologize" by following the steps of these mythologic or epic female identities (Wisker). For Gordon, Carter strives to separate myth from folklore, and this is one of the things that makes her angry because, for her, this was her duty as an artist (Gordon 228). Considering her rewritten fairy tales and demythologized myths, it can be seen that she is highly skilled at her job. In her writings, it can be understood that she does not only annihilate the patriarchal symbolism of these stories or figures but also revises the traditional stories and myths as a space for female creativity, such as in *The Bloody Chamber*, *The Passion of New Eve*, *The Magic Toyshop*, and many more. She uses these stories "remade again and again" in a characteristic and highly skillful way, changing the way of understanding the moral points or messages of the stories (Carter *Old Wives* ix).

Rewriting traditional stories in a new style, or, as Carter says in her famous article *Notes from the Front Line*, "putting new wine in old bottles," is not the only way she expresses her own brave thoughts and ideas to people (Shaking 37). Another distinctive and important strategy Carter uses is Gothic. Carter, by reprocessing conventional narratives, does not only transform the patriarchal structure into a feminine one; instead, she uses gothic figures very skillfully to explore the depth and the darkest sides of human soul, sexuality, and desire. In fact, gothic in her fiction can be seen both as a narrative style and a political metaphor. She is so intelligent that she finds a way to use gothic as a weapon. The best comment comes from Robert Nye about her use of gothic in this way. In his book review, *Daring Young Woman* in *The Guardian*, he claims that she uses old gothic guns to make contemporary wounds (The Guardian). This interpretation summarizes Carter's usage of the gothic since she wants to reverse common stories. Therefore, a new space for sexual identity is opened through her gothic writings, just as in *Heroes and Villains* (1969), and these spaces are mostly masculine or heterosexual (Mahoney 77). In this novel, she uses gothic to indicate how gender and authority are reconstructed after the disaster. Marianne's dark journey from the civilized world to a barbarian tribe can be seen as a reflection of the gothic subconscious where violence and

sexuality coexist as powers of both creation and destruction. With this combination of violence, sexuality, gothic, and myth, she highlights the vulnerability of stable identities and the changeability of moral binaries.

This usage is not limited to this novel; we can see gothic symbols in almost every one of her novels. Shadows are one of the best examples of these figures. For Fiedler, among all gothic symbols, the shadow is the most intricately developed one (133). This is because it contains binaries such as light and dark, black and grey, the human and monster, conscious and unconscious, etc. From this point of view, it becomes a symbol that shows fear and oppressed desires. Carter's relationship with gothic seems more psychological, because she not only presents it as a terror symbol but also as a space for enlightenment and transformation. When we investigate this relationship in her female characters, we can see that when a character faces the shadow, she finds an opportunity to regain her socially and sexually oppressed self. Thus, the shadow in Carter's novels is not only a terror figure but also a strong metaphor for resurgence. For example, in *The Magic Toyshop*, seeing Uncle Philip's shadow is enough to frighten the characters. Suddenly, the ambiance changes, and even if everybody is happy, they feel darkness and fear in their hearts; therefore, they start to control themselves until Melanie and Finn eliminate this shadow by shedding light on it with fire. This is an illustrative example of how a female character facing a shadow results in her transformation and empowerment. As a result, she can find an opportunity to recreate her fragmented identity. In the light of this example and Carter's other writings, it can be said that Carter is highly aware of the importance of the gothic in the building of female identity. For her, the gothic represents a threshold for female characters: there, they face the darkness and the shadow of authority, and they are aware that they have two choices: either they yield to it or rebel and rebuild themselves. From the novels, it can be inferred that Carter wants to show that a woman should not run away from or yield to the gothic; on the contrary, she should face it, resist it, and rewrite her story.

Carter is one of the writers who has a distinguished narration style because it is hybrid, self-reflexive, and mostly destructive. Its destructiveness is particularly directed at stereotyped thoughts and certain presumptions (Gamble 4). But while doing this, she uses a highly sarcastic and ironic language and narration style that draws the readers' attention, and more interestingly, she implements these styles into extraordinary genres such as horror writing, mythical stories, fairy tales, etc. Furthermore, she uses her witty language in horror writing so skillfully that even religiously or culturally meaningful words become a tool for criticizing philosophical, societal, and political rules, such as in her fairy tales and novels (Wisker 117). Gordon evaluates this

situation as liberating, because she, in other words, saves these forms from conventional points of view (xii). In fact, this linguistic dislocation is one of the reasons why Carter is among the most prominent writers of feminist literature. By pushing the boundaries of language, even treating it like a toy, she has managed to bring herself to the forefront in the world of feminist literature through traditional and mythological rewriting of stories or characters deemed valuable or important by society. Because, as I mentioned above, language itself has become a field of struggle, and her writings demonstrate that it can be subverted. Her unique style of writing, juxtaposing the gothic and ironic while successfully demythologizing, highlights the instrumental nature of language rather than its transparency. Her highly self-conscious narrative language rejects the biases associated with realistic fiction and tradition, revealing how vocabulary, syntax, and most importantly, style encode ideological positions within the patriarchal system. This linguistic and thematic rejection initiated her engagement with postmodern feminist writers and theorists, who similarly liberated language from its constraints and transformed it into a terrain of struggle, because her writings discuss the reorganization of female sexuality and the phallic system.

As an example, Angela Carter's novels and rewriting coincide with Cixous' ideas in terms of the transformation of the body as a reaction to the patriarchal system. This connection derives from Helene Cixous' seminal manifesto, *The Laugh of Medusa*, where she urges women to write their own bodies in order to regain their lost or, more precisely, their suppressed voices; therefore, she encourages women to take a more active role in the literary scene. Similarly, Angela Carter's fiction subverts the hierarchy of traditional narrative with the sarcastic language she uses, the extremity of her works, and the striking rewriting of a story that has been conventionally accepted by everyone from a certain perspective, in an unconventional language. The remarkable transformation of the female character in her works is a prime example of this. Through characters like Melanie, who admires her own body from the very beginning of the work; Eve, who suddenly awakens in a female body; Fevvers, who learns to be a woman in every way possible in her own place of growing up; or Marianne, who uses her body as a tool for power, Carter demonstrates the fluidity and changeability of feminine writing, a concept also supported by Cixous. These works are undoubtedly the most suitable examples for Cixous, who argues in another important article of hers, *Castration and Decapitation*, that even if the feminine writing itself ends, the narrative continues, pushing the reader into an intellectual void (53). Carter continues to flow in the reader's mind even after the novel or story ends, with the extraordinary events and situations she creates. Betty Moss says this is possible

because she offers the reader the opportunity to discover “other ways of living” and pushes them into the void Cixous describes (178). When we consider the time she wrote, we can understand this method in relation to people who read her works, especially women. It is like discovering stories told from another perspective and adopting them anew. For instance, in *The Magic Toyshop*, as Sarah Gamble observed, Melanie has important similarities with Eve, even if it is to a certain extent; however, after a while, the traditional fairy tale changes direction, and the main characters are removed from the centre of the story and pushed to the sidelines, where they are not as noticeable as in the traditional version (*Front Lines* 80-81). This situation is more obvious in the Melanie and the Swan part. Readers, especially female ones, realize that the strong character in this story, the Swan, but Zeus in the mythology, becomes weaker because he can be opposed by another, which is impossible in traditional stories. This shows that the life attributed or deemed worthy for women, that is, for the weaker figures in traditional stories, actually has a completely different, livable aspect when they oppose authority.

The similarities between Angela Carter’s works and Cixous’ *écriture féminine* are not restricted to this. The most impressive examples of the oppositions, or binaries, on which the Western world of thought is based, which Cixous emphasized in her article *Sorties* in *Newly Born Woman*, are also found in Carter’s writings. As an example, in *The Magic Toyshop*, we can observe the most obvious examples of these dualities in different sections of the novel, such as puppeteer/puppet, subject/object, activity/passivity, speech/silence, feminine/masculine, or nature/culture. But the difference here is that the author employing these binaries is a woman, unlike the predominantly male authors in the Western world. This, in fact, unlike the leading writers of the period, demonstrates that by not submitting to the rules set by the patriarchal system, but by defying them and, in a sense, breaking the silence deemed necessary for female writers, she not only makes her name in the literary world but also encourages women writers, like Cixous, to write about their own bodies. This reorganization of identity, desire, and linguistic power, especially in *The Magic Toyshop*, opens the door to a discussion of Luce Irigaray’s idea of feminine subjectivity and her criticism of the phallogocentric system.

Like Cixous, Luce Irigaray challenges the prevalence of phallogocentric discourse, but her method emphasizes the need to create a unique female subjectivity rather than just dismantling the masculine one. She discusses that in Western philosophical and linguistic traditions, female identity has only been defined as the negative of the masculine, as absence or lack, in works like *This Sex Which Is Not One* (1977) and *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974). Carter’s stories align with Irigaray’s theoretical framework because they reinterpret the female voice

and body as independent sources of pleasure and meaning rather than as mirror images of the masculine. In this respect, when Carter's works are examined deeply, it is inevitable that readers and critics will find parallels with Irigaray's theories in terms of feminist revisions of myths and fairy tales that deconstruct patriarchal gender roles and foreground female agency. She also emphasizes gender equality in her writings. In Irigaray's intellectual world, where she emphasizes that gender differences are the only thing that will prevent women from being exploited, Carter's works are a good example because they emphasize and highlight the female gender (Irigaray and Whitford 32).

Additionally, when we consider Carter's works in terms of the mimicry theory emphasized by Irigaray, we can see that Carter's works are suitable for examination from Irigaray's perspective. For Palmer, Irigaray provides a suitable framework for examining Carter's work because she reflects how symbols associated with femininity are manipulated and used by Carter, perhaps most skillfully in a way that is most apt for mimicry, contrasting with the opposite approach (27). This is a type of discourse that Irigaray uses against the phallogocentric discourse of the female figure she supports. Furthermore, according to Susan Rubin Suleiman, Irigaray claims that if women's relationship with language is acknowledged, female eroticism will also be accepted in society and the literary world (49). In fact, these two situations are interconnected; that is, as long as female eroticism is written freely, feminine language will also find its freedom. From this point of view, one of the writers who has made the greatest contribution to this is undoubtedly Angela Carter, since she employs eroticism in feminine writing without concern. She writes about the unspoken female body, and mostly the avoided one. That is why some symbols in her novels align with Irigaray's ideas about the freedom to write the female body. In this context, eroticism becomes not only a theme but also a form of bodily writing in Carter's act of writing. By reflecting female sexuality and, simultaneously, silence through language, Irigaray's vision of feminine discourse, in accordance with *écriture féminine*, resists masculine syntax. Thus, Carter's fiction not only builds on Irigaray's theory but also embodies it, demonstrating how the written female body can destabilize patriarchal semiotics and redefine possibilities for meaning and identity.

In addition to drawing parallels with Irigaray's writings on women's language and bodies, it can be argued that many of Carter's works and writings are related to Julia Kristeva and her writing strategies. Kristeva's semiotic and symbolic theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how meaning and subjectivity find their place in language and how the maternal body challenges and questions patriarchal structures. This framework provides a

highly productive lens through which to read and interpret Carter's narratives, as her stories develop between the rational order of the symbolic and the emotional, fluid realm of the semiotic. Psychoanalytic theories, particularly semiotics, chora, and abjection, are indispensable tools for analyzing Carter's narratives, which disrupt myths and emphasize the bodily and psychological complexities of gender and identity. For example, Melanie's expulsion of maternal feelings to enter the symbolic in *The Magic Toyshop*, as well as the mirror scene, evoke Kristeva's abjection. Her defiance of patriarchal restrictions and her questioning of her identity amidst the problems these restrictions create are important examples of the semiotics embedded within the symbolic concept.

Furthermore, her violent defiance of authority in her works, while simultaneously refusing to accept a new authority, demonstrates the relevance of examining her work from Kristeva's perspective. The mother figure is also one of the symbols that demonstrates this situation. However, the striking point here is that, like Kristeva, Carter, despite her desire to destroy the old (phallic) authority, completely rejects the new authority. Carter's depictions of mothers and the maternal body vividly reflect what the subject must expel in the formation of their identity; for example, the liberation from maternal feelings in *The Magic Toyshop*, or the creation of a murderous, monstrous mother rather than the known, reliable mother in *The Passion of New Eve*, or the mother figures in *The Bloody Chamber*, which are likewise outside the cultural norm. These mothers turn into a powerful threat to the female characters in the novels, and Carter ensures that the other female characters do everything they can to get rid of them. In this respect, Carter's writings closely parallel Kristevan theories, although she does not directly acknowledge a connection. Through these lenses, Carter's fiction is a Kristevan investigation of the ways in which the semiotic—the maternal, the physical, the chaotic—can coexist with, disrupt, and eventually revitalize the symbolic order of meaning and language.

4. BEYOND WORDS: SILENCE AND *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE* IN CLARICE LISPECTOR'S *NEAR TO THE WILD HEART*

*Between the clock, the typewriter and the silence
there was an ear listening out, large, flesh-pink and dead
(Lispector Near 11)*

In *Near to the Wild Heart*, silence emerges as one of the most powerful narrative and psychological motifs through which Lispector investigates the inner world of her protagonist, Joana. Silence in the novel is indicated as a living and dynamic existence that shapes Joana's consciousness and her journey toward self-realization. In addition to being a reflection of her consciousness, silence also embodies the rhythm of nature, reflecting Lispector's own existential loneliness and revealing the ecstatic dimensions of feminine subjectivity.

Silence, which indicates itself in various ways, becomes a sign of how the introspective journey of the main female character in her novels, even when she does not speak, can be conveyed to the reader through a variety of means, and how Lispector achieved this skillfully. Examined from this perspective, Lispector's novel emerges as a reflection not only of Joana's silence but also of her creator, Clarice Lispector. Lispector impressively portrays all the silences she has witnessed since her childhood, their impact on her life and relationships, and how, even though she struggles with the guilt that has overwhelmed her from an early age, she often found herself face to face with that very silence. Almost every reader, especially women, can deeply understand how she uses silence as a tool of struggle.

Although silence is often seen as the opposite of speech, there are many situations in which silence speaks. Silence is not always expressed with the word "silence." Sometimes it's the sound of a car outside; sometimes it's the sound of nature outside (leaves, wind, birds, cats). In fact, by understanding the rhythm and music created by these silences in *Near to the Wild Heart*, the novel can be analyzed more accurately in terms of both Lispector and literature. Because the sounds heard behind the silence play a very important role in the reflection of our

character's emotions, because Joana is a woman who does not speak much and lives within herself, in her own world of consciousness, it is more accurate to infer meaning about Joana and her thoughts from the reflections of silence rather than the words in the novel.

In fact, her silence can be seen as a reflection of her childhood. Considering that her father was silent and that she experienced the same situation with her husband as an adult, it's not hard to understand that Joana was forced to remain silent. This form of silence can also be seen in Lispector. The forced separation from her own identity and self, which she experienced as a child, and the silence she had to keep to herself fostered an unbreakable bond between her and Joana. This is why, in her first novel, she wanted to write about what had perhaps been her most challenging experience up until then: her silence, or the very fact that she had been subjected to silence.

As a result, Lispector articulates silence—the voice that most authentically represents her narrative vision—through indirect rather than direct means. This indirection manifests in several ways: nature's speech in the moments of character silence, the use of silence as a tool for *écriture féminine*, and silent screams that, contrary to expectations, depict the totality of a character's inner world. To investigate the multifaceted role of silence in Lispector's debut novel *Near to the Wild Heart*, this chapter examines it through several interconnected critical aspects. Each aspect not only enlightens a distinct layer of Lispector's examination of femininity, language, and identity but also reveals how silence inevitably becomes a key part of Joana's self-formation process.

4.1 Nature's Voice in Joana's Silence

In *Near to the Wild Heart*, the first and perhaps the most primary appearance of silence arises through nature itself. The silence in the novel's natural world is not the silence in its absolute form but rather nature's mediation of silence. This mediation operates differently in various narrative events and settings. In addition to exploring the specific places in the text where silence appears, I will examine how nature serves as a medium for Joana's unspoken feelings and ideas in this section.

Silence is one of the key elements of literature because it reflects the ambience without speech. While Charles Glicksberg is defining literature, he highlights its inseparability from

silence; because of that, he rejects the “silence of literature” (166). It is impossible to disagree with him because silence can be written through subjects, reflections of the sound in nature. This silence of nature can be defined as “audible silence” a phenomenon distinct from mere speechlessness (McCallum). This is a highly acceptable definition for nature because, in this way, silence denotes the existence of a deeper, more subtle resonance that is difficult to articulate rather than the absence of sound. This contradiction is exactly how nature works in Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart*: it speaks in its silence. This auditory quietness is made tangible by the gentle rhythm of Joana's surroundings, the rustling of the wind, the murmur of the water, or the humming of the leaves. These organic silences, which are both internal and exterior expressions of Joana's changing consciousness, depict her transitions between cognition and instinct.

Lispector is a very skillful writer who writes silence through nature. She does not present nature as a background but a very appropriate space for language, memory, and desire. Nature, which emerges in silence, often provides Joana with the opportunity, at crucial moments, to either distance herself from the subject and listen to herself for a little bit, or to connect more closely to the subject, thus deepening her inner journey thanks to the voice of nature. However, these situations often occur when Joana withdraws from the events around her, retreats into her own inner world, or needs to be alone in a crowd. For example, during one of those occasional moments of silence, when she questions her own life, lost in thought, she realizes the terrifying extent of her loneliness when she imagines herself watching from the sky. She then travels back to the time period that has left the most profound mark on her mental world: her childhood. In this case, the act of reflection that begins with silence becomes one of those moments that transports her back to her childhood. On this occasion, the silence of the night can be seen as a trigger that activates the act of thinking (21). Sometimes, when Joana feels trapped or unable to react to events, she abandons herself to nature and establishes a connection with it. After her confrontation with Otávio and his lover, Lídia walks through her garden, unaware of her destination, amidst the silence of nature, “solitary in herself” (146). At that moment, Lispector catches the core of the audible silence: Joana's retreat into nature symbolizes not an emotional void, but rather an effort to find meaning in the stillness that surrounds her. The silence of the garden, for it reflects her inner transformation, is a space where thought, feeling, and instinct temporarily coexist without the intervention of language. Through this encounter, nature becomes not a passive backdrop but a living, resonant force that reflects Joana's changing sense of self.

One of the most stunning representations of silence intertwined with nature appears in the scene where Joana is overwhelmed by her confrontation with her aunt. The entire scene progresses with the rhythm of the sounds of nature. The whole scene progresses through the rhythm of natural sounds, with Lispector employing the stream of consciousness technique with profound sensibility. Through this narrative flow, the reader not only observes Joana's emotions but experiences them in real time. The movement of the wind, the shifting of the sea, and the rustling of the sand transform into the instruments of an audible silence, demonstrating how nature itself begins to speak within silence. Peculiarly, this is one of the most abstract manifestations of silence in the novel. Lispector transforms nature into an auditory canvas; descriptions such as "The wind was now licking her with force" or "the sea shining in waves of copper" do not simply portray a physical environment but rather externalize Joana's inner turmoil (Lispector, *Near* 34). Additionally, this scene shows Joana after she feels her father's death; nevertheless, even if Joana's father's death might conventionally necessitate an outburst of grief, Lispector defies this expectation. Instead, she silences language itself and permits nature to give voice to what cannot be spoken. In doing so, silence becomes a substitute for language—a space where grief and recognition coexist beyond articulation. Lispector thus redescribes the boundaries of expression by letting nature speak where words fail.

This scene not only reflects Joana's spiritual silence in nature but also carries a symbolic mother connotation embedded in the sea imagery; thus, the lack of a mother figure is eliminated in the novel. Joana's vomiting by the sea may also carry symbolic significance. Perhaps the sea is used here as a replacement for the absent mother figure. The sea, which is characterized as "serene" and "mighty," functions as a symbolic substitute for the missing mother figure, embodying a form of maternal quiet that comforts without using words (Lispector, *Near* 35). Thanks to her interaction with the sea, Joana experiences the trauma of her father's death not through speaking but through a physical and sensorial interplay in nature: Lispector relocates the missing mother's existence with the sea, an entity that is both infinite and abstract, offering a silent, essential form of consolation. This moment is a threshold moment for Joana when the outside world falls silent and nature begins to express what language cannot. Nevertheless, the reader can understand Joana's pain not from words, but from the vivid and untamed description of nature.

Toward the end of the novel, nature reappears as a silent witness to her mental development. Joana, in this part, has matured into a self-aware woman, and nature transforms into a space where her internal struggles find meaning. The imagery she used in this part is

especially important, since it reflects Joana's gradual evolution, from a child who obeys everything to a woman who rebels, her attempt to build an identity, and to become the woman she dreamed of. From this point of view, the setting of the night functions not only as a background but as an active participant that absorbs all external noise, constructing a place where Joana's fragmented interiority can surface. The "croaking intermittently" of a toad, echoing through the silence, makes the disjointed rhythm of her consciousness more understandable and exemplifies how Lispector uses a natural sound to mirror the character's psychological disharmony (161). Thanks to the interaction between silence and sound, Lispector turns nature into an accomplice of introspection. Towards the end of the scene, the reader can observe that Joana emerges stronger and more determined. It is not her husband, the person ostensibly closest to her and thus expected to perceive her innermost thoughts, but the distant, enveloping existence of nature that bears witness to her silent self-realization. In this sense, it can be observed that Joana feels deeper intimacy with nature than with her own husband since nature is the only thing that can comprehend her silences.

As a conclusion, nature's silence in *Near to the Wild Heart* not only functions as a background but also actively contributes to her spiritual and psychological development, or more precisely, her awakening. Lispector creates nature as a reflection and a mediator of Joana's fractured self through the interaction of sound and silence. The wind, the water, and the sand all have their own languages that listen without demanding, talk without using words, and calm without an explanation. The interplay of maternal presence and absence in Joana's consciousness is articulated through a nonverbal exchange between woman and nature, which mirrors what Julia Kristeva refers to as the semiotic chora, a pre-linguistic world where rhythm and sound come before organized meaning. For Joana, the maternal presence of nature fills the void left by both her mother's absence and her husband's alienation, allowing her to reconstruct her own identity beyond patriarchal discourse. In Lispector's prose, silence becomes a tool of expression, images of nature—sea, sand, trees, and so on—a feminine language far beyond logical speech. Consequently, Joana's reconciliation with the sea symbolizes her reconciliation with her own being; contrary to popular belief, silence represents not emptiness but power, creativity, and innovation. Thus, the stillness of nature becomes a single place where Joana can exist freely, where her fragmented voice, her self, combines with the rhythm of life. This is an example of what might be called the most profound and moving expression of feminine silence, or the search for a voice for oneself.

4.2 The Language of Small Sounds: Silence within the Audible

In *Near to the Wild Heart*, in contrast to the compassionate, powerful, and embracing silence of nature, the domestic silence surrounding Joana is filled with faint, often fragmented sounds: the ticking of a clock, the creaking of a door, the whisper of a breath. These sounds, however nebulous, are not only background details; they express invisible tensions and repressed emotions that language cannot convey. In *Near to Wild Heart*, Clarice Lispector transforms seemingly ordinary auditory elements into a semiotic space where sound exists, even intertwining with silence to reveal Joana's fragmented consciousness and emotional alienation. Because, as Cixous also says in her book *Reading with Clarice Lispector*, that is a very significant book about Lispector, Lispector can speak all the oldest languages, including silence (12). In this section, I will explore how the sounds of silence in Lispector's home and surroundings are reflected in her writing.

The novel opens with a symphony of sounds that increasingly disperses into silence. "Daddy's typewriter was tapping out tac-tac . . . tac-tac-tac . . . The clock chimed brightly ting-ting . . . ting-ting . . . The silence dragged out zzzzzzz" (11). This opening, with such an impressive description of the room, does not simply represent a description of the atmosphere; rather, it reflects the novel's core aesthetic: an interaction between sound and silence that reflects the conflict between Joana's inner self and the outside world. From the very beginning of the novel, Lispector builds up an atmosphere in which silence is as alive as sounds themselves. While the mechanical yet fragmented rhythms of the clock and typewriter evoke a world bound by repetition and order, the long "zzzzzzz" sound of silence disrupts this mechanical harmony, suggesting that the important matter will not be spoken but can be deeply felt. In this sense, silence becomes the novel's first and most eloquent sound.

In addition, "flesh-pink and dead" listening ear, which is explained in the same paragraph, represents Joana's own developing consciousness, her capacity to perceive existence in its pure, unspoken form and to hear beyond words. Joana's consciousness shapes by a vibrant, living presence: silence between the ticking of clocks, the typewriter's tapping, and the rustling of leaves. The novel's whole rhythm, which alternates between loudness and calm, movement and stillness, and speaking and meditation, is therefore foretold in the opening paragraph. Lispector demonstrates through this delicate balance that Joana's journey toward self-discovery would be shaped by the profound and sometimes painful awareness of silence itself, rather than through language.

In addition to the ear's function, its descriptive words also have special meaning. Although it seems like an ordinary description, it combines two opposite symbols. Innocence, warmth, and sensory openness are suggested by the hue "flesh-pink," which also reflects the innocence of childhood and the vitality of the body. However, this childlike innocence is immediately destroyed by the symbol of the dead, which destroys the image of life and happiness. This is another paradox that reflects Joana's fragmented consciousness, and also Lispector indicates the tension between vitality and decay, perception and muteness. A bodily listening organ, the ear is interestingly lifeless; it hears the sounds of the clock, the typewriter, even the silence itself, but does not participate in the meaning-making process. Therefore, it turns into a disturbing symbol of oppressed perception that summarizes the novel's preoccupation with the limits of language and the birth of self-awareness. From this point of view, ear image refers to the very threshold of her awakening, too. In the novel, where innocence and death come together only as a physical detail, Lispector shows the reader silence not as a simple absence, but as an active, sensory state, a space where consciousness begins to take shape. While doing this, she uses two opposite terms, innocence and death, and this confirms Rosalind Moran's idea that Lispector uses the most frequent contrasts, death and life, to express her ideas (52).

The scene where Lispector transforms domestic sounds into inner awakening is the "Some furniture creaked, the shadows fastened more firmly on to the wardrobe" scene in the novel (125). In this scene, the shadows that cling more tightly to the creaking furniture transform the wardrobe from an ordinary object into a vehicle for physical and emotional tension. Although the creaking is a high-pitched, thin sound, it embodies a restrained desire, or rather, the tension between this desire and the emerging sense of self. It's as if Lispector makes this ordinary object speak here, enabling it to react to Joana's awakening. The fact that it's the shadow that grasps the wardrobe is also telling. This demonstrates that as Joana's consciousness develops, she draws ever closer to darkness. Because a woman's awakening is the darkness of a patriarchal society.

One of the most striking representations of Joana's loneliness takes place in the scene where the monotonous ticking of a clock reflects her inner sense of isolation. By saying, "And she, solitary as the ticking of a clock in an empty house," Lispector not only indicates her loneliness but also transforms a basic domestic voice into an echo for existential emptiness (127). It can be implied that because every faint sound intensifies in the emptiness of the house, silence itself turns into an extremely appropriate place of echoes. In addition to that, there is a

remarkable detail that she is next to her husband. Even though her husband exists there physically, she feels emotionally detached and deeply alienated, revealing the paradox and isolation within domestic life. What further strengthens this definition is her later description of listening to “the blare of music, much too loud for any human being” (127). This shows that her inner solitude is so immense that no ordinary person could endure it, and the fact that she experiences it next to the man she shares her life with makes it even more striking. What is most impressive, however, is Lispector’s attempt to express this through the sound of a clock—heard intermittently but rhythmically—in a completely silent house. This scene alone demonstrates Lispector’s skill in portraying an emotion as difficult to describe as loneliness, especially considering it is her debut novel.

As a result, Lispector builds an impressive language that reflects Joana’s consciousness. The subtle interaction of sound, echo, and silence shows not just the outside world but also the internal conflict of her subjectivity. In the novel, domestic spaces and inanimate objects participate in a fragile dialogue with Joana’s feelings; for example, furniture creaks, shadows fasten, and clocks tick, but not as simple background voices, yet as indicators of Joana’s fragmented self. In this respect, sounds inside the silence function as both a mirror and a sign of her loneliness: every echo in the room, for example, turns into a repercussion of her alienation, whereas silence itself transforms into a living existence within her consciousness. Lispector’s usage of the term silence transcends the term absence; it becomes a language itself, a place where the unspeakable feelings cannot be expressed. The ticking clock, the muffled creak of furniture, and the shadows moving through the empty house all suggest that her loneliness is not invalid but a space where identity trembles, expands, and redefines itself through the voices in silence. Even in the existence of her husband, she experiences the irresistible magnitude of solitude, as though her inner silence strengthens every external sound. Through this interior resonance, Lispector reveals that the boundaries between the world and the self, sound and silence, intimacy and estrangement, are continuously dissolving in the life of our character. In this dissolution, Joana comes closer to her awakening, not through speech or dialogue but through the subtle, rhythmic murmur of her own existence.

4.3 When the Body Speaks — Bodily Echoes of Silence in *Near to the Wild Heart*

Throughout the novel, silence turns into a living force that moves through Joana's body, translating what cannot be said into gestures, unconscious reactions, and sensations. Whenever words stop speaking, her body starts to become the site of meaning. Silence, once broken up by the waves of the sea, the ticking of a clock, or the roar of the wind, soon begins to take over Joana's body. These are not just physical reactions, but also the bodily reflections of responses beyond the control of language. Through these reactions, Lispector reveals how the female body functions as both a voice and a space. In this way, as Joana's body becomes a silent interlocutor, transforming the ineffable into physical rhythm, the boundaries between the internal and external collapse. Therefore, this novel demonstrates that silence is most effective when it passes through the female body. Just as nature once gave voice to Joana's inner silence, her own body now assumes that role. In these scenes, silence no longer surrounds her — it inhabits her.

The scene in which Joana desperately tries to get her father's attention is one of the best examples of this situation in the novel. It was in the first chapter of the book, which means that Lispector gives another clue about Joana's future in human relations. The silent room fills with the child's voice; however, her words disappear in the surrounding air, unanswered, but most importantly, unnoticed. What remains is not only the child's unanswered call but also the beginning of a dialogue between silence and the body that will last the rest of her life. The absence of a response from her father in this scene represents Joana's first encounter with the meaninglessness of language; it is her realization that speech, no matter how loud, will fail to reach or mobilize another being or person. It is precisely in this void that Lispector begins to replace verbal expression with bodily reactions—that which is left unsaid, the silent, that begins to occupy the body. In this way, Lispector's novel makes the body both a witness and a vehicle of silence, suggesting that the deepest realities of the self can emerge not in speech but sometimes in minute details.

In this scene, with “movement of her bare foot on the dusty wooden floors”, Joana starts to express what her voice cannot(13). Instead of calling out to her father or trying to speak to him directly, Joana chooses to draw his attention through small gestures. Likewise, rather than expressing her boredom aloud, she prefers to observe the walls around her. One possible reason for this is her reluctance to break the silence that fills the room and allows her father to concentrate, or perhaps it can be interpreted as a reflection of her own inner silence. She senses

that disrupting the quiet would anger him—a fear that the reader later realizes is justified. When her father finally bursts out, saying, “Go and knock your head against the wall!”, Joana walks away, singing “in a low voice” to herself and braiding her hair, withdrawing once more into her private world of silence (14, 15).

When Joana learns of her father’s death, she does not respond with tears or screams. Instead, she stays in silence on the rocky shore, where her body finally expresses her inner conflict by vomiting (34). In this part, the act of vomiting turns into a substitute for language, which is a way of throwing out what cannot be expressed. Evaluating this part as a physical condition can be wrong because it is profoundly symbolic. Her body responds to the unbearable weight of her loss, transforming silence into a visceral gesture. In Lispector’s work, as seen in this example, the body replaces speech and functions as the site where emotion and repression collide. The setting itself is a testament to Joana’s inner loneliness, giving the reader the sense that she is being destroyed by the world rather than expressing her pain through words. Through this scene, Lispector reveals the limitations of language and the necessity of the body as a vehicle of expression. Therefore, her inability to speak or her silence at that moment is not due to the absence of sound, but rather to the presence of an intense emotion that refuses to be expressed. Therefore, her vomiting becomes a physical indicator of mourning, a silent yet powerful cry that fills the gap between internal chaos and external stillness.

Another example of the body’s silent reaction in the novel is in the kissing part. When Otávio, her husband, kisses Joana, Joana’s body does not know how to react physically. She then bites her lips, her head spins, and she feels the weight of her body and the blood rushing through her veins (89). But despite all this, she does not say a word. This is another example of a scene where the body replaces language. While these reactions may appear to express emotion, Lispector uses such expressions to convey Joana’s hatred. For example, biting her lip is the first reaction that replaces words, representing both suppressed anger and passion. Later, when she goes to her room and tries to sleep, it is both an escape and, in fact, a process of rebirth. Here, sleep transforms from a conscious desire into a quiet refuge, like physical surrender. Therefore, the silence or lack of reaction in this passage demonstrates that, no matter how strong the emotion, if suppressed, it most accurately reflects the character’s inner world through silence.

In a different example, Lispector depicts Joana’s silent rebellion not through an ordinary confrontation but through the physical manifestation of her repressed emotions. When Joana realizes the extent of her husband Otávio’s control over her own existence, Lispector expresses

her reaction not through speech, but through an overwhelming inner contraction. When she senses what her husband feels, Joana's instinctive reaction is conveyed as "her hands were gripping the arms of the chair and her teeth were clenched" (p. 100). The intensity of her feelings turns into physical tension. Yet, instead of an external outburst, what follows is a deep and realistic awareness of her own confinement. When she thinks "I'll leave him..." (p. 101), the reader begins to understand that Joana will no longer submit but take action. Indeed, it is at this point that she performs her most decisive act of rebellion—she interrupts Otávio (p. 102). However, feeling once again compelled to restrain herself, rather than responding further, "she had to swallow carefully to suppress the foolish urge to weep which slowly surfaced in her breast." This part is even more important: instead of screaming outward and wreaking havoc, his anger transforms into an internal force, keeping alive the awareness of his injustice. In other words, he does not act, but transforms into existential energy, allowing it to grow within him and perhaps even later to become his own being. So, while silence here may seem like containing his anger, it becomes one of the most profound reflections of her inner conflict.

Throughout this chapter, silence in *Near to the Wild Heart* is not so much a void as an alternative language through which Joana's body communicates what words cannot express. Lispector transforms silence into a bodily discourse: when Joana cannot express her anger, pain, or resistance, her body becomes the site where repressed emotions emerge through gestures, spasms, or involuntary movements. Whether she clenches her jaw, clutches a chair with trembling hands, or vomits next to rocks upon learning of her father's death, these physical reactions replace verbal language. In this sense, the dichotomy between speech and silence in the novel dissolves, demonstrating that silence itself can be tumultuous, capable of challenging resistance, pain, and truth. Indeed, when examined in terms of transgression, Joana's silent actions constitute a subversive form of agency. Through her body, she voices what cannot be said within the confines of patriarchal discourse. Thus, her silence ceases to symbolize submission; instead, it becomes a threshold between being silenced and reclaiming her voice.

4.4 Beyond Patriarchal Discourse: Silence as Feminine Writing

Silence serves as both an absence and a purposeful narrative technique in Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart*. Within this framework, language is destabilized, linearity is questioned, and the multiplicity of body and consciousness is privileged. Silence is not merely

a sign of the absence of language or the inability to speak; it is also treated as a creative space where the female subject redefines her place within patriarchal discourse. The ruptures in Lispector's language, the fluidity of her interior monologues, and the circular structure of the narrative bear traces of the feminine form of writing defined by Hélène Cixous. In this part, I will analyze moments of silence in Joana's inner world, examining how writing represents silence and, through it, reconstructs the female experience through the tools of *écriture féminine*.

In *Near to the Wild Heart*, Clarice Lispector transforms silence and the perception of corporeality into a feminine form of expression that embodies the principles of *écriture féminine*. Therefore, analyzing the novel through the tools of *écriture féminine* is essential to understanding Lispector's narrative approach. Lispector portrays Joana through this framework in multiple ways: her body, her interiority, her loneliness, and her rejection of conventional moral rules. Deep down, Joana desires liberation; though she initially appears to submit, she later resists effectively, demonstrating that the feminine self is not to be silenced or belittled, but celebrated and reclaimed through writing. This is precisely what Cixous envisions in *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975) when she urges women to "write their bodies" — an act Lispector performs through Joana's internal and bodily expression. Through this lens, Lispector not only gives voice to the unspoken but also rewrites the act of resistance itself as a silent form of creation. By transforming muteness into narrative power, she redefines silence as a language of feminine subjectivity rather than absence.

Both the child Joana and the adult Joana struggle to find their own identity, yet they face rejection — first by her father, and later by her husband — which pushes her toward self-discovery. Her resistance to authority begins in childhood. For instance, when she steals a book and is scolded by her aunt, the reprimand becomes less about morality and more about gendered expectations: "Up, it won't be long before you're a young lady... Very soon now you will be wearing your clothes longer" (46). The aunt's reaction implies not disapproval of theft itself but of Joana's defiance at the threshold of womanhood. In this moment, silence takes the form of internal rebellion; Joana refrains from explanation, knowing her words will not be understood. This moment reflects the earliest sign of Joana's awakening consciousness, marking the intersection between innocence and rebellion. Lispector thus uses the child's silence as a precursor to the adult woman's self-assertion — a silent education in autonomy.

Cixous interprets Joana's response as a movement toward innocence — a purity not of submission, but of authenticity. When Joana asserts, "That's right, I stole because I wanted to.

I only steal when I feel like it. I'm not doing any harm" (45), she reclaims her desire without guilt. Her act becomes a declaration of autonomy rather than sin. Here, silence evolves into a philosophical stance: the rejection of patriarchal morality and the affirmation of bodily truth. Thus, Lispector's use of opposites — body/desire, innocence/sin — reflects one of the core techniques of *écriture féminine*, where contradiction generates meaning and the feminine voice emerges from within the unspoken. Joana's silence, then, is no longer passive; it becomes the very rhythm of her becoming. In the following analyses, this transformation will be explored further through the images of nature and bodily expression that mirror Lispector's own redefinition of feminine identity.

In the later parts of the novel, it becomes clear that Joana's relationship with her body is independent of the patriarchal gaze. She discovers her own body, but this discovery occurs not as a sexual object, but as a subject. Joana describes this state as "rejoicing in her own body" (59). At the same time, the minute details of the body are among the most striking examples of the exploration of the body through women's writing. The textualization of the female body here is a significant indicator that Lispector transforms Joana's body into a written language. Furthermore, the image of water is also crucial in this section. Joana is silent, but the water speaks, "not mute," it murmurs (59). Water is not only examined as a symbol or a space of fluidity; it is also depicted as the place where Joana both loses herself and finds her true self. It can also be read in terms of the construction of Kristeva's semiotic and symbolic concepts. As mentioned earlier, Kristeva associates the symbolic order with patriarchy and the alienation from the mother/child bond (Jones 58). In this scene, she makes a brief transition to what Kristeva calls semiotic: "she chuckles to herself" expresses bodily pleasure and gentle murmurings like those of water, expressing fluidity; that is, to the realm of motherhood, that is, before it is sycophantic by patriarchal culture (59). However, the scene does not proceed in this way, and as the water cools, Joana begins to tremble with fear, thus reviving the claim that the symbolic has returned. The word "everything" she uses towards the end reveals to the reader that her experience of self-discovery has failed, because she cannot express the pleasure she experienced at that stage with any other word (60). From this perspective, it is clear that Lispector has been quite successful in writing about the female body, particularly in relation to *écriture féminine*.

Another significant passage to be read in light of *écriture féminine* is the tearing of the dress. This represents the violent conflict between feminine experience and patriarchal representation. Joana's delicate, ornate, and, more importantly, feminine dress is torn (142). In

this part, the dress can be considered as the mask of patriarchal femininity, and therefore, its tearing can mean the collapse or invalidation of this patriarchal femininity. In addition, “I must look straight ahead at the tear, but I’ve always been afraid of exploding with pain like the strains of the orchestra” (143). This quote is one of the most striking examples of Joana’s self-confrontation. Lispector uses the orchestra as a symbol of the explosion of sound, and the “fallen silent immediately” as a symbol of immediate silencing. This reflects what *écriture féminine* theorists attempt to explain as the dilemma of women: the necessity to speak and the violence of being silenced. The orchestra, originally a highly harmonious and orderly institution, is thrown into disharmony at the moment it attempts to give voice to feminine experience and is subsequently killed. This is one of the most obvious examples of a women who try to speak out in society being silenced by the order. In this case, Lispector supports Irigaray’s views on the destruction of the symbolic order with a remarkable description.

Écriture féminine can be understood through the metaphor of motherhood, as it embodies the act of creation, nurturing, and renewal that defines feminine writing — a textual process through which women give birth to their own language and identity. Joana’s conversation with Lídia oscillates between an aggressive speech (‘I, too, could have a child. Why not!’) and a silent inner monologue (‘I can feel myself holding a child, Joana thought’) (144). Although she responds to Lídia using her masculine logic—competition, possession, the seeming sacredness of motherhood—she internally opposes this patriarchy and analyzes the situation in depth. The fact that her child will be superior to her, despite developing with her own power, becomes one of the best examples of female alienation within Kristeva’s symbolic. This is because the mother’s joy in giving life is intertwined with the fear of being erased by that life; therefore, she must get rid of it, just as Kristeva’s opinion about abjection. Additionally, this section also supports Cixous’ views on writing through the body. The mother’s body becomes a place where desire and nourishment coexist, and the concept of *écriture féminine*, as a writing of this body’s flowing, is reflected.

Through *Near to the Wild Heart*, Lispector redefines demythologizing as a form of *écriture féminine*—an unmaking of patriarchal myth through the silent, bodily language of feminine becoming. In the novel, Lispector dissolves the hierarchies that separate the divine, the human, and the material. While she initially does this by speaking out against her husband, she later also appears to be using it against God. For example, when she imagines “God perched on a tree and twittering” in the novel, the sacred is stripped of its status and reduced to the level of the ordinary, even the fragile (161). The divine voice, rather than a commanding logos,

becomes a corporeal presence, thus weakening the patriarchal image of a speaking, commanding God. Furthermore, it is spiritual and therefore omnipresent. But in Lispector's writing, God resides in a physical place (a tree) and is a small, ordinary bird (161). In Christianity, God, who is above all else, is subordinate to humanity in the novel. And if God is merely a tweeting bird, then human life requires no divine power. Furthermore, the voice of God, to whom everyone in religion listens and obeys, is here "unable to say anything" (161). Even God is silent in this part of the novel. However, towards the end of the novel, we see that Joana rejects to be silent; she starts to speak out, raising her voice against her husband, society, and restrictions. No matter what, she resolves to fight everything she faces and, more importantly, to build the woman she desires. And while doing this, she does not want anyone to be by her side, not even God. (185) This moment encapsulates Joana's ultimate act of emancipation — by rejecting divine and social authority alike, she dismantles every external source of meaning, embodying *écriture féminine*'s ideal of self-authored womanhood through silence turned into voice.

As a conclusion, Joana's silence in the novel becomes even more significant considering *écriture féminine*. By revealing the female character's profound roles such as those of the daughter, the wife, and the self-aware woman who resists patriarchal norms, it redefines feminine subjectivity within a modernist framework. Joana's self-questioning, with its fragmented stream of consciousness and bodily rhythms, disrupts the phallic-centered symbolic order. Furthermore, Hélène Cixous' call to write the body aligns strongly with Luce Irigaray's plural feminine language and Julia Kristeva's semiotic chora. Joana's silences, both in childhood and in marriage, are acts of feminist resistance that demythologize patriarchal myths such as the obedient daughter and the blessed mother. Thus, as proposed by *écriture féminine* theorists, a space for the expression of feminine desire beyond the constraints of masculine discourse is created. This paves the way for tracing Joana's journey as a feminist *bildungsroman*.

4.5 Echoes of a Silent Childhood: Lispector's Self-Reflections in Joana

The silence surrounding *Near to the Wild Heart* belongs not only to Joana but also to Clarice Lispector. Lispector's novel, written when she was still very young, bears the traces of an unspoken history: her childhood marred by pogroms and displacement, her mother's premature death, and the start of a new life in a new place. Lispector rarely mentions these

details. However, the reader can still gain insight into the author's thoughts through the characters' characteristics and way of thinking, as the connection between the author and character is undeniable. Joana's silent reflections echo Lispector's own fragmented memories of childhood and exile; through these echoes, Lispector integrates silence, bodily rhythms, and fragmented consciousness into a feminist *bildungsroman*, dismantling patriarchal myths about femininity and reclaiming the right of women to write their own becoming. This chapter will examine these connections through the lens of the feminist *bildungsroman*.

Like Joana, Lispector grows up with a mother's absence. The loss of her mother at a young age gives meaning to Joana's mother image, as the novel simultaneously explores Joana's self-construction within the framework of a feminist *bildungsroman*. In fact, the mother in the novel is a figure mentioned only in fragments, recalled in sensory moments, but never speaking for herself. Unlike traditional feminist *bildungsroman*, where the mother is often governed by patriarchal knowledge and authority, the mother's absence plays a crucial role in Joana's resistance. Because she has no mother to turn to or look up to, she is forced to grow up on her own, just like her author, Lispector. This image, which confronts Joana at every stage of her life, empowers and allows her space to challenge authority. Thus, every moment in her life represents Joana's struggle to reclaim her identity.

One of the clearest similarities between Lispector and Joana is religious belief. Even if she was born in a Jewish family, Lispector's relationship with belief is shaped by her father's death. As Moser notes, after her father's death, her respect for religious texts vanishes almost completely (227). This situation is directly related to Joana's own spiritual loneliness in the novel. For both Joana and Lispector, their father's death led to a detachment from the world and a commitment to their inner worlds. As her close friend Olga Borelli points out, she does not directly commit to religion, but she continues to question it (35). Joana follows a similar path in the novel. She does not completely reject God, but she certainly cannot be said to exhibit complete dependence.

In addition, in one of her interviews, Lispector writes that before she could even read or write, she and her friends would create endless stories (Moser 380). This allows Lispector to connect Joana's childhood with her own, especially in terms of her imagination. As Moser quotes, the stories she made up in her childhood are similar to the stories Joana made up (380). Because, at the beginning of the novel, Joana also tries to pass the time by making up stories in her inner world to attract her father's attention, or rather, in her silence. These stories can be seen as similar to the stories she, or rather Lispector, created: endless stories. In which the dead

are resurrected, and the stories never end, but always continue. These in-and-outs between death and resurrection can also be perceived as a cyclical rhythm that defines both Joana's and Lispector's inner worlds. In addition, this situation conforms to the feminist *bildungsroman* tradition by transforming the constraints of childhood and silence into the foundations of expression. Because the main character in her dream story is also a woman, and no matter what, she never dies and continues to rise. This demonstrates to the reader how Lispector instills a feminine form of becoming and resurrection in the mind of a young child. This continues even as the novel's main character, Joana, grows and reaches maturity. This signals that Lispector is not just writing stories; she's projecting her own consciousness onto the reader from the very beginning through the character's imagination, and that this consciousness will persist even as the character grows into a young woman.

In both Lispector and Joana, there is an evident sense of inner awakening and rebirth. Yet, both achieve this transformation through the profound use of silence. Silence becomes, for each of them, a means of expressing what cannot be spoken — a language for the unsayable. One possible reason for this shared silence lies in the formative traumas of their childhoods: Lispector's loss of her mother and the guilt she carried for it, and Joana's own mother's absence, which deprived her of a figure from whom she could learn what it means to be a woman, compounded by her father's emotional detachment. This absence is vividly reflected throughout the novel. However, Lispector refuses the traditional, male-centered structure of the *bildungsroman*, which equates maturity with social integration and rational selfhood. Instead, she transforms the genre into a distinctly feminine space of authenticity — one that unfolds through observation, contradiction, uncertainty, and the intimate embodiment of thought. Both Joana and Lispector resist patriarchal expectations. Joana's fragmented consciousness mirrors Lispector's own struggle to articulate female subjectivity in a world that privileges male rationality. Thus, *Near to the Wild Heart* is not only Joana's story of self-realization but also Lispector's self-reflective act of creation: a silent dialogue between woman and author, between life and literature, redefining the boundaries of feminine existence. It is for this reason that Lispector's close friend Maury Gurgel Valente once wrote in a letter that the female characters in the novel, both Lidia and Joana, are identical to Lispector herself (Moser 170). In this novel, Lispector integrates silence, bodily rhythms, and fragmented consciousness into a feminist *bildungsroman*, dismantling patriarchal myths about femininity and creating a narrative that encourages women to write their own stories.

5. THE LANGUAGE OF SILENCE: *ÉCRITURE FÉMININE* AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY IN *THE MAGIC TOYSHOP*

*Struck dumb on her wedding
day, she found her old voice again the day she was freed.*

(Carter *Toyshop* 220)

In Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), silence functions as both a weapon and a shield—and also a tool of patriarchal oppression and a powerful form of female resistance. The reader encounters numerous silences in the novel: Aunt Margaret's enforced silence after her marriage to Uncle Philip; Melanie's inability to express her sexual consciousness, which emerges in orate; and, more importantly, the silencing of the feminine idiom within phallogocentric discourse. This contradictory absence of silence, imposed by patriarchy and its presence constructed through the feminine phallic, resonates deeply with the principles of *écriture féminine*, a feminist writing practice theorized by Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva. Cixous' *The Laugh of Medusa* (1975), in which women are challenged to create a language that purifies them from patriarchal structures by writing themselves, demonstrates how silence can transform speech into a form of body writing, rejecting masculine writing and transforming speech into a feminine language.

In many ways, the theoretical framework of *écriture féminine* offers important perspectives for examining Carter's narrative strategies. Cixous' concept of body writing emphasizes the translation of feminine bodily experience into textual form, while Kristeva's semiotic concept challenges patriarchal language. Irigaray's "parler femme," the speaking woman, similarly advocates for a fluid, multiple form of feminine speech (*This Sex* 219). While the *bildungsroman* traditionally expects the protagonist to conform to social and linguistic norms, *écriture féminine* offers a manufactured reversal for female protagonists; it challenges the traditional linear trajectory of development. In this case, *The Magic Toyshop* is a significant example of *écriture féminine* because it depicts Melanie's unproblematic submission from

childhood to adult womanhood, rather than a traumatic confrontation with the mechanism of violence through which feminine subjectivity is gradually constructed.

Silence in the novel might initially be seen as a symptom of women's silencing, but Carter reconstructs it as a form of resistance. Like Joana, Melanie, and Margaret initially appear to submit to Uncle Philip's rules by remaining silent, but towards the end of the novel, the reader observes that this silence is a crucial tool for reclaiming their freedom and selves. Furthermore, in the novel, silence is not simply the absence of sound; it is the expression of other voices speaking for the characters and reflecting their inner worlds, such as Francie's violin, footsteps, or voices from nature. In this chapter, I will examine how Carter redefines silence in *The Magic Toyshop* through the lens of *écriture féminine*, transforming silence from the tool of patriarchal pressure into a tool of feminine creativity and self-authorship.

5.1 Muted Voices: Patriarchal Control and the Silencing of Women

Silence plays a crucial role in the development and self-discovery of the main female characters in Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* (1967). However, this issue is not addressed from a single perspective in the novel; one of these is the suppression of the female characters' silence caused by patriarchal authority. For example, at the beginning of the novel, Melanie uses richer language in her inner monologues, telling the reader about her life as if it was a novel. However, in the later scenes of the novel, Melanie's expressive language diminishes due to the events she encounters. Because, in the beginning of the novel, Melanie, who was prosperous in her home and grew up, moves in with her uncle after losing her parents, the freedom of language is restricted. Because the authority figure, which does not appear at the beginning of the novel, strikingly appears before the female characters in later scenes. The best example of this is when Melanie and her two siblings, Victoria and Jonathan, first arrive at their uncle's toyshop, or rather, the Flower family's home. Melanie, realizing that she must obey the rules of an authority figure she has not yet seen, is unsure how to react to this encounter. For example, her aunt's brother, Finn, who lives in the house they came from, tells her about Uncle Philip's likes and dislikes. When Melanie is told that Philip "won't have a woman in trousers" and that she must "only speak when you're spoken to," Carter clearly reveals the role of patriarchy on female identity (69, 70). Philip's disgust at a woman wearing trousers is not due to aesthetic considerations or preference; it is an act of refusing to allow the female body into

the realm of masculine visibility and action. Therefore, ordering women to remain silent reinforces the idea that feminine identity should not be heard within the phallogocentric order. In addition, Melanie's first conscious confrontation with this order occurs in this scene, because when Finn warns her about her dress, she knows that her dress is appropriate.

Her speech stumbles, her body becomes a field of authority, and her silence represents forced obedience. In fact, Melanie's silencing can be considered the first step in the formation of her subjectivity. Because Melanie, facing such a situation for the first time in her life, evaluates the situation and decides that the most appropriate solution at that moment is to remain silent. Because she has no idea how frightening the man in front of her, Uncle Philip, is. Her understanding of this issue develops further after she meets Uncle Philip and realizes how frightening he truly is, and she begins to look for ways to cope with him. Uncle Philip, the symbol of authority and patriarchy, was the biggest reason for the "charm quiet" in the house (100). Many descriptions of the house indicate that it is completely silent, but this silence comes from fear, not peace. His "Medusa glances" are so strong that everyone in the room feels disturbed (80). For Aunt Margaret, his existence is enough to make her feel uncomfortable. Also, his existence as a horrible figure causes more serious fear in Victoria. His reactions cause her to forget the speech she had just learned (83). This part is an indication of the physical collapse of language in the face of authority. Victoria's "gasp" reflects a moment when patriarchal fear stifles language, but the language and the body try to speak.

Carter uses powerful imagery and impressive language to portray the space of patriarchal authority. This spatial politics is often associated with enforced silence. Uncle Philip's place "at the head of the table" in "a large chair with arms" and "presiding magisterially" over the meal strengthens his role as a symbolic father and domestic patriarch more concretely. Margaret's position, which is described as "crouched at the table foot, one eye on the kettle," is in contradiction with Uncle Philip's raised, throne-like seat (80). In that part, as well as spatial hierarchy, voice hierarchy can also be analyzed. Philip, sitting on the throne, not only has the authority to determine when others speak, but he can also speak whenever he chooses. In contrast, Margaret is relegated to the lowest position at the table and doubly silenced through both linguistic exclusion and spatial marginalization. The uncanny silence of the scene evokes Foucault's concept of the "micro-physics of power," which means not only possessing power but also silently and strategically exercising it. According to Foucault's micro-physics of power, if bodies are disciplined through spatial organization and silent ritual, there is no need for authority to be loudly announced (26). In fact, this is what happens in *The Magic Toyshop*:

Philip does not assert his authority by shouting at everyone; the household is already disciplined when they sense his presence or his shadow.

Philip's treatment of Margaret provides compelling examples of the sadistic dimensions of patriarchal silencing. "...never talked to his wife except to bark brusque commands" is a phrase that codes multiple violence in this novel (138). Furthermore, the verb barking is used to animalize Margaret, reducing her to a creature taking orders rather than a human subject capable of speaking. The phrase "except" indicates that the orders are not speech, but that true communication in their relationship is completely absent. In this situation, Margaret, already deprived of her voice, is also deprived of her interlocutor status. Furthermore, Uncle Philip enjoys this situation. During meals, he gazes at Margaret with "expressive satisfaction," which not only delights him but also whets his appetite (127). Uncle Philip feeds on Margaret's pain. It is precisely in this section that Uncle Philip emerges as a reflection of what Laura Mulvey terms the sadistic male gaze. According to Mulvey, the male protagonist dominates many things in the scene; besides, he derives immense pleasure from this sadism, as he gains control, granting him full control over the object (14). Margaret, however, cannot control his gaze or speak. She suffers inwardly, and although Uncle Philip sees this, he enjoys it. In this scene, Margaret has become a dominated object.

One of the most prominent examples of resistance to patriarchal silencing occurs toward the end of the novel. Initially, Melanie appears subservient to Uncle Philip's regime, maintaining silence against its rules and pretending to accept the restrictive female roles imposed upon her. But this external obedience masks an internal process of resistance that gradually grows stronger and transforms into action. The climax of the novel, in which Melanie witnesses the toy shop burning down, is the most significant indicator of this silent resistance transforming into revolutionary destruction. Her refusal to intervene and her choice to watch the flames consume the physical manifestation of patriarchal control constitutes an act of defiance more powerful than speech itself. Furthermore, Melanie's decision to wear trousers in the final section of the novel, despite Uncle Philip's explicit prohibition of women wearing masculine clothing, embodies a silent yet overt defiance of patriarchal impositions on feminine dress and behavior (212). This seemingly minor clothing challenge carries profound symbolic weight, challenging not only Uncle Philip's household rules but also the broader system of gender norms that seek to limit and define female identity through appearance. By demanding the right to dress as she wishes, Melanie asserts her bodily autonomy and rejects the idea that her femininity must conform to masculine rules. Thus, what initially appears as passive

acceptance reveals itself as a strategic silence. This can be linked to Luce Irigaray's concept of mimicry. Melanie strategically submits and distorts patriarchal commands to undermine them from within. By imitating the codes of male authority—first through obedience, then through ironic mimicry—Melanie destabilizes the binary opposition between silence and speech, passivity and action. Her silence is no longer imposed; it becomes a language of resistance.

Examined from these perspectives, the silences in the novel are not natural absences but gaps created through violence, the patriarchal order's deliberate denial of women's voices. Carter demonstrates that under conditions of extreme patriarchal authority, women's silence is not freely chosen but violently produced through physical intimidation, sexual trauma, and the erasure of the linguistic subject. However, these silences are not uniform in meaning and impact. These silences gain significance in the novel's later sections, helping these female characters find themselves and, subsequently, resist through their silence. Just as *écriture féminine* advocates for a body writing that transcends patriarchal language, Carter presents her reader with a language written about bodies forced to speak because their mouths are sealed, not for celebration but for survival, a stubborn insistence on liberation even in silence.

5.2 The Muted Body: Margaret's Silence, Survival, And Resistance

It is a terrible affliction; it came to her on her wedding day, like a curse. Her silence (41).

In *The Magic Toyshop*, Aunt Margaret's silence stands as one of the most haunting and complex relationships of female subjugation and resistance. Unlike Melanie, whose struggle to speak emerges at moments of linguistic rupture and awakening, Margaret's silence is total, embodied, and inscribed in her gestures. Her silence is not only the absence of a voice, but also the result of years of patriarchal domination, physical abuse, and internalized oppression under Uncle Philip's rule. Yet, through her music, gestures, and silent interactions, Carter constructs an alternative language—a language that speaks beyond words. Thus, Margaret creates a language that is uniquely her own, one that speaks without speaking. In this part, I will examine Aunt Margaret's silence.

Melanie and her siblings are confronted with the reality of Aunt Margaret's muteness not by Margaret herself, yet by the Jowle brothers: their reaction reflects the family's shared attitude towards Aunt Margaret's silence. Francie's explanation, "She's dumb," is rather flat, harsh, and lacks empathy (41). While saying this, Finn and Francie's preoccupation with other things demonstrates their indifference to the situation. Later, Finn's comparison of Margaret's silence to a "curse" transforms this silence into an unexplained event that begins not at birth but on the day of marriage. In this case, marriage is an institution that condemns women to silence and turns them into beings who obey orders. At the same time, this situation confirms Elaine Scarry's argument that "physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it." For Margaret, marriage becomes a total pain that gradually destroys her capacity to speak (4). This situation actually forces Melanie to ask questions about marriage, which she feels she is ready for when she looks at herself in the mirror at the novel's beginning. Or does the curse of silence that all women are subjected to when they marry become visible in Margaret's body?

Her body, represented as a blend of light and fragility in their first encounter, becomes a paradoxical embodiment of both presence and erasure. The fiery red of her hair and eyebrows symbolizes vitality and passion, while her "colorless" face and "painfully thin" body demonstrate the extent of the violence she is subjected to (41). Furthermore, her convulsive, unpracticed hug to Victoria can be interpreted as a physical reflection of lost motherhood. Carter constructs Margaret's body as language, and her silence as a text written in flesh and movement. Margaret's "hungry sort of smile" can be summarized as an instinct for nurturing and connection, smothered by a lifetime of deprivation (41).

In the novel, Margaret is also described as the ideal mother. A good wife, a good cook, she is also understanding and caring. Since the children arrived home, she has been particularly attentive to Victoria, taking care of her with great care. Besides being a good mother, she is also an ideal wife. While it's known that this ideal wife stems from Uncle Philip's fear, the depth of Aunt Margaret's silence becomes even more evident the longer Melanie and her siblings remain in the house. However, there are also moments when this silence disappears. One night, Melanie witnesses Aunt Margaret and her siblings singing and dancing, demonstrating that Margaret herself is actually resisting silence and, through the instrument, able to project her own voice, albeit without speaking. After this night, the "total silence" in the house becomes a silence Melanie no longer can hear, but one she begins to understand. Margaret's silence allows her to re-create her own existence, body, and emotions through her flute. However, the melody's ending with "dribble into silence" indicates that this field of expression is also temporary, that

it can only be sustained in the absence of patriarchal oppression (55). Melanie's secret listening to the music and admiring Margaret expresses a moment in which she experiences feelings of both admiration and fear. Furthermore, Margaret's grasp of the flute "as though she were thirsty for it" symbolizes both her repressed desires and her hunger to express her repressed voice (57). In this sense, Margaret can be seen as a mirror figure reflecting Melanie's future state.

Aunt Margaret's Sunday transformation is one of the most chilling representations of Margaret's feminine captivity and silence in the novel. Carter meticulously depicts this ritual, which is both emotionally and physically painful for Margaret, as if it were a ceremony. The silver collar she wears, which virtually immobilizes her, is Uncle Philip's most effective weapon of control over Aunt Margaret. Her eyes remain "anxious and sad," forcing her to hold her head "high and haughty as the Queen of Assyria" (126). This situation holds together the internalized contradiction of submission hidden behind a dignified posture. Susan Bordo also suggests that women's adorning practices are often "normalizing" disciplines that produce "docile bodies" through self-regulation (166). This is a clear description of the situation Margaret faces. Through the collar she wears, her voice is silenced, and her body is made docile to authority as if this were normal. The oppositions in this section are also quite striking: mutilating jewelry, starving ornament, suffocating beauty. Sunday, which is usually a day of rest and spiritual nourishment, becomes a painful ritual for Aunt Margaret. But even more frightening is the fact that Uncle Philip seems to relish it. This is also a manifestation of the sadistic dynamics underlying patriarchal marriages, such as the husband who feeds his wife even though she starves, the husband whose appetite is whetted by witnessing her deprivation, the husband who transforms his pain into entertainment.

Margaret's silence, even if rooted in patriarchal violence, transcends its origins and becomes what Irigaray describes as "disruptive excess"—a presence not fully contained within the symbolic system that produces it (*This Sex* 78). Throughout the novel, Margaret's silence is both a weapon and a wound. However, in the novel's apocalyptic ending, as the Toy Shop burns down and the patriarchal order is literally reduced to ashes, Margaret's silence takes on a different dimension. She does not regain the ability to speak—Carter rejects this emotional resolution—but her silence becomes clearly willed. She does not protest Philip's disappearance, nor does she scream or plead for help for her husband as faithful wives do. Her silence in this situation is interpreted as rejection rather than crisis or helplessness. This distinction is crucial for Margaret's analysis in the novel. As Bonnie Mann argues, women's rejection of patriarchal structures, even if this refusal takes the form of passivity or withdrawal, can become resistant

when their potential rebellion is thwarted (74). Margaret has no voice to condemn or oppose Uncle Philipp, no language to voice her grievances, but she has silence, and Margaret uses it. Her response to the fire, devoid of panic and anxiety, is a key example of this. What emerges is not a victory, because Margaret's liberation is not fully realized. Her silence, which begins as a triumph of patriarchy at the novel's beginning, ends as a rejection of that system.

5.3 Writing Against the Myth: *Écriture Féminine* and the Demythologizing of Patriarchal Narratives

In *The Magic Toyshop*, Angela Carter engages in a significant intervention within the patriarchal storytelling tradition, presenting the principles of *écriture féminine* alongside a deliberate act of demythologization. Through the fragmented, sensual, yet defiant structure of her prose, she unsettles the mythical archetypes that have long confined women to passive, subservient roles within the symbolic order. Moreover, in doing so, she not only rewrites these archetypes but also invalidates them. She exposes their nature, previously constructed by the patriarchal system, and the violence underlying their supposed universality. Women cannot simply adopt their masters' tools, cannot articulate their experiences in a discourse designed to silence them, and therefore must develop alternative forms of narration and signification. For Carter, one of these alternative forms is a narrative that exposes the constructedness and also the fragility of patriarchal myth. This writing, too, bears traces of *écriture féminine*, from Cixous' call to write the body to Kristeva's theory of the semiotic chora. In this section, I will examine the traces of *écriture féminine* and the demythologizing processes in *The Magic Toyshop* from different perspectives.

The juxtaposition of Mrs. Rundle's and Melanie's prayers early in the novel prompts the reader to question the roles of religion and marriage. Melanie's prayer, "Please God, let me get married. Or, let me have sex," reveals that marriage is a means of sexual access rather than a spiritual union (9). Furthermore, it reflects the acceptance of female sexuality only within a sacred or legitimized framework. Despite having resigned herself to God at thirteen, her repetition of this prayer demonstrates her loss of faith in God's fulfillment of her desire. Her realization that God is not present suggests the collapse of male-centered divine authority. Mrs. Rundle, however, makes this question more subtly, suggesting, as Kristeva suggests in the semiotic field, that female language emerges through the interstitial layers of the unspoken and the repressed. Therefore, we can observe both the reflection of *écriture féminine*, accompanied

by subjective, corporeal guilt, and Carter's ironic dismantling of the divine myth of male authority.

Another example is Melanie wearing her mother's wedding dress. This scene demonstrates Carter's success in demythologizing and *écriture féminine*. After examining her body in detail in the mirror, she decides to wear her mother's wedding dress. Melanie's wearing her mother's wedding dress stages the construction of the bride myth as an ill-fitting costume. When the dress becomes too big, she does not take it off; instead, she observes herself in the mirror and realizes how well it suits her. Furthermore, she feels so beautiful that she believes she does not need a groom. This, in turn, reimagines marriage as a solitary, self-sufficient experience of identity. In this way, the institution of sacred marriage and the romanticized bride cease to be the ideal myth. Her narcissistic address to nature in her wedding dress, "Look at me!", demonstrates her sense of superiority over nature and the apple tree about to fall. The landscape she gazes at is a metaphor for her own body: unprocessed, untouched, untouched by human feet. "Virgin" (18). She challenges these myths by rewriting the myths of purity and femininity through the language of the symbolic order. Her contemplation of going to the garden evokes the fall in Paradise. However, unlike the fall in Paradise, this demonstrates that it is not a punishment but a transformation. When she reaches night, that is, goes outside, and then, afraid of the darkness, searches for ways to enter the house and is wounded, it proves that this is not a salvation, contrary to what was thought. Returning home with wounds and bruises, and discovering that her crown is on the tree, she realizes that she has left her fairytale identity where it belongs, in nature, and that she has returned home incomplete. Because she is no longer innocent, she has lost her identity as an innocent girl and has instead acquired the identity of a wounded subject.

Motherhood is another sacred thing demythologized. After losing her mother and, suddenly, unprepared and reluctantly, embracing her status as a mother, she decides to take full responsibility for her siblings. Carter positions Melanie between the symbolic childhood fantasy and adult responsibility. Melanie now embodies the maternal role, reflecting the patriarchal myth of femininity. After losing her mother, she declares, "Mummy. No, Mother," realizing that she should only call her mother by a dignified name after her death, revealing the artificial respect imposed on the mother figure. She also declares, "I am no longer a free agent," confirming the idea that women are trapped by their responsibilities to others, as suggested by Simone de Beauvoir (*Second Sex* 274, *Magic Toyshop* 35). At the same time, this situation captures what Kristeva calls the "semiotic" through its rhythmic repetition and self-interruption.

In addition, realizing the arduous task of motherhood, Melanie decides to delegate it to her aunt (86). Victoria's transfer to female caregivers positions her as property and demythologizes the supposed naturalness of maternal bonds. The sudden relief that comes after delegating this role to her aunt voices women's ambivalence toward compulsory motherhood. This relief is a repressed truth within the patriarchal discourse that holds that women instinctively desire and enjoy children. This passage also exemplifies what Hélène Cixous describes as women's writing that articulates the "unspoken" of the female body and desire (*Castration* 43). Melanie's words reject the progression of linear narrative, instead allowing her to make choices impossible in masculine discourse.

The novel's myth of Leda and the Swan represents one of the most aestheticized depictions of sexual violence in Western culture. Zeus, disguised as a swan, rapes the mortal woman, Leda. This myth has been romanticized many times through art and literature, particularly through the poetry of W. B. Yeats (214). The myth's most insidious function is its dismissal of Leda's subjectivity. Leda remains silent about the rape, her individual trauma trivialized compared to masculine historical myths. Thus, the myth serves patriarchal ideology by suggesting that male sexual violence, like civilization itself, is founded on the violation of women's bodies. Angela Carter rewrites the myth in *The Magic Toyshop* through Uncle Philip's traumatic puppet show. Uncle Philip forces Melanie to enact Leda's rape. Carter's reinterpretation of the myth removes all romanticism, revealing the essence of the myth as male sadism and female terror, and refusing to aestheticize Melanie's experience. Contrary to all romanticization of the myth, he de-glamorizes it by turning it into crude masculine aggression by saying "lumpish jump" (187). Moreover, he portrays the swan so comically that Melanie laughs when she first sees it (185). This is an important depiction that ensures the myth is devalued. Melanie's terror, "she screamed and screamed," restores the voice of the cookie that was silenced by the classical versions (187). In this sense, Carter's rewriting of the Leda and the Swan part not only reimagines the myth; it also occupies and dismantles it from within, revealing the violence and gendered silencing embedded in patriarchal narratives. As Horzum argues, Carter engages in this resistance "by occupying its myths and dismantling them from within" (201). In this, one can also see the reflection of Irigaray's concept of mimicry. Because Melanie remains silent and continues to do Uncle Philip's bidding because she does not know what will happen next in the scene, but when she realizes that the swan is going to rape her, she resists Uncle Philip and the swan, that is, she resists authority and myth.

Carter's rewriting embodies the principles of *écriture féminine*, which reject phallogocentric language. While patriarchal mythology interprets this rape as a symbol of mortality's encounter with the sacred, the divine, Carter portrays Melanie as a person of concrete suffering. Phrases like "The swan made a lumpish jump forward and settled on her loins," "She thrust with all her force to get rid of it..." highlight the fragility and pain of the female body, the physical reality of penetration as an assault (187). Carter's style portrays the *écriture féminine* as it is. The constant repetition of the terror of that moment with screams and the fact that it occurred at an unknown time indicate that this was a serious trauma for Melanie (Caruth 91). By stating that Melanie was almost murdered, she not only emphasizes the violence of the rape but also calls it the death of the self (193). Carter's instinctive prose disrupts the aestheticization of the symbolic order, allowing the truth of the female body to emerge through the narrative form. Thus, Carter offers the interiority that classical mythology rejects and allows us to accompany not only the act but also its spiritual destruction. Furthermore, by destroying the normalizing effect of the myth on rape, she demonstrates that the violation of the female body is a crime and that, at the same time, it is not the raw material of male history but also the subjectivity of women that deserves respect and freedom. In this way, Carter's mythological narrative destroys the patriarchal discourse and makes it possible to achieve a new, woman-centered reality. Through this demythologizing process, Carter also restores the silenced female voice: the cry that replaces the mythical swan's song becomes the sound of resistance. The scream, in this sense, transforms from an expression of terror into a reclamation of agency, rewriting myth through sound rather than submission.

5.4 Writing the Self: Carter and Melanie's Parallel Journeys from Silence to Voice

The Magic Toyshop not only establishes a connection between its main character and its author but also exhibits the hallmarks of a feminist *bildungsroman*. It is one of the most compelling works depicting the development of girls into womanhood as they struggle to find their own voice. The novel, which depicts Melanie's journey from silence to finding her own voice, also reflects Carter's own artistic and feminist awakening as a child who faced numerous challenges. Both the character and her creator inhabit worlds that navigate worlds dominated by patriarchal linguistic codes, and struggle to create a voice that can resist and redefine these linguistic boundaries. In this chapter, I will examine the relationship between Melanie's *bildung* and Carter's feminist consciousness.

Melanie's profound loneliness and her imaginative fears mirror Carter's childhood, forging a biographical connection that enhances the female *bildungsroman* in the book. Carter, who “lacked playmates of her own age,” has to find new toys and friends for herself. When she is alone, as Gordon quotes, she creates terrifying monsters for herself (20). Melanie, too, awakens to adolescence feeling incomplete, becomes an orphan, and is forced to enter Uncle Philip's sphere of oppression. In this house, she creates grotesque fears from her own imagination. This parallel loneliness enables both Carter and Melanie to transform their personal fears into subversive narratives, thereby fulfilling the very aim of *écriture féminine*. Carter does this through her writing, and Melanie through her bodily awareness. By imbuing these “hang-ups and private fears” with a physical voice, she transforms the feminist *bildungsroman* not as a patriarchal genre of writing, but as a space where womanhood is recognized and opposed to phallogocentric myths.

Melanie's emphasis on physical appearance stems from the bond she formed with Carter. Gordon writes that Angela Carter suffered from profound body shame as a child and was harshly criticized by the children around her (23). Desire to make herself invisible is one of her biggest wishes at those times. Frequently criticized by those around her and even given unflattering nicknames, Carter was introduced to the thin body image required of femininity at a young age. This is evident in Melanie's mirror and meal scenes in her second novel, *The Magic Toyshop*. Melanie avoids eating because she believes thinness is a characteristic of choice. Furthermore, Carter's childlike stutter confronts the reader through Melanie's silence throughout much of the novel. Both the stuttering child and the silenced protagonist experience language as an obstacle rather than a tool, and more importantly, their voices are constrained by forces beyond their control. The biographical parallel suggests that Melanie's journey from body shame and forced silence to a voice that resists represents Carter's own journey.

The transformation from silence to voice is fundamental to both Melanie's development and Carter's evaluation as a feminist writer. Carter grew up in a postwar atmosphere where women were systematically suppressed and their voices confined to the domestic sphere. Therefore, remaining silent was one of the most deeply felt experiences for her. The end of Carter's early marriage and her encounter with second-wave feminism may have been one reason she incorporated resistance into her writing.

The puppet theater, however, is the most violent moment of Melanie's silencing. However, at this very moment, she defies expectations and inverts the myth. Melanie, one of the most impressive representatives of women forbidden from making noise and screaming,

demonstrates her rejection of these feminine prohibitions. In writing Melanie's scream, Carter simultaneously expresses her anger at the limits placed on female sexuality and creativity. The feminist *bildungsroman* structure is among the most important elements in Carter's depiction of this process as a developmental journey. Furthermore, both Carter and Melanie understand that voice is not merely an individual expression but a collective resistance. Melanie's scream, though expressed individually, is a reaction from all the voiceless women whom Uncle Philip has established dominance over. As Audre Lorde so impressively states, "Your silence will not protect you"; survival and finding one's voice depend on transforming silence into action (40).

As a result, Carter and Melanie's movement from silence to voice demonstrates what theorists of *écriture féminine* argue: women create themselves through writing and find their subjectivity through language. The voice Carter gives Melanie is her own. By depicting not only Melanie's but also Carter's finding her voice, Carter voices the truths the patriarchal system seeks to silence. By giving Melanie her voice, she finds her own.

6. CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the multiple dimensions of silence in Clarice Lispector's *Near to The Wild Heart* and Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*, situating them within a feminist writing tradition that transforms silence into a form of expression for both authors. By framing both texts within the framework of the feminist *bildungsroman* and *écriture féminine* theoretical discourse—particularly drawing on the frameworks established by Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray—the study demonstrates how silence functions as both an oppressive and a liberating force in women's lives. An examination of these two novels, emerging from vastly different cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts, reveals how silence can be redefined as a tool for female resistance, transformation, and creativity. Silence, which does not always appear as the absence of sound, is explored in detail in this novel, as it demonstrates how female characters, particularly protagonists, reflect themselves and their inner worlds through silence.

This study also examines the *bildungsroman* genre and its intersection with *écriture féminine* through the lens of both Lispector and Carter's novels. Whereas the traditional *bildungsroman* follows a heroine's adaptation to social order, *Near to the Wild Heart* and *The Magic Toyshop* present female protagonists, such as Melanie, Joana, and Aunt Margaret, who resist patriarchal structures in their development. Through Cixous' call for women to inscribe themselves into existence, Kristeva's semiotic theory that disrupts the symbolic order, and Irigaray's critique of the phallic economy of language, this study demonstrates that the silence and fragmentation in these novels are not symptoms of female inadequacy but strategic deployments of a feminine linguistic practice that refuses to be confined within patriarchal narrative structures.

This thesis later demonstrated that the biographical and cultural contexts of Lispector and Carter were essential to understanding how they employed silence as a literary strategy. Lispector's Brazilian-Ukrainian Jewish heritage, the forced separation from their homeland, the necessity of changing their identities and maintaining their anonymity, and her preoccupation with existential questions profoundly influenced Joana, a character existing at the limits of language. As Lispector struggles to express her inner experience, Joana, the alternative form of

silence, elaborates in her works, where meaning transcends verbal expression and silence acquires meaning. Similarly, Angela Carter's position as a writer witnessing the development of feminism and war in 1960s Britain inspired her to create Melanie, a heroine who must challenge patriarchal myths. Her works demonstrate that silence can function as a transgressive aesthetic principle, subverting hierarchies of sound, meaning, and form. This silence is sometimes expressed through movements, gestures, and facial expressions, and sometimes through the body. Both authors write about how women forced to remain silent in the patriarchal order used silence as a means of resistance.

This thesis also presents the various dimensions of silence that function *as écriture féminine* by conducting a detailed analysis of Clarice Lispector's *Near to the Wild Heart*. Joana's deep connection with nature contrasts with patriarchal language, transcending verbal narrative and offering a form of expression that carries profound meaning. This chapter, through a detailed examination of these multiple uses of silence, reveals a different dimension of writing about the body and the female inner world. For example, it examines not only the absence of sound that occurs whenever the body falls silent, but also the way Joana expresses herself through silence, exploring and reflecting on how this absence is reflected. Furthermore, this study identifies Lispector's influences in the novel and establishes a connection between Young Clarice and Joana. Moreover, it examines in detail how Joana's body speaks when her language is silenced. This becomes a space where Lispector creates a presence through something unspeakable in traditional discourse, and this thesis explores this space.

The next chapter examines how Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* presents a detailed investigation of silence within patriarchal structures, revealing how silence operates as both oppression and resistance. Melanie's initial silence reflects her position within a system that shapes her identity according to patriarchal fantasy, while Margaret's utter silence represents the ultimate silencing of women under oppressive masculinity. However, the novel reveals that this imposed silence also holds the key to resistance. Margaret's body, declaring that she cannot speak, uses her muteness as a vehicle for reflecting her own emotions. Furthermore, this analysis reveals how the novel, in light of its relationship with myth and the *écriture féminine*, attempts to shed the mythological meanings of patriarchal narratives and reclaim them. Finally, it highlights the parallel journeys of Carter and Melanie, from silence to voice, and argues that women's writing constitutes a movement from imposed silence to self-expression, a claim to narrative authority systematically denied by patriarchal culture.

This study contributes to ongoing academic arguments on gender, language, and feminist *bildungsroman* by demonstrating the critical importance of analyzing silence as a positive force rather than a mere absence. The theoretical frameworks of Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray offer fundamental tools for understanding how women's writing operates by challenging and rewriting masculine linguistic norms rather than conforming to them. By examining silence in conjunction with *écriture féminine*, this thesis offers a new perspective on how silence is a complex critique of language itself, a refusal to participate in discourses that fail to accommodate women's experiences. The implications of this research extend not only to literature but also to broader issues of gender, power, and communication. This study is the first in Türkiye to thoroughly examine silence and gender through the lens of *écriture féminine*, to offer a comparative study of Lispector and Carter, and to explore these writers' *bildungsromane*, particularly within French feminist theoretical frameworks. Scholars can extend this methodology to other understudied women writers whose works similarly utilize silence and interiority as forms of resistance, and examine writers from diverse linguistic and cultural traditions who challenge phallogentric discourse with alternative expressions. The intersection of silence with other forms of marginalized identity (especially considering how race, class, sexuality, postcolonial experience, and disability influence women's relationships with language and voice) will deepen understanding of how oppression and resistance operate through multiple, intersecting systems of power. Interdisciplinary approaches that combine psychoanalysis, linguistics, trauma studies, and performance theory will further illuminate how silence functions not only as a literary tool but also as an embodied experience and social phenomenon. By establishing the methodological and theoretical foundations for analyzing silence in the light of *écriture féminine* in literary studies in Türkiye, this study invites a new generation of researchers to explore the rich field of women's alternative expressions and contribute to national and international discussions about feminist literary practice and the project of transforming female subjectivity into presence.

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