

CHARLOTTE BRONTË AND SRPUHI DUSSAP :
WEAVER MOTHERS
AND
PALIMPSEST AS GRAMMAR OF FEMALE NARRATION AND PLOT

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Grammar of Female Narration and Plot

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Thesis Abstract

Maral Aktokmakyan, “Charlotte Brontë and Srpuhi Dussap: Weaver Mothers and Palimpsest as Grammar of Female Narration and Plot”

The use of double-talk becomes the female discourse in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Srpuhi Dussap’s *Mayda*. This method as female literary strategy, also termed the style of palimpsest, gives the woman writer the opportunity to tell/ write whatever she likes, thinks and believes and at the same time avoid male criticism and reduction. As nineteenth century writers, both Brontë and Dussap constructed their novels in styles which seem to comply with conventional plots, themes and literary rules. The striking characteristic of both novels is the subversion of the apparent obedience they advocate through similar plots and thematic alternatives they offer. Only in this way is woman’s self-fulfilment achieved and she is promoted as a subject as opposed to her imprisonment in the role of the object. This study aims to discuss the reasons for their application of the palimpsest and the way they are applied in *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda*.

Tez Özeti

Maral Aktokmakyan, “Charlotte Brontë and Srpuhi Dussap: Weaver Mothers and Palimpsest as Grammar of Female Narration and Plot”

Çift anlamlı konuşmanın kullanımı Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre*'i ile Srpuhi Dussap'ın *Mayda* romanında kadın söylemi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Palimpsest olarak da adlandırılan kadın yazın stratejisi olan bu metod yazara istediği, düşündüğü ve inandığı şekilde söyleme/yazma fırsatını tanırken aynı zamanda kadın yazara yönelik eril eleştiri ve dışlamayı da engellemiş olur. Ondokuzuncu yüzyıl yazarları olarak Brontë ve Dussap romanlarını geleneksel kurgu, tema ve edebi kurallara uygun çerçevede ortaya koymuşlardır. *Jane Eyre* ve *Mayda* romanlarının en göze çarpan özelliği önerdikleri benzer kurgu ve tema alternatifleri yoluyla görünürde göstermiş oldukları uygunluğu yıkmaktır. Ancak bu şekilde kadının kendini gerçekleştirme mümkün olur ve nesne rolünde hapsolmuşluğunun aksine özne durumuna yükselir. Bu araştırma palimpsesti *Jane Eyre* ve *Mayda* romanlarında nasıl ve hangi nedenlerle kullandıklarını tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION and THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

It is not a coincidence that nineteenth century literature entailed women writers who wished to appear and fulfill their female identities in literary scenes but had to accomplish it under disguise. These are the women writers of palimpsest and this study aims to analyse the works of two particular palimpsestic writers, Charlotte Brontë and Srpuhi Dussap through their novels *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda*. My contention is to display the ways in which both writers arrange to narrate the “woman” since they both aim to construct the “I” of the female voice, which is an attempt forbidden by patriarchal intrusion in the realm of literature as well as in reality. Hence, the key words for this female project, namely truth, meaning and subjecthood will be first discussed at a theoretical level. The structuralist movement and narratology will be analysed and interrogated with respect to these key concepts and an attempt will be made to reveal how much of them function or not for the female version of these notions. The final part of introduction will stress that an alternative discipline, feminist narratology emerges as the theory that employs narratological analysis on texts underpinning the significance of the gender issue on narratives. In this way, women’s narratives can be observed both in structuralist and feminist terrains together. In short, as this study aims to evince, with feminist narratological approach, one can question the discourse of the extant “signs” in a text and also produce various interpretations that the narrow and conservative male -oriented disciplines exclude.

From Structuralism to Narratology

“I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar” declares Nietzsche in *Twilight of the Idols*. He would be shocked if he could see that almost half a century later the world witnessed the birth of Structuralism which worshipped grammar as religion and the believers of this movement who were led by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, their prophet. Encouraged by Saussure’s principles, such as *langue* vs. *parole*, *synchronism* vs. *diachronism*, or *syntagmatic* vs *paradigmatic*, Structuralism has been operating on texts in order to find the deep structures under the surface and finally reach a pure interpretation in this way.

According to Structuralism, the critical analysis of literary works focuses on three areas: the intentions of the author, the reader and the text. Although what each does is basically called interpretation, they focus on different points of view: the author’s, the reader’s or the text’s. What Structuralism does could be considered highly controversial, for its approach tends to command all three of them in a mechanical way. If interpretation and meaning are indispensable within the realm of literature for either the author or the reader, Structuralist thought too finds a way to materialise this ultimate end. In Eagleton’s terms, Structuralism conditions a transcendental sort of “super-reader” of literary texts. The transcendental tendency stems from the desire to find the original meaning under the surface. In “Structuralist Activity”, Barthes calls Structuralism “an activity of imitation” since it interprets the world instead of copying it. Therefore, he puts it together with literature and art since they all “derive from a mimesis, based not on the analogy of substances, but on the analogy of functions” (489). This view is in compliance with the different stance of structuralist thought since it in essence interprets the texts through its methodology. Eagleton sums this attempt of structuralist criticism as “a copy of this copy” since the text itself is

believed to be a “copy”, a reflection of the deep structure which governs the text according to the structuralist view (Literary Theory 97).

Deep structure, a structuralist term for “meaning”, is regarded as hidden under the surface of the text. Thus, the structuralist’s duty is considered to explore the underlying meaning like an archeologist. In other words, meaning is understood through an analysis of the language. At this point, Saussure’s linguistic theory is accepted as a constitution for the structuralist excavation of meaning. His *Cours de Linguistique Générale*, published in 1915, found its echo in time, and in the 1960s this work caused the new movement of Structuralism to appear in the history of thought. Structuralism stood with a different way of perception of meaning while numerous critical and philosophical approaches of the twentieth century such as Existentialism, Modernism, Phenomenology or Psychoanalysis all share a basic common background: they aim at questioning, interpreting and finally reaching fragmented knowledge, whereas Structuralism focuses on the whole of the subject matter. With the help of Saussure’s linguistic laws, the structuralists treated literature and literary texts as if in a laboratory in order to reach holistic and concrete ‘results’.

The primary concept in Structuralism is the sign, which forms the core of Semiology, Linguistics as well as Structuralism. The arbitrary relationship of its components, that of the signifier and the signified reveals the fact that a graphic structure (signifier) and the represented concept (signified) which form the meaning together have no internal relation. Thus, the arbitrariness of the signifier and the signified provides the principle of difference; that is to say, meaning is established by the fact that every sign is different from others. The second principle is the pair *langue* and *parole*. Saussure, dividing the language into three groups as *langage*, *langue* and *parole* sets out to classify language as a whole. Furthermore, privileging *langue* over *parole* draws the limits of the study of linguistics; the medium of *langue*, representing the system of language, allows us to study language objectively. Thus

the criterion of this privilege seems to be founded on disciplined claims. *Parole*, on the other hand, meaning any daily individual utterance, was considered by Saussure too distant and diverse a way to study language at a serious level. *Parole* could not provide the laws such as words or grammar that were parts of the system of language *langue* included. The last pair to mention is *synchronism* and *diachronism*. Structuralism, in the light of Saussurean framing, sets synchronism as its basis instead of diachronism. The former is a method of looking at the whole at a given point in time whereas the latter focuses on a certain point looking from every phase of history/time. These are the main principles of Saussurean linguistics which allows structuralism to be “analytical, not evaluative” (Eagleton 83).

On the one hand, such a description sounds plausible and respectable since as a literary theory Structuralism is merely concerned with form excluding content from its medium of search. Unlike the grounds of its predecessors, New Criticism and Formalism, Structuralism claims to use a safe and sound approach for the deep truth literary texts covered. Thanks to this safe and sound way, structuralists believed in the deep structure which is thought to uncover the “hidden” “truth” of universal “meaning”. Accordingly, language precedes the human subject or human experience unlike the common belief that it is the individual mind and use of language that makes it meaningful. Therefore, the exclusion of subjectivity and the content from the realm of structuralist study brings other questions into mind. As Eagleton notes, the bourgeois belief that the human subject is the source of the meaning of the world “took a sharp knock” due to Structuralism (93). Once again in Eagleton’s terms, its “anti-humanist” character which completely refuses value judgements and interpretation as the means of evaluation seems to drag such a theory to a dead end.

What is left after the conclusion is that any written or verbal data should be open to interpretation liberally since anything belongs to a discourse. However, it is also arguable that within its theoretical background Structuralism desires to decipher the codes for the sake

of universal truths. Just like Robert Scholes's defence of Formalism against Jameson's accusation of its denial of interpretation, Structuralism as well deals with "poetics rather than with interpretation, more concerned with producing useful generalisations about 'literariness' than with ingenious readings of individual works" (76). However successfully may the defence of Structuralism be directly grounded in its reliability upon its objective attitude, it is doomed to fail since any totality or any assertion founded upon homogeneity falls short by disciplines that try to avoid the indiscriminating effect of universalism.

Applying universalism as the central issue is not only restricted with Structuralism, as narratology, one of the branches of this movement, deploys universalistic attitude within its discipline of thought as well. Between the 1960s and 1980s, critics such as Sirau, Propp, Greimas and Todorov presented their studies and analysis based on narratology and the theories they established became the basis of narratological studies. Similar to the structuralist attitude, their observations, schemes and models bear the characteristic of universalism. Bearing in mind that Saussure's principle of oppositions or difference reveals the dialectic nature of identity and difference of language one can notice the crucial role of the signifier which holds the central importance in any approach with structuralist origin. Thus, the study of narratology too is divided according to this centrality into three branches: "a grammar of narrative" that deals with fabula, "the discourse of narrative" that maintains the text and Bakhtin's category called "heteroglossia of novelistic discourse" (Mezei 2). Greimas, alongside Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov and Jean Claude Bremond made their studies that are categorised in the grammar of narratives, or to say in Jameson's terms engaged in a "grammar of plot" where they produced the best studies based on the signifier (123).

My intention in examining only Greimas and his narratological model, instead of viewing the above-mentioned narratologists, firstly stems from the fact that he bases his theory on preceding accumulated assertions and theories and providing a clear adaptation in

his synthesis. Secondly, by choosing Greimas as a base for my background, I intend to reveal the reductionist attitude of the study of narratology since it excludes gender.

Feminist Narratology

When postmodernism resulted in numerous branches of feminism such as black, lesbian, French, and queer feminism in the 1980s, classical narratology too met the alternative discipline under the heading of feminist narratology. If Narratology could metaphorically be interpreted as a tapestry, it is feminist narratology that brings us out of the patriarchal modus of linguistics, since according to French feminists, language is the product of the male gender. Thus, the study of such a discipline necessarily includes the strands and the way they are woven through. And in the intersection of these two disciplines, the female writer/reader should act like Penelope, weaving her own loom/text. For this reason, interpreting Greimas's biased or reductive scheme and concepts according to feminist analysis of narratology is significant in terms of the scope of meaning.

Palimpsest as defined in dictionary means “ [Gr. *palimpsestos*, rubbed again . . .] A parchment or other piece of writing material from which one writing has been erased to make room for another, often leaving the first faintly visible, a process to which many ancient manuscripts were subjected” (The New Webster Dictionary 590). Christine Brooke-Rose takes the term as “The notion [palimpsest] is that of history as itself a fiction, the expression is varied.” (125). Her adaptation of palimpsest is mainly adopted for the novels which have been called “magical realism”. Although Brooke-Rose, by mainly discussing Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, relates the term as a mixture of realistic novel and other alternatives such as spirituality or supernatural and concludes that palimpsest history in the narratives is not an “alternative world, it is alternative history”, still it bears the main idea of

uncovering the voice of the Other (131). Brooke-Rose uses it for the sake of re-reading or in a more common expression, that of interpretation and her stress consequently lays on plurality and how a writer shows the hidden plurals under the singular interpretation, life-style, law, history and so on. As for the palimpsest taken within the context of female writing in particular, it reveals the “double of a double” nature. Back to Webster’s definition, I’d like to “interpret” a dictionary definition so as to display how the relevance is born with this third definition. Female initiative of palimpsest is as old as the beginning of female writing. Therefore this “ancient” female activity had to cover itself, leaving only “faintly visible” traces to be reached by sisters over time, under the surface of male voice. In short, female palimpsest, as both words suggest double strategy, comes out with a pair of doubles.

Greimas’s “actants” in the form of pairs, such as subject-object, receiver-sender and helper-opponent could be in line with female writing while this time the woman replaces the place/function of the “subject” of the male. Similarly, in the novels *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda* desire and quest play significant roles though once again these concepts are employed in the terrain of female subjectivity. Eventually, Greimas’s semantic rectangle could be deployed by using components of woman-man and marriage-death. While *Jane Eyre* both “shows” and “tells” that she chooses “fire” and subsequently she ends her story with ‘life’ or survival and victory against marriage as the male social plot, *Mayda*, narrating her story through constant existence of ‘water’ and ennui points to her inevitable choice of “death”¹.

Having subverted the man-made quality of narratology by manipulating it through the feminist discourse, it is now worth focusing on feminist narratology as a discipline. To use David Herman’s term “Postclassical narratology” is what any narratological approach, which

¹ This interpretation is directly developed by Greimas’s semantic rectangle. According to the rectangle that he uses in hopes to find out all possible meanings in narratives, he posits a pair of triads which represents the main structure of the rectangle. On one side of the pair there is life, fire and joy, and on the other there is death, water and ennui. Interpretation of Greimas’s semantic model becomes apt for questioning because of the fact that the fire and water elements, merely out of coincidence, are dominant themes of *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda*, respectively.

unlike the classical type, works out the texts in an interdisciplinary way. Also commonly known as feminist narratology, this discipline is particularly developed by Susan Lanser who contributed to the discipline of narratology with her emphasis on gender. She questions classical narratology by saying:

Upon what body of texts, upon what understandings of the narrative and referential universe, have the insights of narratology been based? It is readily apparent that virtually no work in the field of narratology has taken gender into account, either in designating a canon or in formulating questions and hypotheses. (“Towards a Feminist Narratology” 343)

Consequently, Lanser aims to refigure and rewrite narratology by acknowledging Propp, Barthes, Greimas and many others as theorists who studied texts with the gender bias (Page 45). Instead of employing alternative narrative models, say by Longacre or Hoey, for the texts of my study, I aim to make my analysis through the concept of palimpsest which both initiates the plot structure with its distinctive plurality of the double quality and also provides the reader with the feminist ideology buried in the text. But before elaborating this distinct style, I'd like to look at the characteristics of female writing in terms of the act of interpretation by the female. As such is the case, Umberto Eco's analysis bears much elaboration on the subject through his analogy of Hermetic philosophy. When one looks at Umberto Eco's analysis of Hermetic thought with relation to Greek and Latin ways of thought that structured the overall Western world, one can draw the parallel between the principles of Hermetism and female voice in literature as well as female's distinctive stance in the concept of writing. Needless to say, the female voice emerges within a pluralistic characteristic unlike the homogeneity of the great patriarchal Western voice in white male hands. For this reason, too, by its very nature, the plural, ambiguous and chaotic quality and potentiality of the female voice/writing avoids this totality by subverting it. But before discussing the quality of

female authorship on the literary scene, I would like to have a short look at the essence of this female subversiveness.

When female gender and the idea of writing are juxtaposed, it is conceivable to talk of a rebellious fashion which originally reflects the “truths” of female minds. Although any discussion of truth ends in subjectivity, the female subjectivity, as one of the related topics of this study, throws light on the *true* world of patriarchy which has the ultimate right to *tell* the stories of men, women and the world. In this manner, that is, by putting her subjectivity on paper, almost like hermetic thought itself, the woman destroys the singular and thus safe discourse of man. Eco’s description of the relation between truth and Hermetism is worth remembering:

Secret knowledge is deep knowledge (because only what is lying under the surface can remain unknown for long). Thus truth becomes identified with what is not said or what is said obscurely and must be understood beyond or beneath the surface of a text. The gods speak (today we would say: the Being is speaking) through hieroglyphic and enigmatic messages. (30)

Once again the strong relation between woman and writing within the context of Hermetism reveals a strong compatibility. The concepts stressed above such as deep knowledge, obscurity, or writing appear as a riddle point to the ontological posture of the female writer in the literary scene. If the Western white male author considers himself “god” only by authorising his superiority through the relation between pen and penis, the woman writer speaks her female mind in the darkness of the text. To study the underlying reasons and meanings of such subversive structures deployed by the nineteenth century women writers, the novels I intend to discuss accordingly comprise the central focus of this paper.

The palimpsestic writing as the model for the application of feminist narratology comes out in the intersection of “subversive structure”, as the embodiment of this discipline. While the word “subversive” here implies sexual politics, analysis of discourses and dynamics

between genders reflected on paper, the structure naturally suggests the linguistic structures applied for the effort of burying the female mind/voice away from the male surface structure.

At the feminist/political/social level, the definition of this method is best given in the well known work, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Gilbert and Gubar regard most of the fictions written by women beginning from the eighteenth century as palimpsestic in theory, explaining that:

[these are] works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. (73)

By all means a strategy like the 'doubletalk' Gilbert and Gubar reveal are used by both genders; still, different means reinforce the vitality of the female usage. According to Gilbert and Gubar's account, men attempt palimpsest because of the "anxiety of influence", which means to be an author for a man is to be able to offer his original order over the old one of his 'god/father'. On the other hand, the woman trapped by masculine language, ventures to let the oppressions, repressions and impositions out for the sake of expressing herself. Thus, her reason to write in "swerve", in Gilbert and Gubar's term, seems to have fairly ontological roots since it is completely related to constructing herself. Furthermore, she does not experience this 'self-construction' in the same way as the male writer does. As her existence both as a woman and an author are tortured by the masculine process of meaning, any attempt to authorise a writing for a woman seems pathetically vital and alarmingly critical. That is why, Gilbert and Gubar need to call the female act of authoring "schizophrenia of authorship", with which it becomes clear on which grounds she acknowledges her identity unlike men (78). Theoretically speaking, as Gilbert and Gubar note, all women writers write in the palimpsestic mode since they all have their subversive say under the more common and acceptable masculine language. However, in practice, there are some women whose writings are more consciously based on this method, perhaps resulting from the alarming quality of

their ‘dangerous’ minds. Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1890) and “Female Ingenuity” (1832) are some of the greatest examples of palimpsestic writing in which these writers actually portray the nineteenth century female experience of survival.

When we come to the structural level of palimpsestic writing, it seems essential to discuss it within the terrain of structuralism. Firstly, it is important to remember that the Victorian era is a period in which binary oppositions are constructed, developed and used with great relish and purpose. As a result, the Victorian canon advocates these oppositions and their “true” nature. Works by some women writers subvert this structure by offering subtexts which could be regarded as the primitive examples of deconstruction. A couple of binary oppositions such as angel vs. fallen woman (Whore/Mad), house vs. society that comprise the key aspects of gender and class issues are not discussed through a comparison which is what male writers do, but in a fashion of reconciling the two. Although such acts of reconciliation wink at the idea of postmodernity, I should note that any suggestion of postmodern implications in these narratives by females would be misleading for such a period of gestation. For instance, the two woman protagonist of this study, Jane and Mayda, both desire to acknowledge all dualities in their identities; in a clandestine way they display their wishes in their palimpsestic novels. The subversiveness of palimpsestic female writing, structurally speaking, lies in the fact that it questions the signs. The result is that the relation between signifier and signified is manipulated by the male perception of the world and that of genders. The sign ‘fallen woman’, for instance, should rightfully be questioned since it is the patriarchal society that creates such signs, beyond arbitrariness. Patricia Ingham sums up such a structuralist approach with which she employs the narratives in her book *The Language of Gender and Class* :

As already stated, non-fictional and fictional writings (as well as visual signs) in any period share a common range of signs with established though fluid

meanings. The advantage that novels have over other kinds of writings is that they place signs within a narrative which, like the syntactic frame of a sentence, attempts to determine and control meaning(...)They are a part of re-accenting signs. (27)

Therefore, female subversiveness could also be interpreted as the female attempt to “re-accent the signs” of male originated binary oppositions. As for the plots, or narrative syntaxes as Ingham calls them, particularly in *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda*, the two main keys for the plots are the concept of quest and desire. However, here these themes are taken out of their structural/narratological aims towards myths and folktales, and instead used in the light of feminist narratology. Thus, although I owe the concept and the existing schemes to Greimas, my aim is to transform them under a feminist approach into female quest and female desire, which I will discuss in the following pages.

To begin with the contents of the palimpsestic style, it is essential to note moods like anger, fear and madness that are all related to the female’s stance. Viewing them as female reactions, it is noticed how the female mind reacts as a way of self-expression. In other words, these three main attitudes represent the female ideology. Madness as the greatest sign of female voice in comparison with the other two is considered as the ultimate feminist cry by many literary and feminist critics. The fallen-bad-mad woman in *Jane Eyre* forms a classic example for Brontë’s successors, as Lizbeth Goodman notes in order to “rethink the meaning of female insanity” (120). The process of reconstructing the signified of the madwoman could be found in *Mayda* as well, though not so strongly portrayed as in *Jane Eyre*. Both Brontë and Dussap choose to acknowledge both sides of womanhood, as the angel and the madwoman in their identities. For this reason, it is possible to call these works protest novels since the subtle style does not prevent the fervent female reactions. Therefore Elaine Showalter’s personal categorisation of novels by women in order to create a female tradition falls short for the description of *Jane Eyre* as an English novel as long as the novel is

evaluated from the palimpsestic quality the work performs. Shoewalter puts *Jane Eyre* in the feminine phase, which she describes as “(...) a prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and *internalisation* of its standards of art and its views on social roles” (13). A first look at the description seems right enough to consider *Jane Eyre* as yet a novel of imitation. However, from the view of feminist narratology it is well known that it is the very imitative style that promotes the work as a protest novel. The romantic ethos enables these writers to manipulate and even exploit certain structures (e.g. conventional feminine style of writing) and enables them to parody the romantic affairs between the two genders. On the one hand, the gender relation under the name of romance turns into a battle of the sexes. And on the other, utilising the romantic movement’s priority on emotions, Brontë and Dussap do not hesitate to point out their own emotions. These famous sensations, namely female anger and fear, are kept beneath the acceptable and easily received surface structure of the novels. While Jane/Bertha chooses to “tell” a story with a backbone of anger, Mayda/Herika’s narration employs female fear as the subplot of the novel. Juliet Mitchell explicitly formulates the female way out of the masculine labyrinth of language: “(...)I do not believe that there is such a thing as female writing, a ‘woman’s voice’. There is the hysteric’s voice which is the woman’s masculine language (one has to speak ‘masculinely’ in a phallogocentric world) talking about feminine experience” [qtd. in Goodman 116]. Clearly expressed and summed above, the dark doubles “speak” the fears and angers instead of the protagonists, they go mad for the sake of their obedient doubles and thereby the subplot always points to the same notion: the female quest. Yet, considering that these woman writers design to parody patriarchal orders of all sorts, the most genuine thing behind the anger, fear and madness of the female turns out to be female laughter.

Since my medium is feminist narratology, I intend to observe central narratological phases first such as the plot-subplot, the significance of the genre, the functions of the

characters in detail and then discuss the narrative voice during the analysis of each novel. It is my main focus to point and discuss the narratological terms within the context of feminism. To start from the plot structure, it is the style of palimpsest which may be said to grow upon the subplot of female desire for quest. Consequently, the protagonists and their narratives will be analysed around this key factor. Such a subplot suggests the identity search of the female character. Thus it opens up the issue of the style of the Bildungsroman. As Fraiman notices some critics like Northrope Frye deny the relation of gender with the genre of fiction. However, unlike Frye's ungendering politics, genres like the forms of fiction revolve around the female or the male. Similarly, the literary style of the Bildungsroman seems to serve for the male gender at large. Susan Fraiman's *Unbecoming Women* studies female Bildungsromans and as her first chapter "Is there a female Bildungsroman?" puts clearly, one should first look at the history of Bildungsroman in literature in order to define what the formation of a girl signifies differently from a boy's. The fact that the female Bildungsroman differs from the male's in many respects leads us to a discussion of certain features of the Bildungsroman. As Fraiman also notes, there are two steps to reconstruct the girl's formation. The first one is the questioning of the term itself. The Bildungsroman, also meaning the formation of the apprentice, does suggest that the protagonist is young and inexperienced. But moreover, it subtly implies the protagonist's ultimate journey from inexperience to mastery. Regarding Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* as a point of departure, Fraiman also concludes that three elements form the bildung. These are the mentor, the choice and the mastery mentioned above. When these are adapted for the young female's formation, one notices the fact that the female is doomed to be imprisoned instead of ending up in mastery. Fraiman constantly questions the problematics of this process noting that such a failure becomes inevitable because of the male-oriented social structure: "And finally, consequently, when the mentor is a husband and when apprenticeship reduces to a process of marital

binding, it never leads the heroine to mastery but only to a lifetime as perennial novice” (Fraiman 6). The conclusion that the female ends up with an ambiguous and incomplete process of identity is subverted by Brontë and Dussap. As the failure of identity formation has directly to do with the male prevention of the female desire of quest, they make their mad-bad women speak the angers and fears of their protagonists and act against the male dominated social system.

As a further level on this discussion, I would like to make clear another distinction of these two novels. First, it is controversial to accept *Jane Eyre* as a Bildungsroman since some critics assert that the subjective tone of the authoritative voice of Jane prevents the work from being regarded as a “reliable” story of formation. However, I suggest the choice of writing in the shape of a Bildungsroman has to be evaluated within the discourse of feminist narratology. Accordingly, such a suggestion leads us to the fact that Brontë intentionally chose that style in order to manipulate the unacceptable views in her palimpsestic novel much more easily, while her seemingly “unreliable” subjective voice draws the attention of only the “common reader” on the surface structure. Through Jane’s voice Brontë insists on revealing that the female quest and the eventual female formation could be materialised, be it written openly or by “swerves”. Secondly, written in the epistolary style, the novel *Mayda* starts narrating the protagonist’s life after her becoming an orphan as well as a widow. Although neither the structure nor the style suits the necessities of a Bildungsroman, I suggest the novel’s contents, or structurally speaking, the inner dynamics of the novel, proves Fraiman’s idea of why a woman’s formation cannot be achieved and consequently cannot be written. Considering all the implications of the Bildungsroman, *Mayda* stands as a criticism of the Bildungsroman and at its climax it “secretly” shows the impossibility of female mastery by the death of the female character at the end of the novel. Still, as an epistolary novel, *Mayda* sets out to utilise the style in order to construct her doubletalk throughout the novel.

As for the characters, they should be observed through the mechanism of binary opposition, similar to Greimas's stress on functionality between opposed actants as well as related ones. Two obvious structures or signs, women encountered as angelic vs demonic and the Other are central points of female discourse. While the phallogocentric world pretends that female desire does not exist and is strictly suppressed due to this male pretension, those women construct their stories of quest - that is woman's main desire in life- with the help of the demonic female. The bad-madwoman whispers the actual intention of the novel while the protagonist's narration draws the attention of the common reader towards the surface structure. With this technique, the female deconstruction is put to action through the palimpsest. This distinct or gendered deconstruction is similarly achieved by two structures like the texture of the palimpsest. The surface structure displays the angel and the evil woman as counterparts, whereas the binary opposition is set between the woman and the man and the hidden female desire/design is reached only by reading the subtext of the novel.

The force of gendered narration in female writing is divided into two phases, very much like the formation of palimpsestic style. The double quality of the narrative voice emerges through the diegesis on the surface and mimesis in the muted text. In other words, when for instance Jane writes her mind and actions in the lines of the surface text, she merely fulfils the role of reporting the story, or more theoretically she "tells" the narration. However, as the system of palimpsest reveals, she prefers to "show" her anger at the patriarchal order or that of Rochester's manhood through Bertha. Her narration at large bears the mimicry of nineteenth century propriety, nevertheless her mimetic ends reveal the truth of the woman. The very similar discourse is relevant in Mayda's challenging story. Diegetic form within the epistles throughout the novel seems to belong to mutual correspondence of female community of two women based on mournings, complaints and misfortunes particularly caused by adverse female character. Mayda's personal mood is presentable to nineteenth century readers

while with the help of her supporter and adversary female community she successfully “shows” the hidden anxieties behind the mirror of “tell”ing a proper story. As an early feminist solution to Simone de Beauvoir’s famous remark that “one is not born a woman but becomes one”, those nineteenth century woman writers intend to question the female identity enmeshed in patriarchal politics and structures by writing determinedly their own lines underneath.

“Written on the body is a secret code only visible in certain lights; the accumulations of a lifetime gather there. In places the palimpsest is so heavily worked that the letters feel like braille. I like to keep my body rolled up away from prying eyes. Never unfold too much, tell the whole story.”

– Jeanette Winterson

CHAPTER II

JANE EYRE : THE FEMINIST MANIFESTO OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Biographical quality in *Jane Eyre* is dominant throughout the novel since Charlotte Brontë's person incessantly 'haunts' all of her novels. Her father Patrick Brontë's account of the conflicts between Luddites and mill owners appears as the main plot upon which Charlotte based her novel *Shirley*. She used the time she spent in Brussels and her relationship with the Belgian schoolteacher M. Heger as the main theme of her posthumously published novel *The Professor*. Her last work, *Villette*, is also based on the theme of a broken love affair which she actually had with this professor. Thus, *Jane Eyre* was no exception to what John Skelton calls the "daguerrotype" of her life [qtd. in Michie 27]. Likewise, Brontë created Lowood school out of her elder sisters Maria and Elizabeth's problems with consumption in the school they attended and their eventual death. In addition, it is also asserted that Charlotte's memories of her sister Maria became the model for the character of Helen Burns (Michie 5).

Although her biography could be closely traced in her works, I will not take that approach. Instead, I will concentrate on an analysis of *Jane Eyre* as a palimpsestic work, female subjecthood and mimicry in female narration. For this reason, to warm up into the terrain of feminist narratological grounds I take my departure from biography for once and for all after mentioning a fact which I will elaborate in the field of theory subsequently: the fact that Brontë wrote *Jane Eyre* while she accompanied her father to Manchester where they stayed until her father's cataract operation and recovery. This could be considered the "genesis" of *Jane Eyre* as it contributes to numerous feminist discussions the novel is founded upon. Taking such factual data, and interpreting it as a journey/quest taken by Father and daughter together, we can claim that *Jane Eyre* is a female creation with defying overtones which replaces male quest and rebels against the "ways" of the Father. Besides, it is truly a

female impregnated output which attacks the established parallel between the male gender and his exclusive ability to see even to the extent of blindness. Deciding her own ways, Charlotte/Jane leads us to thoughts, feelings and facts that are not visible to male eyes and are thus regarded as non-existent by them. The daughter's role as helper, company or supporter does not change or promote her position a bit.

Instead even though Father's eyesight is seriously troubled it encloses her into a passive, dependent and thus secondary stance to him. Even this little detail taken from her life is adequate to explain the reason why the female applies the style of palimpsest. As this style remains a practical choice for the nineteenth century female writer, its subversive and transformative characteristic merits discussion. The palimpsest deployed in literature maintains its double/dual structure both in technique and gender politics. Hence, style as a specific literary genre in feminist literature becomes a distinct branch as it is practised as an umbrella term for numerous feminist literary issues. Gender politics, female mimicry, female deconstruction of male genres, rewriting, parody of the male canon and language could be counted as some of them.

Charlotte Brontë's subversive female voice starts from the beginning of her literary career. It should be remembered that her childhood writings of imaginary Angrian tales of Northangerland are the primeval overtones in her authorial angry female voice. Apart from Brontë sisters' traditional writing habits of imaginary homelands and their exchange of stories about these places her first official attempt to be a "real" writer begins with *The Professor*. This first "serious" try, considered as a failure, thematically has a significant role with regard to *Jane Eyre* since it turned into a literary groundwork for this masterpiece. Meanwhile, the progress from *The Professor* to *Jane Eyre* is also the indicator of the principle she elaborated and advocated in her later works as well. The principle that includes questioning the male

orders, conventions and power is a dominant factor in her novels and for an integral understanding of her feminism a brief view of her other works merit mention in this context.

To start with the lexical resemblances, *The Professor* is abundant with some of the concepts which construct the backbone of *Jane Eyre*. Character description according to the fire or fireplace, the analogy between fire and the word “crimson” in protagonist/narrator Crimsworth’s name, the desire for ‘looking’ are some of the themes Brontë seems to have focused on in her early work. What makes her first novel a failure rests upon the fact that Brontë seems to have hesitated to give the ideal portrait in her mind through the one and only character (essentially female) and thus chose to divide certain themes that are shared between Crimsworth and Frances in such a complementary way. As an orphan, Crimsworth is portrayed as a pseudo-Bildungsroman hero. His portrayal as an idealist, sensitive and passive man suggests an androgynous character. The same situation is also relevant in his future wife, Frances’s portrayal. Their plain appearance, their ideas of slavery and desire for freedom are common aspects in both of the characters as well as that of Brontë’s all other heroines.

With respect to this fact under the ambiguous characterisation and plot, her attempt of male-impersonation with Crimsworth, that is, in hopes of writing in the style of Bildungsroman is on the other hand complemented by the orphan heroine of the novel, Frances Henri, within a possible Cinderella story. The failure of her first attempt of re-writing a Cinderella story is caused by the male-impersonation technique, the danger of which Brontë realises and soon gives up. Frances’s angelic lacemending together with heinous Zoraide’s ‘knitting’ with other girls are left vague and undeveloped, and deferred until *Jane Eyre* in which Brontë remarkably creates female narration/weaving of threads with both ends of angelic and demonic.

Brontë continues to voice her questioning stance in her subsequent works, *Shirley* and *Villette*, through the methods of parodying patriarchal literature, rewriting alternative

narratives and portraying Brontëan determined and rebellious women under her distinct narrative devices. *Shirley* mainly suggests the embodiment of female parody of male genres, realism and gender roles. Although her work is commonly criticised for being entrapped in male imitation, a meticulous observation of Brontë's style displays that she has "different narrative ends" (Langland 8). In other words, she aimed to rewrite Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* far from imitating his "Titan"ic literary stance, or that of any man of letters (Gilbert and Gubar 373). Her last novel *Villette* is another example of female rebellion. Lucy Snowe is another "woman without", typical of Brontëan heroines' condition, who is deprived of parents, patrimony and eventually society. Although Lucy's taking a quest for life pattern in Brontë's literary structure is "different as this journey seems to be from Jane Eyre's English pilgrimage", still it is obvious that "it suggests similar points about women's disenfranchisement from culture" (Gilbert and Gubar 406).

Hence, it can be claimed that Brontë could not help rewriting patriarchal concepts, ideologies, injustices through her means of mimicry or parody – to some extent- all of which culminate in *Jane Eyre*. Consequently, I firstly intend to look through the main qualities of the novel and then proceed with the analysis of the work with my close reading on the grounds of feminist narratology.

In her biography, Gaskell's account of Charlotte Brontë's disposition as a meticulous writer attracts attention since such a statement hints at the rich quality of the novel's interpretation. She notes:

She had that strong practical regard for the simple holy truth of expression, which Mr. Trench has enforced, as a duty too often neglected. She would wait patiently searching for the right term, until it presented itself to her. It might be provincial, it might be derived from the Latin; so that it accurately represented her idea, she did not mind whence it came; but this care makes her style present the finish of a piece of a mosaic. (234)

Charlotte's adherence to the idea of a 'plain heroine' almost to the extent of obsession is also one of the most significant issues in her stance as a woman who writes. Her answer "I will prove you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours" to her sisters, who thought that a heroine must be beautiful as a principle of the novel in order for it to be interesting echoes her heroine's self-assertive character for the sake of her identity (Gaskell 235). Indeed, *Jane Eyre* becomes the plain woman's tale, however, Victorians' reaction to such unconventionalities comes immediately as an answer. But as Gilbert and Gubar point out, they did not react against the "coarseness and sexuality of Jane Eyre", it was rather "Jane's anger" which perplexed the Victorians (338).

Jane Eyre as a fictional autobiography does more than meeting the expectations of the genre when anything in the novel - characters, scenes, places and so forth- is intrinsically related to Jane Eyre's person. The novel's quality is mentioned likewise in Woolf's article, "*Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*" when she says "Think of Rochester and we have to think of Jane Eyre. Think of the moor, and again there is Jane Eyre. Think of the drawing-room, even, those 'white carpets on which seemed laid brilliant garlands of flowers' (...) what is all that except Jane Eyre?" (186). However, in the following paragraphs, going on with the novel's distinction, Woolf writes her famous conclusion that summarises the novel in a sentence. She says "She [Jane] does not attempt to solve the problems of human life; she is even unaware that such problems exist; all her force, and it is more tremendous for being constricted, goes into the assertion, 'I love', 'I hate', 'I suffer'" (187). This formulaic remark rather seems to be Woolf's own assertion since reading a woman's story in *Jane Eyre* exceeds such simplicity in her as a character, a narrator and the writer of her life, and in actions of the three. Yet, Adrienne Rich rightly comments, though in parentheses, that "Always a governess and always in love? Had Virginia Woolf really read this novel?", which implicates the novel

is a female construct beyond any expectations of Victorian morality and politics (101). Rich's subsequent solution is that *Jane Eyre* is a tale, different from all the other works ever written since it is only through her narration we witness a character who "feels so unalterably herself" (91).

Following Rich's statement, *Jane Eyre* as a piece of work consciously written for the purpose of selfhood bears all its implications subtly embedded in itself. In other words, when Virginia Woolf sees "I love", "I hate", "I suffer" on the surface, *Jane Eyre* seems to show "I look", "I see", "I lie" in her subtle muted text. Before examining these two sets of sentences as the formula of the novel in a larger scale, *Jane Eyre*'s potential of innumerable pluralities in the name of being a palimpsestic work on the whole starts from the very structure. First, being a governess novel *Jane Eyre* is both a gothic novel and a fairy tale, also in the sense that Adrienne Rich offered. Remembering that Irigaray's stress upon female narration is closely related to mimicry as a means of deconstruction of every sort of patriarchal imposition, the novel's stance belonging to more than one genre implies its strategic duplicitous quality from the very beginning. Besides, its duplicity becomes a paradox when the novel is thought to strive for possible reversals of these definitions. In other words, *Jane Eyre* is both a fairy tale, a gothic novel and a governess story, but at the same time it is none of them. Similarly, *Jane Eyre* as a Bildungsroman bears the same complicated quality. Since every Bildungsroman is a formation novel which reveals the protagonist's process of development from apprenticeship to mastery, *Jane Eyre* too conforms to this rule. Bearing in mind that the act of writing is privileged only to the male gender and since femininity is narrowed down to what is weak, slant, obscure and even satanic according to western norms, the conflation of these two becomes rather alarming to the male eye. Still, *Jane Eyre* is exclusively a novel of female education, a Bildungsroman revealing the heroine's mastery. The novel's projection ever on female subjectivity initiates early from the eponymous title of

the book. Far from being only one of the eponymous novels of the nineteenth century, initials of Jane Eyre, “je” covertly attaches itself to the principal quality of subjectivity. Furthermore, apart from Gilbert and Gubar’s neat deciphering several interpretations of her surname as “invisible as air, the heir to nothing, secretly choking with ire” (342), Nina Schwarz notes that her surname derives from the Latin verb ‘iter’ “meaning journey or trip”(551). Remembering Greimasian focal points within plots, her mere name and surname sum that the internal dynamics of the novel has already been based upon the heroine’s desire for ‘quest’ for herself (je)². Yet, the satisfaction with the hypothesis that *Jane Eyre* is a Bildungsroman soon collapses when the dynamics over the contents are noticed. It is suggested by many critics that Brontë used Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* as an example and structured the plot accordingly mapping the way that takes her from apprenticeship to a mastery. Still, Brontë rewrites the Cinderella tale through arranging the master-slave relationship of gender politics. Therefore, it is also likely that Jane Eyre is “Pamela’s daughter” inferring to Richardson’s *Pamela* (Gilbert and Gubar 337), rearranging power relations between man and woman. In this sense, Bildungsroman merely appears as the genre of the novel whereas it is implicitly used as a tool for the integration of clandestine narrative devices. Lisa Sternlieb, realising the contrast between Pamela and Jane, claims that unlike Pamela’s deprivation of her own story and instead relying on Mr. B.’s version of narration Jane “escapes this fate, because she is able to wait and marry legitimately, she is able to write the autobiography of a virtuous woman. More importantly, she, like Mr. B., is able to buy time: she is able to construct the kind of narrative her master has taught her, not succumb to the narrative her master has told her” (27). The narrative pattern of Pamela, as Jane displays, “will not do for her” since the

² Similarly, both the initials under Jane’s paintings and the pseudonym she takes at Marsh End, Jane Elliott, reinforce Brontë/Jane’s attachment to her identity (Lanser 187). Furthermore, the choice of “I” in French (je) not only points to her self-assertion but also reinforces her adherence to her Otherness, which is provided by asserting her identity “I” in an adversary language instead of English as the “legitimate” language.

pattern clearly rests on “class fantasy” in which “ aristocrat marries dependent girl” and thus Jane’s own story reveals that it is “designed to rewrite the scenario in her favour” (Bodenheimer 166).

Furthermore, the narrator’s direct address to the ‘reader’ carries the novel to the position of the epistolary novel, which is the genre of *Pamela* as well. Susan Lanser notes that Jane’s allowing the Reader into her narration turns the text into a “public epistolarity” as the “narrative sign” of the novel. Lanser furthermore comments

Just as the novel’s suppression of retrospectivity re-creates the immediacy of epistolary fiction, I believe the name “Reader” functions as a substitute for the epistolary proper name, recapturing in a public fiction the intimacy of epistolarity in a way much more immediate than Agnes Grey’s effort to capture the intimacy of the diary. (186)

Still every Bildungsroman is a road story, or a “pilgrim’s progress” for authorship of his/her own *voice*³. Her road story indeed includes several places as stations of progress in her life. At the same time, at its figurative level, *Jane Eyre* is a story which narrates the heroine’s education through which she finally finds her voice as well as her ‘true’ ‘way’ of survival. Thus as a narrative device, the first person narrator of the fictional autobiography written retrospectively should not be confused with Jane the heroine. While narrator Jane is responsible only for indiscriminately narrating through telling and showing, heroine Jane reveals her battle over the concept of credibility. In this manner, another double structure of the text is discovered as both the story (by heroine) and the plot (by narrator) are simultaneously written. Particularly Jane’s education circles around the voice she strives to authorise while the heroine herself reaches to her identity from a “credible” revenge story.

³ Quoting Irigaray, what Lanser reminds that “to find a voice (voix) is to find a way (voie)” is what has actually been accomplished through Jane’s story (Lanser 3).

In *Fictions of Authority*, Lanser examines *Jane Eyre* through the concept of voice and emphasises its remarkable distinction from its predecessors. She suggests that *Jane Eyre*, as an example of female voice of narration is something 'new' from other nineteenth century examples according to the way it uses the narrative voice. Lanser notes that while other works adopt "a voice grammatically female, however, each also limits the narrator's personal authority by appealing to (masculine) authorities outside the self", *Jane Eyre* almost as a revolution succeeds to exclude itself from such restraints (177). Usage of the first person "I" and that of the narratee are the basic differences clearly noticed in *Jane Eyre*. While in former narratives "the narrator looks back with sharp moral distance at the younger character and can tell her story only because she has changed", *Jane Eyre*, in the name of writing her life story, remains the same since the older married Jane as narrator and the Jane the character from childhood to maturity share and preserve the same old self-centredness, self-assertion and self-authority (179). As to the narratee under the name of "the Reader" in *Jane Eyre* Brontë utilises this device for the purpose of reinforcement of self-authorisation. *Jane Eyre*'s narratee is a public audience, the rest of the world as she strives to be the "public female personal voice" to tell the "true" story of *Jane Eyre*. However, Brontë's predecessors used the Reader formation "only in distanced, often anxious, third-person forms" since they were supposed to account for their actions according to moral convictions of the society (178). Thus, those novels were written almost with a shameful guilt under which these women writers had no choice but to submit.

Jane Eyre is a novel which tells of a woman as daughter, orphan, governess and wife who at the same time is shown that she is none. Each one of these titles are portrayed within the dialectics as any image (fire and ice) or character (i.e. Georgiana and Maria, Miss Temple and Helen Burns, Grace Poole and Bertha Mason) are employed as such in the rest of the text. Jane is exclusively put in this dialectics opposing the Law of the Father. As such is the case,

while *Jane Eyre* as self-conscious narration defies the phallic symbols in the characters of Mr. Reed, John Reed, Brocklehurst, Rochester and St. John as well as in actions conventionally equated with masculinity such as the gaze and walking, the same Jane Eyre narrates her story establishing her identity as the opposite of Man. Consequently, her self-conscious narration, paradoxically hidden under the “visible” text of the surface, is supported and shown through the female pairs against her challenge against Man, while the agenda of the surface text is occupied with a Jane Eyre, the governess who is inadequate to fill the Victorian sign of “Woman” through her horrifying angry moods. The narrative plot of such female narration alters patriarchal structuralist methodology through its palimpsestic characteristic like Greimas’s scheme by its very nature of hidden plots through the pairs of characters earlier mentioned and particularly from the fact that woman is the “subject” who projects the Man as her “object”. However, any tendency of an act of deconstruction, at least methodologically, cannot be asserted since the heroine’s aim to replace the order she rejects with her own version contradicts with the principle of deconstructionism. In other words, her rejection and the way she rejects, which is the subject of discussion, seem to share the same philosophy with the movement that interrogates centrality and universalism under Western metaphysics with scepticism. However, the novel contradicts the application of the movement by replacing the old with the new version, for which it has been criticised by postcolonial critics such as Gayatri Spivak. Yet the voice in *Jane Eyre* is found “totalising” by Lanser claiming that “[the voice] has a dangerously unacknowledged dependence of its own” (177-178). The totality of Jane’s “voice” in one way derives from the style of self-affirmation that the palimpsestic style of writing provides. As a matter of fact, Gilbert and Gubar link the Victorian female “disease” of enclosure with the idea of “state of trance” through which “many nineteenth century women wrote obsessively(...) about their feelings of enclosure in ‘feminine’ roles and patriarchal houses, and wrote, too, about their passionate desire to flee

such roles or houses” (313). As one of the characteristics of Romanticism, entranced writing was also prevalent in Brontë’s novels in which she consciously or unconsciously took refuge. Whatever the intention was, trance writing motivation is synonymous with the palimpsest as the former is a pretext to advocate “the female anxieties of authorship” just like the latter’s pretension. Furthermore, Gilbert and Gubar reveal the close relation between mode of trance-writing and male impersonation on the point that “by impersonating a man she can gain male power, not only to punish her own forbidden fantasies but also to act them out”, which still reinforces the ends of palimpsestic principle of writing as a female device of narrative (317). Thus, Brontë’s pseudonym Currer Bell consolidates from the start the fact that she had something to say which is too dangerous for Victorian society and thereby she needed the disguise to tell her story. Similarly, Brontë’s definition of relationships portrayed through power struggles is the indicator of her imagination that “hardly knows not what it does” (Bodenheimer 160).

That Brontë holds the conviction that “Truth” is in the “eye” of the beholder in *Jane Eyre* instead of “Beauty” is the sentence summary of the novel within the context of palimpsestic style. Whether literally taken or not, the embodiment of such a statement in the novel leads us to ponder upon the narrative discourse of the work itself after having discussed the outlines and preparatory effects of *Jane Eyre*. Since truth is now, differently from the conventional Truth of Man, that of the Woman and her eye is the only gaze present – though with totality- which “looks, sees and narrates”. Any power relation based either on gender or class is portrayed and defeated by the “true” story of Jane Eyre’s “eyes” through which she insistently becomes herself.

Her story of quest, starting from Gateshead is elaborated step by step while Jane draws a map during her narration which is socially, mentally, sexually and politically as well as geographically oriented. In other words, every location is a battleground where she is

supposed to endure and challenge a version of patriarchy one by one. First place Gateshead is the home of the Reed family which represents the nucleus of Victorian patriarchy. Indeed, the palimpsest is accessible not only in the plot structure and pairs of characters but also in the heroine's fragmented self. The very opening sentence of the novel by Jane that informs us about the impossibility of taking a walk on that day intriguingly tells about herself. In other words, the scenic beginning in the novel, which is pretty conventional for the nineteenth century literature, exceeds its functional spatial information and exteriority points to the 'dark' paths of Jane's interiority instead. Sitting cross-legged "like a Turk" Jane's narration directly starts with her restless mood when her eyes pretend to start with the narration of outside. Furthermore, her restless psychology gives way to the contradictory statement on having long walks. While she says "I was glad of it; I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons" (1), she is the one who obsessively finds solace in her walking as a governess at Thornfield. The window-seat where she sits reading her book behind the drawn curtain represents the womb for the orphan child Jane who is very much aware of her displaced disharmonious position within the Victorian family. As a motherless girl, she mothers herself by protecting herself from outside threats posed by the family members themselves and by nurturing herself with books, now with Bewick's *History of British Birds*. The book, similar to the ambiguous contrasts between outside and inside, is basically an indoor element which as nourishment for her progressive mind, opens her to the outside world and her surname initiates Jane through the pun of "air" of freedom. Reminiscent of the existential pattern, her desire for freedom makes her feel restless and the air turns out to be "ire" with the outside interruption of the male voice. It is significant that this transformation is caused by the threatening of the only male voice of the family. The patriarch-to-be John Reed's discovery of her hiding place ends with his punishing her. The first address to Jane uttered by John Reed through scaring her with his "Boh! Madam Mope!" remark in the

apparently empty room points to Jane's presence and absence at the same time. The little patriarch's "Boh!" is the miniature of the coming and prevailing gothic mood in the rest of the novel. The male voice, above all, sounds scary to the female ear as well as the fact that male voice functions to frighten the female. John Reed as a substitute father figure (at the age of fourteen which also supports the miniaturised patriarch figure) punishes her for her "sneaking way of getting behind curtains, and for the look [you] had in [your] eyes" (2). First of all, teasing her by his dub "Madam Mope" is unpleasant to the male eyes since the secondary meaning of the verb to mope, "wander about listlessly" includes a range of ideas from the female quest to street woman, any of which are negative in the male vision. Her desire for listless wandering is closely related to her "guilt" of sneaking that is synonymous with being absent from the male vision once again. The female is supposed to be present for the purpose of meeting man's needs and basically to serve him. Also the absence is only equated with God or at least the patriarch. As such is the case, Jane has no right to be absent, to look and to read since otherwise she is likely to be a threat to the male figure. Thus John Reed punishes her by hurling the book at her and Jane's ire ends up in the red room with Mrs. Reed's order.

The red-room chapter is the embodiment of sexuality, as the outcome of the attack and counter-attack of John Reed and Jane. Jane starting her pilgrimage is also suggested by the last sentence of the first chapter that initiates her figurative "birth": "I was borne upstairs" (5). This theme of birth is intrinsically related to entering womanhood which is constructed through the connotation of the room with menstrual blood. As the first predicate of the novel's plot structure, "I look" is literally carried out by the heroine at the very restless beginning and then she is punished for the angry look on her face by John Reed and eventually she is faced with the red-room experience by looking at herself and her painful sexual initiatives.

The red-room was a spare chamber, very seldom slept in: I might say never, indeed, unless when a chance influx of visitors as Gateshead Hall rendered it necessary to turn to account all the accomodation it contained: yet it was one of the largest and stateliest chambers in the mansion. A bed supported on massive pillars of mahogany, hung with curtains of deep red damask, stood out like a tabernacle in the centre, the two large windows, with their blinds always drawn down, were half shrouded in festoons and falls of similar drapery; the carpet was red; the table at the foot of the bed was covered with a crimson cloth; the wardrobe, the toilet-table, the chairs, were of darkly-polished old mahogany. Out of these deep surrounding shades rose high, and glared white the piled-up mattresses and pillows of the red, spread with a snowy Marseilles counterpane. Scarcely less prominent was an ample cushioned easy-chair near the head of the bed, also white, with a footstool before it, and looking, as I thought like pale throne. (7)

Ellen Moer's suggestion that "the first three chapters of Jane Eyre includes the crisis of pre-pubic sexuality" (188) is significant since the intensity of the red colour of the room full of phallic symbols including " a miniature of [Mrs. Reed's] deceased husband" focuses on the developing fragmented self much more (7). It is the place where she becomes a woman in Beauvoir's terms as well as the very place she gradually starts to move from "looking" to "seeing". She experiences sexuality as a threat in such an atmosphere and strives to de-posit herself saying "I was a trifle beside myself; or rather *out* of myself, as the French would say" (6). Being the epitome of Gilbert and Gubar's interpretation as "trance writing", this statement is soon developed by her seeing herself in the mirror. Her identity as a woman takes place in the red room of the dead absent patriarch where she realises her nullification. At a literal level, her displacement stems from the language of economics. Jane the narrator clearly reflects this overwhelming economic nullification when Bessie reminds her that "if she were to turn you off you would have to go to the poorhouse": " I had nothing to say to these words: they were not new to me: my very first recollections of existence included hints of the same kind. This reproach of my dependence had become a vague sing-song in my ear; very painful and crushing, but only half intelligible" (6). And the figurative level

reveals that she exclusively experiences how not belonging there feels like. “I was a discord in Gateshead Hall; I was like nobody there” is the statement of a self indeed in and out her-self who rather consciously realises (look-see) how overwhelmingly artificial the world of man’s castle is (9).

Just at this point, Gateshead reveals a threatening place of reality for Jane. The real danger lies in the fact that Gateshead Hall as the Victorian family institution designs to destroy Jane’s sense of factuality, which is reminiscent of the “madwoman” theme. Therefore, Jane’s confession reveals the extent of the “maddening plot” of the Victorian family she suffers when she says: “I half believed her, for I felt, indeed, only bad feelings surging in my breast” (21). The red-room as the place for punishment is the foremost scene where she cannot help the temptation between the rational and the irrational. At the end of her imprisonment, although the narrator insures that “No severe or prolonged bodily illness followed this incident of the red-room: it only gave my nerves a shock, on which I feel the reverberation to this day” (13), the echoes of this incident is later seen through her double Bertha. Indeed, from the very beginning, Jane’s story –as well as Bronte’s story- is replete with ambiguities that point to female’s anxiety of authorship unlike man’s anxiety of influence. Therefore, Gateshead is no exception to the places where Jane is tempted into the “schizophrenia of authorship”. Mrs. Reed, first of all, is “blind and deaf on the subject” of her son’s bullying Jane (4). Jane, on the point of being taken to the red-room by the maids, protests the unjust social hierarchy between her cousin and herself : “Master! How is he my master? Am I a servant?” (6). Also the maids disturb the factuality in Jane by “looking darkly and doubtfully on my face, as incredulous of my sanity” (6). Red-room becomes the very place where her “anxiety of authorship” is forced to be turned into “schizophrenia of authorship”. Her “mad” screams are chided by Mrs. Reed who accuses her of lying: “I abhor artifice, particularly in children; it is my duty to show you that tricks will not answer; you will

now stay here an hour longer, and it is only on condition of perfect submission and stillness that I shall liberate you then” (11).

However, it is unlikely to see any transformation into submission in Jane’s anxious mood. Rather, a rejection takes place as she turns down the tart, delightful picture of the edenic bird on the plate and Gulliver’s Travels which she reads on and on considering it as a “narrative of facts” (14). Mr. Lloyd, the apothecary’s existence is the first instance through which she is partly liberated from the forceful image the (Reed) family imprisoned her. His language works with the analogy of his occupation of healing (though it is not in the level of a physician) when his language treats her as a child of her age instead of a baby. As “Jane’s first sympathetic audience”, Mr. Lloyd also displays his healing effect by helping her with “putting her woes into words” (Bodenheimer 157). His interrogation to learn more about her anxious stance implicitly culminates in her answer “I can never get away from Gateshead till I am a woman” (17). Far from an unconscious baby, Jane’s entrance into womanhood through the implications of red-room experience makes her a much more subversive instead of a favourable, submissive little child. Her subversiveness when she “without at all deliberating on [my] words” cries out “They are not fit to associate with me” and her direct interrogation of Mrs. Reed’s conscience with a statement like “What would uncle Reed say to you if he were alive?” over which she claims “she had no control” (20-21) reveals Jane as an assertive young woman.

The Cinderella tale turns into the tale of Little Red Riding Hood until the end of the Lowood chapter. Brocklehurst’s extensive phallic appearance during his inquisition of Jane is inevitably realised by Jane: “What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large prominent teeth!” (25) When she honestly answers Brocklehurst’s questions on being a good Christian, humble nature and the Bible, she however is turned into a liar by Mrs. Reed’s assertion that Jane has “a tendency to

deceit" (27). On his leaving and given a pamphlet on "the sudden death of the Liar", Jane says it should be given to Georgiana "for it is she who tells lies, and not I" (29). Jane's revenge from Mrs. Reed ends up in a victory which she likens to that of a warrior in a battlefield:

I am glad you are no relation of mine. I will never call you aunt again as long as I liv(...)if any one asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty(...)How dare I, Mrs. Reed? How dare I? because it is the *truth*. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of your love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity. I shall remember how you thrust me back-roughly and violently thrust me back- into the red-room, and locked me up there, to my dying day, though I was in agony, though I cried out, while suffocating with distress, 'Have mercy! Have mercy, Aunt Reed!' And that punishment you made me suffer because your wicked boy struck me-knocked me down for nothing. I will tell anybody who asks me questions this exact tale. People think you a good woman, but you are bad, hard-hearted. *You* are deceitful! (30)

Such a victorious move endows Jane with an identity, liberating her from an identity crisis, or rather the impediments of the Victorian pernicious family institution which directly excludes any claim on the self by the Other.

If Gateshead is the representative of the Victorian nucleus of patriarchy, Lowood is another version of the range controlled by patriarchal rules. However, it is in Lowood where Jane continues to break the rules through the education she receives. Even though the school is financed and governed by the strict rule of Evangelical Mr. Brocklehurst, the female mind such as Miss Temple is responsible for training Jane Eyre, who so far had grown up hearing Bessie's narratives, and had not yet been equipped with self-authorisation. As a matter of fact, Lowood becomes the place from where Jane emerges fully educated and fit for survival. Her two central "teachers" Miss Temple and Helen Burns bear double palimpsestic overtones on the path of Jane's training. The first palimpsest is carried out within their characters. Helen Burns, as Jane gradually observes, is troubled with the rules and expectations of her

teachers. Jane's portrayal of her as a true Christian exceeds the natural bond with obedience. In other words, she is constantly chided and even punished and humiliated for being "slatternly". On the one hand, it is Helen Burns who finds her friend "weak and silly" when Jane says she cannot bear her fate referring to the injustices and cruelty of Miss Scatcherd (48), and on the other, it is the same Helen Burns, on the next page, who also has things she "cannot bear":

Miss Scatcherd said, slatternly: I seldom put, and never keep, things in order; I am careless; I forget rules; I read when I should learn my lessons; I have no method: and sometimes I say, like you, I cannot bear to be subjected to systematic arrangements. This is all very provoking to Miss Scatcherd, who is naturally neat, punctual, and particular. (49)

Although Helen Burns seems to be an irresponsible, careless and unfortunate child on the surface, she, as a matter of fact is the embodiment of insurrection, though her version is fully different from that of Jane's. Her lack of fury, and instead her apparent attachment to passivity as well as submission are unremittingly implied by her seemingly obedient actions. Forgetfulness, irresponsible about her duties and her dreamy mood are synonymous with covert disobedience. Instead of accomplishing what she is told by her teacher, she chooses to "wander" in thoughts. Although her trance-like elusive stance seems quite innocent at first, her thoughts are dangerous at their roots. Her feelings and ideas on Charles I exemplify Helen Burns as one of the successful palimpsestic characters:

This afternoon, instead of dreaming of Deepden, I was wondering how a man who wished to do right could act so unjustly and unwisely as Charles the First sometimes did; and I thought what a pity it was that, with his integrity and conscientiousness, he could see no farther than the prerogatives of the Crown. If he had but been able to look to a distance, and see how what they call the spirit of the age was tending! (49)

Taken from the gender-oriented point of view, Helen Burns criticises the king, who is also equated with divinity and is the ultimate patriarch of the nation. Although her Christian voice pities him, her muted voice finds the dead patriarch's actions "unjust and unwise". Furthermore, her latent comment on his lack of 'vision' –in terms of foreseeing- reveals that she also like Jane has already realised man's blindness to some reality and "Truth". At the end, Helen's, though covert, subversive ideas are protected once again by her entranced nature. As Jane the narrator strategically notes, the statement "Helen was talking to herself now" (50) makes her sound as if she is insane, which guarantees her secure place in the novel.

In so doing, Helen Burns confirms Jane's "way" exactly by being submissive to injustice by which she "educates" her to avoid doing what she does. The same thing is relevant for Miss Temple, the superintendent of the Lowood Institution. Miss Temple's very portrayal when she speaks with Mr. Brocklehurst is worth studying in this respect:

Miss Temple had looked down when he first began to speak to her; but she now gazed straight before her, and her face, naturally pale as marble, appeared to be assuming also the coldness and fixity of that material; especially her mouth, closed as if it would have required a sculptor's chisel to open it, and her brow settled gradually into petrified severity. (56)

The sign of smile, common in both Miss Temple and Helen Burns, hints at their secretive rebellious nature over the ongoing narration of events. Miss Temple's attempt to pass "her handkerchief over her lips, as if to smooth away the involuntary smile that curled them" (56) signifies the female is mocking of Brocklehurst's excessive evangelical doctrine to the extent of ridiculousness. As in the second instance of Helen Burns, Jane who is made to stand on a stool as a punishment by Brocklehurst is encouraged by Helen's smile who on the pretext of "asking some slight question" to Miss Smith passes Jane at the risk of being chidden again and again (60).

The second level of palimpsestic education is exclusively based on authorship. These two women first acknowledge her “authority” and then help her develop authorial power through credibility. Being punished in Gateshead for her desire to see without being seen becomes the same reason for Jane’s degradation into a liar in public. Having drawn Brockelhurst’s attention, her humiliation culminates in his insulting and “false” language: “this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut-this girl is – a liar!” (59). Having been defeated and once again deprived of any audience, Jane is first reminded by Helen that “there are only eighty people who have heard you called so, and the world contains hundreds of millions” (61). Furthermore, Helen warns Jane about her passionate lamenting about herself, implying that would be too egotistical and thus devoid of credibility. As her first audience, Miss Temple listens to her narration for the purpose of clearing up any slander perpetuated by Brocklehurst in asking her as if a judge of justice: “when a criminal is accused, he is always allowed to speak in his own defence. You have been charged with falsehood; defend yourself to me as well as you can say whatever your memory suggests as true; but add nothing and exaggerate nothing” (63). Jane Eyre would never lie to Miss Temple about her story, however the change in her narration displays the accomplishment of her education and refinement on her authorial voice:

I resolved in the depth of my heart, that I would be most moderate- most correct; and, having reflected a few minutes in order to arrange coherently what I had to say, I told her all the story of my sad childhood. Exhausted by emotion, my language was more subdued than it generally was when it developed that sad theme; and mindful of Helen’s warnings against the indulgence of resentment, I infused into the narrative far less of gall and wormwood than ordinary. Thus restrained and simplified, it sounded more credible: I felt as I went on that Miss Temple fully believed me. (63)

Miss Temple and Helen Burns thus teach Jane a new turn and “spirit” of the power of “telling” unlike Bessie’s narrative ability which filled Jane’s mind with stories with conventional plots. This newly gained credulous voice in her narration of her story marks its distinction in the rest of the story. In addition to that, Jane is also made aware of her variable audience and thus she tries to meet the expectation of each audience according to his or her own taste. During the time of the plague, she realises her new friend, Mary Ann Wilson “had a turn in narrative” of amusing stories for their tastes while Jane herself practised her habits of questioning and analysing. However, in time Jane avoids questioning people, which is, as she realises, one of the requirements of credibility.

Helen Burns’s remark in her death-bed “Jane, your little feet are bare; lie down and cover yourself with my quilt” (73) and her subsequent death are always cherished in Jane’s mind as she “lies” down under the quilt which is figuratively woven with Helen’s help. Like the sisterhood and solidarity between them, Miss Temple who “stood [me] in the stead of mother” quits her by marrying a clergyman. Guidance of both reaches its end and their missions are ended by displaying her not to act like them and put the events in reverse. The tablet “Resurgam” which “now marks the spot” of Helen’s grave is more than paying tribute to her sisterly guidance. Jane, cleansed from a simple revenge story, has reached a point of maturity where she “will rise again” for herself as well as her “mother” and “sister”. What she has learnt and is tamed into is the single ability to narrate her-self, which also includes the theme of lying. Lisa Sternlieb reaches the same conclusion:

Brontë has written what is arguably the first important female *Bildungsroman* in English literature, and what is crucial to her novel of education is that the heroine learns to lie. Paradoxically, what she tells us is the truth. We must accept her vision of Rochester’s words so that we can see how her narrative style echoes his.
(20)

Having been abandoned by her tutors for good, the urge in her sentence “I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer” (77) reveals her readiness to start writing her own story. Thus her real story starts with the Thornfield chapter since it is the place where she fulfills herself while the previous chapters remain as past experiences that lead her to mature understanding of power struggles and the principle of being the fittest to survive. In this manner, it is not a coincidence the madwoman in the third storey has a direct influence on her story. On the contrary, the attic of Thornfield becomes her third story through which she fulfills herself to the extent to survive victoriously. Thus, the apparent rivalry between Bertha and Jane occupies the surface level of narrative while the hidden text points to the actual rivalry between Jane and Rochester. The mansion and particularly the attic resemble the human anatomy and thus her third story is about the battle of the sexes both of whom fight for power through their minds. Since such a power struggle, as both Rochester and Jane know, depends on authorship, credibility of their narration is the uppermost quality of their battle. When authorship is concerned, narrative devices such as lying, hiding, disguising have the utmost significance during their trials for ultimate power over the other.

The narrator’s opening sentence of the Thornfield chapter strongly suggests a theatrical quality when she introduces it to her reader as “A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play and when I draw up the curtain this time(...)” (85). She cannot help constructing a set story for her first acquaintance, Miss Fairfax, presuming her the lady of the house. This first misunderstanding displays how much her mind is occupied with possible set of narratives. Yet, it could also be considered as the implicit sign of being deceived by the false narrations retold by Rochester. Furthermore, her disappointment that the inquiry over Rochester is not satisfactorily answered by Mrs Fairfax results in her diagnosis that “There are people who seem to have no notion of sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points, either in persons or things: the good lady evidently belonged to this class”

(97). Clearly, a lack of perspective and the inability of narrating seem to be the ultimate condition for degrading people for Jane.

The first introduction of the third floor during the tour given by Mrs. Fairfax is the foreshadowing of the fact that during her “third story” the smile of Miss Temple and Helen Burns turns into a “curious, distinct, formal, mirthless” (98) and even “tragic” and “preternatural” laugh of Bertha Mason (99). The transformation from the smile, which is rather too subdued, into a laugh, which almost blatantly defies male injustice, is constantly prevalent in Jane’s surface text as well as Jane and Bertha’s muted narratives.

The more Rochester subdues Jane by his false or incomplete narrations, the more passionate Jane becomes in order to correct it/him by her alternative story. From the very first meeting Rochester and Jane try to construct their own narrations. That each interprets the first meeting in terms of a fairy tale is exemplary of the rivalry over narrative. In other words, fictionalising the event with the help of the discourse of a tale, makes each of them the author of the story. At the surface level Jane always “feels disposed to obey” Rochester (106); however, she acts strategically as he does. She is both evasive and direct whenever they have a conversation. She rather “beats about the bush”, as in the instance of Rochester’s questioning her having a “cadeau” (112) whenever her real identity is exposed to the male eyes or mind. Rochester’s first exact narration, being on Adele’s story, is intrinsically his; however, he at the end legitimates her –or rather his- story by disowning her. Furthermore, that he familiarises his narration from the beginning expressing that it is the most peculiar thing “for a man like [me] to tell stories of his opera-mistresses to a quaint, inexperienced girl like you” (134) he also reduces her into mere inexperienced audience. Every false narration from then on is followed by the activation in the attic. Consequently, it is Jane who rescues him when a “demoniac laugh” sets fire in his bedroom. Interestingly enough, that the talk of the servants upon child Jane’s “scheming plots underhand”, and Jane the narrator’s comment

that “Abbot, I think, gave me credit for being a sort of infantine Guy Fawkes” (19) retrospectively overlaps with Bertha’s irresistible urge to set fire on Rochester, or his house. In the second place, thinking that “there was a mystery at Thornfield; and that from participation in that mystery I was purposely excluded” (154) at the same time means her exclusion from *the* story Rochester’s mansion/mind holds. At a further level, Rochester’s stance as a liar, twisting any story he has encountered, is elaborated during the charades he plays with his guests. The performance of Bridewell and Rochester’s subsequent joking with Blanche Ingram saying that “Well, whatever I am, remember you are my wife; we were married an hour since, in the presence of all these witnesses” (173) both reveal Rochester’s unremitting tendency to narrate something. In so doing, he unconsciously proves how well he can lie and deceive Jane since later on Jane is told that all the affair was arranged just to make her jealous. Jane, on the other hand, expectedly positions herself in the window-seat again with the same effort of “seeing without being seen”. However, at this particular event, such a habit of hers also functions against Rochester’s design. In other words, Jane protects herself from being part of his devices. Furthermore, while Rochester presumes her as a passive viewer of his “plays”, Jane looks, sees and narrates what she observes in him as a potential and dangerous narrator. On the other hand, Blanche Ingram fails to threaten Jane in this respect as “she was not good; she was not original; she used to repeat sounding phrases from books; she never offered nor had, an opinion of her own” (174). That is to say, she is not capable enough to subvert the books since by books it is meant that she is the victim of the patriarchal narratives and thus incapable of setting her own narrative against Rochester or any admirer, therefore inferior to Jane. Such a subversion is challenged in the gipsy scene in which another “playfully” deceitful scene of rivalry takes place between Jane and Rochester.

The beginning of their conversation almost sounds like a possible reversal of the tale of Little Red Riding Hood. Disguised as a gipsy woman Rochester reminds one of the wolf/man

disguised as the grandmother. Furthermore, the talk seems to have a reversed quality as Jane, quite unconventionally, expresses her indifference towards her/his telling the future in her repetitious comment: "I don't care about it" (184). Besides, although the traditional superiority of the male is extant here as well in comments like "Did you? You've a quick ear. I have; and a quick eye, and a quick brain", Jane unconventionally continues to remain cool and ironically Rochester strives to impress her senses: "Why don't you tremble? I'm not cold. Why don't you turn pale? I'm not sick. Why don't you consult my art? I'm not silly"(184-185). Only after mentioning of Grace Poole, Jane's mood changes into an entrancing dream. And that even at the end of the masquerade Jane's reflection still lingers on Grace Poole proves the way her mind works: "Besides, I had noted her feigned voice, her anxiety to conceal her feature. But my mind had been running on Grace Poole- that living enigma, that mystery of mysteries, as I considered her. I had never thought of Mr. Rochester" (191). Expectedly, her disturbed mind over Grace Poole and Rochester's latest show of deception is proceeded by Bertha's screaming and her hurting her brother Mr Mason. Apart from the fact that Jane witnesses many more mysteries that night while she helps Rochester and thus her mental disturbance does not cease but gradually increases, Rochester's manner towards his guests while he tries to calm them down is significant as he never ceases to use theatrical terms and thus never stops lying: "'All's right-all's right' he cried.' 'It's a mere rehearsal of 'Much Ado about Nothing'" (195). Needless to say, Jane witnesses that it is nothing but everything while he tries to nullify some parts of his story (e.g. Bertha Mason) into the reduction of "nothing". The true life story is not articulated by any of the two and thus their lack of knowledge on their own stories proceeds to be the matter of rivalry. While Rochester thinks it suffices to tell about his life after Mason's getting injured, simplifying it from a "crime" to a mere "error" in the most obscure way, Jane's preparation to go back to Gateshead reveals to Rochester that Jane also has things that are unknown to him.

On the other hand, revisiting Gateshead Jane once and for all proves her victory upon this particular family and its members. However, there is another victory which is over Mrs Reed. In her death-bed, she rejects to know Jane Eyre whose persistent “I am Jane Eyre” displays the ongoing struggle against Mrs. Reed’s nullification. Besides, Jane at last witnesses the fact that it was Mrs. Reed who was mean and the true liar. Thus correcting the insulting past of her childhood, she naturally forgives her.

At her return, Jane explodes to Rochester who continues to torture her with his false plans of marrying Blanche Ingram and sending Jane away. Her rhetoric on equality is seen by him as the struggle of a frantic bird, which still bears the overtones of reducing her. Her answering back “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you” is furthermore challenged by his “You play a farce, which I merely laugh at” through which he implicitly as well as subtly turns her into a player, a liar (241). Even the following love scene is dominated by her scepticism: ““Are you in earnest? Do you truly love me? Do you sincerely wish me to be your wife?” ‘I do; and if an oath is necessary to satisfy, I swear it’” (242).

Plans to get married brings to both a new platform/medium of rival narratives each wishes to own. While Jane, through her narrative, strives to own the event by once again applying the fairy tale context, Rochester is occupied with his delusional concepts of manipulating Jane as his bride, to which Jane’s retorts to him not to address her as a beauty, and not to flatter her accompany. Although Jane reminds him that she is not an angel and adds “I will not be one till I die: I will be myself. Mr Rochester, you must neither expect nor exact anything celestial of me-for you will not get it, any more than I shall get it of you: which I do not at all anticipate” (247), Rochester heedlessly continues to utilise the fairy element in his language. The scene of Rochester’s narration to Adele that he will take Jane to the moon is significant in this sense. Adele confuses his economy of language and rightly calls him “un

vrai menteur” (253). Once having realised his plans for her jealousy, her remark to him “You have a curious, designing mind” (249) is again and again proven and challenged by Jane.

The presentiments, as Jane calls the dream, are another conventional romantic structure which is also utilised as her obscure narrative device. When Rochester pays no attention to her dream narration, Jane feels the urge to dominate him by stopping him with a warning: “I will tease you and vex you to your heart’s content, when I have finished my tale: but hear me to the end” (268). Her clairvoyant dreams are proceeded by her narration of Bertha Mason who visits Jane and tears her wedding gown. Rochester’s reaction to the event is nothing but the same fictionalising attitude: “The creature of an over-stimulated brain; that is certain, I must be careful of you, my treasure” (270).

“For the second time in my life-only the second time- I became insensible from terror” (270) merits attention as well as first her avoidance and then looking at her reflection in the mirror during her dressing of her wedding gown (“I saw a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger” 272). Both, at the surface level, advocate the terror felt by the supernatural or haunting quality. However, Jane –her helper Bertha as well- suffers from male suppression and deception. Having perceived his ‘true’ story, which comes from the third floor, only after the scandalous interruption of the wedding Jane escapes to the ways of quest. Her escape or act of quest is followed by physical infliction and subsequent fainting that epitomises the theme of re-birth.

The Whitcross/Marshend chapter is the extension of the third story in Thornfield as Jane’s escape from enclosure and deception is provided by this chapter. The reason it is part of the Thornfield story is that Jane achieves to own her story and returns to Rochester after the rivalry and comparison between them and most particularly after her eventual physical, financial and literary superiority over the man she loves.

Her destitute and hard times before reaching Rivers's home is significant for she integrates with nature. Secondly, John Reed's "Madam Mope" and Rochester's "elf" becomes one with nature, the wanderer daughter of "the universal mother, Nature" (307). Whitcross stands before her as "a stone pillar", which implies that she will suffer from male impositions at the hardest terms. However, before meeting the Rivers siblings, as a very Jane Eyrean thing she firstly endures hardships in nature, which hardens herself for the coming events. Or rather, the narrator's camouflage within the sentence that "It remained now only to find a hollow where I could lie down, and feel at least hidden, if not secure" (315) uncovers her obsession to go back to metaphors of the womb where she could gain some strength. However, her passing out at their doorstep and her acceptance into the house display that the initiative pattern of the novel will not repeat itself as she has already reached a point of maturity.

With Mary and Diana she finds the same old pattern of solidarity, though not as strong as her "educators". Both mythic and religious connotations support her survival unlike the Georgiana and Eliza sisters. Another reversal or perhaps change is in the character of the "boy" of the family: St. John seems to be as problematic as John Reed only with the difference that St. John meets the grown-up mature Jane. If the Whitcross chapter is accepted as part of the previous one, it is because Jane challenges another man and his power struggles over Jane is through a similar aspect of authority. Her introduction into the home almost as "a mere spectre" (321), as Diana speaks out, has intrinsically to do with her 'false' introduction. In other words, hiding her real identity under the alias Jane Elliott and other subsequent 'lies' figuratively reinforces her 'ghostly' appearance as well.

St. John is much the same as Jane Eyre in numerous ways. Although his element is ice, he is capable of using his gaze efficiently like Jane: "He seemed to use them [his eyes] rather as instruments to search other people's thoughts, than as agents to reveal his own" (330). And

therefore, very similar to Jane, he is very much fond of the window recess. However great the resemblance between the two- to the extent to become next of kin-, St John's gradual domination over Jane holds the fact that Jane is doomed to another rivalry position with this man as well. Although at the beginning his ways are rather too vague to cause disturbance, he covertly constructs a potential danger in his words. More clearly, the process through which he chose a suitable occupation for him holds other invisible facts about him. To devote himself to God as a missionary, yet with the soul of a poet, orator, author or an artist reinforces his desire to "authorise" the story although it is not his, but God's words. Otherwise, becoming a priest would require him to repeat His words in dull and suffocating routine. St John is the exact portrayal of the male "anxiety of influence" Gilbert and Gubar discuss over Bloom's theory. In short, gaining the position of a narrator he will directly gain the power to authorise his discourse too, with a new 'influence' of his authorial invention over his Father's text.

When St John discovers Jane's true life story, he silences her, guiding her to a passive stance with the purpose of owning the story with his authoritative intrusion: "on reflection, I find the matter will be better managed by my assuming the narrator's part, and converting you into a listener" (363). The discovery of her story, and her resistance against him answering his threatening obstinacy with the same determination saying "Whereas I am hot, and fire dissolves ice" (366) or her direct remarks which "He had not imagined that a woman would dare to speak so to a man" (357) do not discourage his gradually forceful attempts of subduing Jane. However, Jane's early remark "For me, I felt at home in this sort of discourse" soon turns into "I fell under a freezing spell" (380). His strategic design of educating her into a silenced and petrified Medusa proceeds with his preaching, almost hypnotic commands and eventually his introduction of a new language in the form of Hindustani. A new language emerges as the initiative of cutting her off her past, her

experience (meaning her-story) and thus nullifying her for his egotistical schedule. Furthermore, as St. John declares the new language turns out to be going to India as a married couple. The fact that his proposal of marriage barely comes from his love for her makes her put an end to his forceful proposal: “Alas! If I join St. John, I abandon half myself; if I go to India, I go to premature death” (386). As the characteristic of palimpsestic plot, Jane hears – or pretends to hear- Rochester’s voice at night as she is fully determined to disentangle herself from the same old “anxiety of authorship” St. John causes: “The feeling was not like an electric shock, but it was quite as sharp, as strange, as startling: it acted on my senses as if their utmost activity hitherto had been but torpor, from which they were now summoned and forced to *wake*” (my italic 401). After this symbolic incident, Jane regains her power of authority over St John, which is prevalent in the narrator’s expression of it: “It was *my* time to assume ascendancy. *My* powers were in play and in force. I told him to forbear question or remark; I desired him to leave me: I must and would be alone. He obeyed at once” (401-402).

From another narrator in the story, the innkeeper, she receives an almost credible story about Rochester. As far as narrativity is concerned in the novel, the innkeeper’s narration preserves the principle of point of view. His regarding Jane Eyre as malicious as Bertha Mason --“ and for my part, I have often wished that Miss Eyre had been sunk in the sea before she came to Thornfield Hall” (409)-- displays any pair of eyes could see the reality in his or her terms and thus Jane Eyre’s “eyes” as a woman’s and her narration of the world of stories are unavoidably significant.

Bertha Mason’s last attempt of burning the house has ended up with her committing suicide and Rochester’s blindness and the loss of his right hand. With this information, Jane dreads for worse as worst of all would be his being mad. Such a scenario would inevitably mean her losing in the battle fought against Rochester as the representative of the patriarch. Since such is not the case, Jane returns to him in his new manor-house at Ferndean.

Doubtless her return and subsequent marriage has much to do with his dependency over her. More than a compensation, her victory over the battle of the sexes is not only restricted with her superiority over him as a wife, which is resounded in her famous “Reader, I married him” (429). As the author of her story, she after all remains the only narrator. Rochester’s inquisitiveness about her adventures after leaving Thornfield remains a subtle revenge of the jealousy Rochester caused Jane through Blanche Ingram. Furthermore, Jane’s narration, or better termed her authorship relies on her seeing and not being seen. Rochester’s blindness not only makes him an emasculated patriarch but also the permanent audience of her narration. After all, Rochester has to accept her stories as authorial instead of disowning. Thus, whenever Jane’s narration sounds unbearably disturbing, he ventures to refute her credibility: “That is a fiction- an impudent invention to vex me” (424). As such is the case, Jane has also the power of manipulation of stories such as hiding and lying as performed by mainly Rochester in the past. The incident of the mysterious voice best exemplifies her full independence over authorship:

Reader, it was on Monday night- near midnight- that I too had received the mysterious summons: those were the very words by which I replied to it. I listened to Mr. Rochester’s narrative, but made no disclosure in return. The coincidence struck me as too awful and inexplicable to be communicated or discussed. If I told anything, my tale would be such as must necessarily make a profound impression on the mind of my hearer: and that mind, yet from its sufferings too prone to gloom, needed not the deeper shade of the supernatural. I kept these things then, and pondered them in my heart. (429)

The tale, in short, ends up with a happy ending under which is narrated not only how Jane Eyre “is not born but becomes a woman”, but also a woman who resists male eyes, voice and narration. It is true that “Generations of readers have been charmed by the prospect of a marriage of mutuality that the *narration* makes clear cannot be Jane and Rochester’s” (Sternlieb 20). Only with the condition of becoming her husband’s vision and right hand,

Jane Eyre lives happily ever after. After all, she is guaranteed to “look, see and narrate” anything she likes; fiction or non-fiction.

CHAPTER III

Srpuhi DUSSAP'S *Mayda* : CONTEXTUALISING ARMENIAN FEMINISM

Armenian cultural history is replete with innovations which formed the periods called rebirth, renaissance or awakening and modernism (Zekiyani 27-28). It is significant though that all these concepts are specific to Armenian culture and should not be confused with their western equivalents.

The Armenian feminist movement appears conclusively within the second major golden era of Armenian culture, namely the “awakening” period. Each Golden Era in Armenian culture was experienced through the axis of language. The first golden age was the result of the foundation of the Armenian alphabet in 405 AD⁴, an invention that guaranteed the survival of Armenian culture. This first Golden Era, which is also known as “the period of translations”, was actually achieved by a trio, consisting of the catholicos of the time, the king Vramshabouh and the inventor of the alphabet Mesrob Mashdots. The qualification of this trio proves the secular potential of a people who will continue to develop culturally in subsequent ages. Eventually, all the traditions, legends, prayers and of course the Bible were translated into Armenian. Armenian also became the language of education.

Almost a millenium and a half later, in the last decades of the nineteenth century the Armenian language witnessed another Golden Era and underwent huge transformations.

⁴ Before the invention of the Armenian alphabet, Armenians had to learn Greek and Assyrian in order to receive an education and read the Bible. The need to found a new alphabet had become essential since Mesrob Mashdots (360-440) realised during his observations in the villages in Armenia that the extant alphabets with 24-26 letters could not meet the distinct sounds of the numerous Armenian dialects. With the help of an Assyrian priest Daniel, Mashtots was provided 22 letters. The remaining 14 letters were invented by Mashdots himself: according to Armenian legend these 14 letters were a result of a dream he had in which he saw the letters on a wall of a cave. Eventually Mashdots brought the 36 letter Armenian alphabet to its final form. He was canonised by the Church and had since been called “the father of the alphabet”.

The first Golden Era was a celebration of classical Armenian⁵. This second Golden Age celebrated the advent of the vernacular. The second Golden Age, which took place in the heterogeneous structure of the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, brought out disparate changes in social life as well.⁶

The Awakening period refers to the time from the 1840s to 1915. This period can also be considered as the time when the Armenian *millet* in the Ottoman Empire became more aware of its ethnic identity. The awakening was the transformation the Armenians underwent which led them to question their rights be it political, demanding more rights from the Sultan, or be it among the Armenians themselves the struggles of class and gender. In short, it was an insistence of equal rights in every aspect of their life.

Zekiyan, in his analysis of Armenian modernity, claims that the awakening period was the climax for which Armenian people had been preparing for at least three centuries. According to Zekiyan, from the sixteenth century onwards, Armenians followed the technological innovations of the times so closely that they became one of the first people to use the press in the 16th century Venice, which was the the centre of printing of the time. However, how they proceeded differently from other nations and particularly from the western process of the same notions forms the whole point in his work *The Armenian Way to Modernity* , in which he says:

We must, however, make it clear that this up to date sensitivity did not mean a slavish imitation of the European models. On the contrary there is often a happy marriage between Western forms, patterns, technique, poetics, theories, and an exquisitely Armenian sensitivity(...) Quite as in the past, Armenians did not copy

⁵ *Krapar* , meaning classical Armenian language, in time was retained as the language of Church and that of old manuscripts. In the nineteenth century, it was replaced by *ashkharapar*, which is vernacular Armenian.

⁶ The second Golden Age, or as more commonly called “The Awakening” meant a parade of landmarks in Armenian history, such as the revival of the Ottoman Armenian constitution, education of all children, use of the press for the translations of works of western literature, the women’s movement, establishment of charitable institutions, newspapers, periodicals, journals and so on.

their models, they integrated and harmonised them in new and often brilliant syntheses. (85)

The innovations which were brought to the lives of Armenians were manifold. One of the essentials which occurred with the urge of the Armenian intelligensia was to establish a Constitution specific to the Armenian *millet* within the Ottoman Empire. The establishment of a Constitution was the victory of the Armenian intelligensia against the unjust status quo shared by the Patriarchate and the *amira* class. These members of the intelligensia, mostly educated in Europe, advocated the necessity of a democratic order of society within their *millet*. Their emergence in public life had already pointed to the changing hierarchies between classes. Those, among whom there were doctors, teachers, poets and lawyers, constructed a constitution and though with great difficulties, in 1863 they succeeded to have it approved by the Sultan. The Constitution, which included 150 articles and a preface, summed up the basic requirements and responsibilities of the Armenian *millet*, the maintenance and upkeep of schools, churches and hospitals. What is remarkable is that the constitution demanded equal opportunity for girls, in one of the articles putting the requirement “to equally teach boys and girls from any class the social sciences that are by all means necessary to mankind” (Ter Minassian 126).

The greatest influence of the time was romanticism, which easily integrated and thus dominated onto every social and political initiative. The western ideas of nationalism, a belated outcome of the French Revolution, led the Armenian *millet* to have a conscious ethnic identity for the first time. This led to an augmentation of charitable institutions, and the significance of education of both sexes was readily accepted by all.

What is more, the Armenian language underwent huge changes, which was considered as the greatest outcome of the same romantic effect. Another dominant feature of romanticism, individualism could also be traced in the formation of language. The

acknowledgment of the vernacular, its replacement of the classical, “language of the Church” proved to be vital. This epoch making change had other implications as well. First of all, such a transformation was a “war of languages” and consequently, as Rowe notes, “the battle” was between the traditions of the old world and the new world and alternative transformations of modernity (Rowe 4). That was the reason why the Armenian intelligensia gave so much importance and eventually turned the vernacular into the language of literature in a rather short time like thirty years (1840-1870) (Ter Minassian 119).

The transformation of language from the old to the new, as Ter Minassian draws attention to, shares the same paradigmatic quality with the ideology within language. The introduction of the vernacular as also the language of literature coincides with the emergence of the “new woman” question and gender issues in general introduced by woman writers. Thus narrowing down the transformative stance of language into an aspect like “language through genders” allows us to examine the Armenian female identity at a microstructural level. Also, the microstructural level of gender relations goes hand in hand with the macrostructural level of the Ottoman Empire’s ethnic thus plural stratification since by its very political nature, minorities were considered as the Other, especially when each different ethnic group ventured to waken up its national identity in an effort for its own survival.

Just at this point, the empire could be observed within the notion of palimpsest. Similarly, any empire bearing many different ethnic groups within herself, such as the Ottoman Empire, opens up new definitions when the singular surface structure is uncovered. So, palimpsest as a narrative instrument has three different and yet related ways of application: first of all, palimpsest becomes a means for the underground voices to be raised as in the example of the imperial structure. As a follower of homogeneity, the empire has to appear in unity. However, as in every sort of totalities, “Other” voices, though with “small letters”, could still be traced and heard.

The second notion is what Christine Brooke-Rose observes: what is understood by “history” in narratives (since literature and history are concomitant aspects) could be subjected to re-interpretations. Thus, the surface acceptable ‘history’ is replaced (and even deconstructed) by the “alternative history”.

These two rough definitions above have the male-centred priority in common. From this point, the third definition mainly represents gender politics and of course female writing. Although the previous two definitions are based upon the simple double position of a pair of binary oppositions, the palimpsest within female writing points out the ‘double of a double’ nature.

Before applying this notion according to the third feature into the novel *Mayda*, I will give some biographical information about Dussap and her career as the first Ottoman-Armenian woman novelist. The sources and persons which have influenced her will also be the subject of discussion since they are essential for understanding her works in general, her version of feminism and her work *Mayda* in particular.

It would be a mistake indeed if the life of Srpuhi Dussap is presumed as ordinary as any Ottoman-Armenian woman’s. Her privileged lifestyle was mainly related to the class that she belonged and more importantly to her mother, Nazli Vahan. Being an *amira*’s daughter, Nazli Vahan guaranteed Srpuhi a place in upper class society. Having lost her father at a very young age, Srpuhi was primarily educated under the wings of a cultured and intelligent mother who knew how to use the priorities of her social class positively for her daughter. Above all, Nazli Vahan was an activist and a feminist whose mid-19th century salon for intellectuals was one of the most famous of her time in Istanbul. In the period of the Awakening, with the developments of the press, establishment of journals by woman editors

and the new Armenian Constitution, women like Nazli Vahan⁷ joined this social renovation by playing significant roles upon people who needed help. As might be expected, the charitable institutions obviously had two focuses: namely orphan children and female education.⁸ Apart from being the daughter of an activist, her mother's conscious choice of letting Srpuhi witness the debates of intellectuals in her salon proves her privileged upbringing. Srpuhi Dussap simply followed her mother and did more by writing. Before her appearance in the Armenian literary scene in 1883 with her first eponymous novel *Mayda* Dussap was already a member of the Charitable Women's Association and in 1879 she also became a member of the School Lovers Armenian Women's Association of which she finally became the head (Rowe 37). While her mother Nazli Vahan did more than being the typical compassionate, tender, loving and sacrificial mother figure by giving a good education to Srpuhi, the daughter's choice of husband, the French musician Paul Dussap, enabled her to have a career, which was a great privilege for a woman at the time and would not have been quite possible with an Armenian husband who would be tightly bound with the rules of a patriarchal society. Moreover, Dussap Pasha's prestigious profession as the conductor of the Imperial Band reflected positively on Srpuhi Dussap's activism. Her own salon was significant not only because she was already known from her mother's salon and thus respected but also because Dussap Pasha as her husband enabled her to gather French intellectuals as well as Armenian intellectuals around her. In evaluating all these influences in Srpuhi Dussap's life, Dussap Pasha as the 'right husband' becomes much more significant as he was also the 'good husband' to his wife. It was he who encouraged her to write what she thought, speak what she thought and be what she wanted to be. All in all, any husband with

⁷ Such a movement of activist Armenian women like Nazli Vahan is reminiscent of the mid-eighteenth century English women's gathering called Bluestockings who worked for women's education, co-operation and individualism.

⁸ Nazli Vahan founded St. Hripsimants girls' school in 1859 and The Charitable Women's Association in 1864. She also acted as patron of the Kalfayan orphanage and the Narekian and Hamazgiats' schools (Rowe 36). Of the establishments mentioned above, only the Kalfayan orphanage is still open today.

tolerance to his wife's ardent (though 'strange' and even definitely improper for a woman in a male-centred society) desires to become more than one '-ist' (activist, feminist and novelist) must certainly not be overlooked and instead it must be interpreted as a great privilege for a woman, especially in the nineteenth century centre of the "Orient". For the preface of her first novel *Mayda*, Srpuhi Dussap notes her privileges : "Today I acknowledge how I am grateful to my husband for understanding what I wanted, encouraging me and continuing in a way my mother's approach" (Asadur 143).

Yet, there is a third name who became a bridge between this educated and talented young girl who was largely under the influence of European –and particularly French– literature and art and the later Srpuhi Dussap who did her best for her ethnic identity and Armenian women's "awakening". Mgrdich Beshiktashliyan was one of the famous poets of the time who privately tutored Armenian girls, including Srpuhi Dussap.⁹ Beshiktashlian's significance in Srpuhi Dussap's life is directly related to language. He was the man who introduced an interest in her in the Armenian language. Thus, after her years of Western admiration, thanks to his help she was "awakened" into her own ethnic consciousness by learning about her people's own culture, history and language. But, Srpuhi Dussap did not suffice with the education she had from this eminent romantic poet. She was influenced by the romanticism of Beshiktashlian as well as by that of other European novelists such as Goethe and Rousseau. However, she used it in completely different ways, to use Zekiyani's terms, creating a "great synthesis" for the Armenian woman's "awakening". Her use of romanticism will be discussed in detail in the following pages. What she also turned into a "great synthesis" was the language itself. It could be said that during the Awakening period, Dussap was one of the writers who stressed the importance of the vernacular and worked for

⁹ Mgrdich Beshiktashlian (1828-1868) not only received his education under the influence of European romanticism since he graduated from the Mekhitarist college in Padua but also became one of the famous Armenian Romantic poets of his time. (*The Heritage of Armenian Literature* 74)

the replacement of classical Armenian, the language of the Church and the great classics written until the 19th century, by the vernacular. Although she was well-versed enough in classical Armenian to be able to write a sentimental poem in classical Armenian at her beloved tutor-poet's funeral, she believed in the use of the vernacular in literature and even wrote an article on this subject.

Srpuhi Dussap's prominent place in the Armenian cultural and literary scene as the first Armenian woman who wrote and spoke freely received admiration while at the same time was subjected to serious criticism by important Armenian "fathers of letters". Her first novel *Mayda* was criticised by Krikor Zohrab, the best known writer, intellectual and public figure of the times. Zohrab claimed that "problems related to the fair sex cannot possibly be considered [our] agenda to discuss" (Asadur 142). Male intellectuals like Zohrab found the ideas expressed in her work dangerous, "fearing that such a demand for being equal with men would destroy [Armenian] traditions and values" (Asadur 136).

In spite of patriarchal alarm, Dussap turned into a pioneer for the next generation of Armenian women who wanted to write and follow her. From then on, almost every Armenian woman writer paid respect to her for her influence. Yet, those who supported her were not only women. Unlike Zohrab, there were a few men who supported her attempts. One of her admirers, Reteos Berberyan wrote in his article "*Mayda* and its criticism" that "Woman is entitled to have more freedom than she has now" (Asadur 142). Another critic, Mamuryan, writes on her daring stance as a woman, saying:

The simple and significant ideas of this lovely young lady made me feel embarrassed. I was charmed by her sincerity and her defence of women in Izmir, her critical language that judged the youth. I remember myself quite at pain since a young lady ventured to teach us on the nature of women in a more liberal way than ours. (*Yereveli Dignants Tari* 39)

Apart from the fact that it was one of the scenes in which Dussap also practised being the ‘new woman’ as much as possible, this event also shows Armenian women’s coming into public life, which was mainly pioneered by her. To give some examples, 1847 was the date when Armenian women were first seen in literary circles. Still, the more accurate date could be regarded as 1860s “awakening”, because of the huge changes brought by the Armenian Constitution.¹⁰ Like Dussap’s other successors, Zabel Asadur¹¹, who has a short study on Dussap’s life and works, also acknowledges her percursory stance in Armenian literature and the feminist movement among Armenian women. She continued to be a great influence in spite of the fact that she lost almost all her contacts with life and gave up writing after losing her daughter Dorin at a very young age, after which she devoted herself to cherishing her memories and praying for her for hours in front of her picture in the small shrine she created at home. Zabel Asadur comments on the groundbreaking views she introduced into Armenian women’s life; she writes “Her mind was not ordinary one and nor was her life. She did not write for a piece of bread or glory(...) She worried about the poor woman, forlorn woman, deceived woman and fallen woman” (140). Asadur also presents us a summary of the main principles that underpin her feminism. These are the freedom to work, equal education with men, free choice in marriage, fighting back against women’s exaggerated artificiality and money as dowry. She wished for the preservation of values without the interventions of false beliefs and prejudices. The final condition for materialising feminist politics among Armenians, the statement “Armenian woman has also significant roles to play in the public life of Armenian society” was the main slogan of the Armenian feminist movement (Asadur 137). In her article “A Few Words On Women’s Unemployment” (1882), Dussap discusses

¹⁰ During this period the number of the Armenian literary magazines published increased to fifty including the first Armenian woman’s magazine “Gitar” published by Elbis Gesaratsian (1862). Young Srpuhi’s first poem titled “Spring” (*Karun*) was published in *Pazmaveb* in 1864 (San, 46-47).

¹¹ She usually uses the pseudonym Sibil, meaning “witch” in Armenian.

Armenian women's financial stance and their polarised ways of living and interrogates subsequently developed disastrous convictions such as prejudices, what is socially moral, right or shameful and so forth by women from three main classes. In her opinion, upper class women regard female labour as something shameful. Besides, she elaborates her view that it is the upper class women who "set a bad example for the poorer women by proving her sublime and elevated status without working" (239). Such a prejudice, Dussap writes, is also reinforced with the charities given by bestowers. She is by no means against the idea of helping the poor; however, Dussap fights back against the prejudices that make Armenian women uncomplaining dependents. She fervently holds the belief that

Only the one who works will reach freedom since she owes to herself the way to wealth, not to the bestowers who only turn women to slaves, exploiting them. Charity received from the bestower is only the first step to becoming a slave since she will feel the obligation to hide her tastes, tendencies and ideas in order to remain grateful to the bestower. (242)

In another article titled "The Principle of Women's Employment" (1881), Dussap this time discusses women's attitude towards labour by looking closely at women from upper, middle and lower classes in detail. While accusing the upper class women for being too proud and too occupied by vanity and the middle class for being "captured by the disease of superciliousness" to the extent that she has "not even the freedom to acknowledge her poverty" (454), she also stresses the fact that the "working" of the working class woman is merely because of urgent financial needs for her and her family's survival. Against such an alarming condition of the Armenian woman, Dussap yet never fails to write the way out to female emancipation. In her latter article, she gives one of her formulaic solutions: "Working is motion, motion is progress and progress has no limits" (453). And in the middle, she asks the ultimate question as a means of her training the Armenian female mind: "As a community makes more progress women can find more jobs and if they fulfil the will to work and

elevate, they will desire their freedom more. But does the Armenian woman have the will to work?" (454). In her articles by criticising the fallacies that retain Armenian women, she tries to reveal the hints which could save them from their passivity. Dussap elaborates her theoretical outline of Armenian women's dilemma in her novels through portrayals, discussions, even preaching her mind. Since Dussap aimed to establish the female writing tradition, she believed in the importance of the discussions at a theoretical and thus at an abstract level instead of portraying the daily life of Armenian woman.

Before I start my discussion of the main subject of this study, *Mayda*, I want to comment on her subsequent works that were also written in the *roman à thèse* genre, concentrating on women's issues. In her second novel *Siranoush*, the main love theme between an upper class young girl, an *amira*'s daughter, and a young artist revolves around issues such as forced marriages, the patriarchal society and particularly oppressed women of *amira* families like *Siranoush* and her mother. Still, the protagonist is portrayed as a liberated woman as well as a victim of patriarchal society. In her third and last novel *Araxia or the Governess*, Dussap again questions society, but in a different way. Since Dussap celebrates the new Armenian woman in her novel, the heroine is postulated both in public and private spheres. Although to be a governess is the only choice for the protagonist to get out of her house, *Araxia* the new woman reverses the fact that she should be dependent on her family or clearly on her father by looking after her parents. Thus in the novel, Dussap finds it apt to confine the father figure to home, portraying him as paralysed and "half-dead" male dependent. Her mother with her conventional bourgeois anxieties represents the victimised woman of the old world and traditions. She becomes the embodiment of all the fallacies of Armenian woman Dussap condemns in her articles. Moreover, by bringing an alternative "new woman" to the scene Dussap teaches Armenian woman the ways to survive and eventually be free. While *Siranoush* stands simply as a novel representing all the injustices

imposed upon an upper class woman within a battle of classes, *Araxia* emerges with the possibility of plural readings as is the case with *Mayda*. To mention briefly, first Dussap's *Araxia* proves to be more than adequate to take the old world's stance over. Although she is strictly limited in her choice of a job because the only career she can choose is that of a governess, she still manages to rebel against her mother. Second, on a deeper level of meaning, Dussap playing with the word "governess" subtly implies that the new woman can also be a mixture of several binary oppositions the phallogocentric male world approved of. Accordingly, *Araxia* is both a conscientious girl and a rebel, an intermediary of private and public life, and most significantly the angel and the demon of the house. This last one becomes a central idea when *Araxia* is interpreted as a rewriting of the tale of Snow White. The rewriting is modernised and adapted into the Armenian society. Looking from this viewpoint, firstly *Araxia* succeeded to promote her social class by marrying the son of the house in spite of the obstacles created by the young man's stepmother. Secondly, as the carnival scene (reminiscent of the Bakhtinian version of the 'carnival') at the beginning of the novel could be interpreted as a foreshadowing of the reversal of the power structures, *Araxia* replaces the evil mother-in-law figure at home overcoming her machinations. In short, *Araxia* becomes the embodiment of Dussap's remarks. She wrote: "For instance, when a woman works she feeds by her own labour and never owes anyone anything; therefore, she is completely free to think, to work, to speak without having to yield to outside forces or pressures" ("A Few Words On Women's Unemployment" 243).

What is furthermore noteworthy is the visible similarity between Dussap's stress on woman's labour as a way out to her freedom and Virginia Woolf's reflections in her famous article "*A Room of One's Own*". Both challenge the idea of women being labelled as the weak, inferior sex by men. Srpuhi Dussap stipulates female labour in a large social scale with positive outcomes, declaring that only by working "could she prove to society that woman is

never the morally and mentally weak creature” that man claims her to be. Almost a century later, we hear the echo of that comment in Woolf who puts the formula of “five hundred a year and a room of your own” in order to save women from the male curse of inferiority (347). Numerous things that Woolf discusses had already been discussed and commented upon by the nineteenth century Ottoman-Armenian writer Dussap. Woolf’s “half the human race indeed, are by nature inferior to himself” or “Intellectual freedom depends upon material things” or her famous exemplary scenario of Judith are by all means more elaborate pieces of female discourse. However, these are the reflections expressed by two women who belong to different eras and cultures and it is crucial that both express the indispensibility of economic independence for female freedom, either to be a writer or only to be a free woman. This resemblance mainly stems from their social status since both come from upper middle class and educated families. They are aware of the privileges they had and they fought for the same struggle of how to save women from being an instrument in the hands of the male. When Srpuhi Dussap asks:

What is she if not the property, slave of the husband? Woman is not entitled to undertake, buy or sell unless her husband lets her. She has to listen to her husband’s guidance all the time. If there is any disagreement between the two the man overcomes not because he is right but because of his sex. (“The Principle of Women’s Employment” 456)

By these comments she tries to voice the ancient and permanent dilemma of the female sex with the same stress and anxiety Virginia Woolf bore in the twentieth century.

The last two decades of the nineteenth century hosted both the romantic and realistic movements. They both appeared in the Armenian literary scene firstly because like everything else Armenians did not find it difficult to assimilate both of them, secondly the romantic movement was handled in a different context by them and thirdly there was Dussap who cleverly chose to utilise the romantic style unlike her contemporary male writers.

Romanticism among Armenians was directly connected with the idea of a more acutely developed sense of ethnic identity. Thus the feelings romanticism encouraged were those of a special cultural independence and pride in Ottoman Armenians. Therefore, romanticism never appeared as a reactionary thing against the rational realism as Zekiyan also underpinned. It was the same romanticism that quite differently from the West turned into a means of women's movement. Intellectuals paid their respects to mothers regarding them as the "educator-mother" figure at home. Consequently, the role of mothers were considered to be very important to elevate the cultural standard of Armenians. Such a role necessitated the idea that mothers should be educated in order to educate the next generations. Thus, the education of girls became important and essential. Furthermore, giving Armenian women such a role entailed them to be in the public world. It was these preparatory developments which Dussap smartly used and even contributed to their development with her works. The first (also the surface) level of her use of romanticism lies upon the simple idea of advocating female emancipation and importance of love between two sexes against the common falsity of forced marriages.

Her first novel *Mayda* was, as already stated, not welcomed by the male critics since through *Mayda*, Dussap, for the first time in the strongly patriarchal Armenian society, ventured to portray the Armenian woman as the new woman. What mainly enraged the male authorities was Dussap's advocacy of the free woman. In spite of the fact that Armenian women in Istanbul received the novel with great enthusiasm, Krikor Zohrab, a famous lawyer, minister and the foremost realist writer of the time who advocated the liberal ideas of the western world, found the novel unbearable, asserting that "woman is retained in family and motherhood by nature. Thus she is not supposed to come out to the public world as mediator. Otherwise there will be no difference between the sexes and consequently she will be bound to lose her feminine distinction" (Asadur 136). He once criticised Dussap for writing like a

man as she should have complied with the rule number one that there is female and male ways of writing. Although Dussap writes her most ‘feminine’ piece of work in *Mayda* by both telling and showing, the reason of her being thus labelled comes from Dussap’s extensive use of philosophical discussion in the correspondence of the two women in the novel. Accordingly, a woman writer was not expected to build her writing on the ground of rational talk of the female. Another critic with similar views, Alboyaciyani, cannot help finding her style awkward, claiming that “above all, she was rather serious and failed to represent female sentimentality in her works, which belong to the masculine literature with its content and ideas” (Alboyaciyani 29). At this point, I should also mention another important male critic’s, Arpiaryan’s criticism that Dussap does not know Armenian women since her social daily life was influenced by European ideas. He goes on to claim that for this reason Dussap’s characters give advice and communicate their thoughts throughout pages instead of loving each other (Asadur, 138). She was accused of writing under the influence of western, or more clearly French literature, and was also denounced for not knowing Armenian women well “since our writers in Istanbul during that period were detached from the Armenian villages and they could only represent the lives of Armenians in Istanbul” (Asadur 138).

The satirist Hagop Baronyan, who was commonly known as the ‘Moliere of Armenian literature’ wrote a parody of *Mayda*, calling *Aydam*. Similarly, Baronyan attacks Dussap’s style of narrating Armenian women’s life and misfortunes without giving any substantial daily (and thus realistic) portrayals of herself and society. In his parody, which is a play, Baronyan puts additional characters such as “the critic”, “the ethic” and “the joker” who open the play and frequently interfere in the dialogue of the two women in order to mention the “problem” issues in *Mayda*. Instead of establishing a medium of reconciliation by accepting or rather simply thinking over her works, Baronyan prefers to criticise her for being a woman writer by executing every abstract or occult description of hers in the public scene of the

theatre. Needless to say, his additional characters are all male-oriented reflections. Thus, Baronyan's constant mocking of Mrs. Sira's advice that Mayda should "work" could not exceed the superficial and biased evaluation towards a work written by a woman with a "dangerous mind". Baronyan also attempts to "teach" her how to write while criticising her "flaw" of abstract narration. His character "critic" advises: "Instead of talking as such, Aydam, you should say that "yesterday evening people who used to be regular visitors of our home in my late husband's days passed from under my window and avoided looking up in order not to make a bow" (Baronyan 195). The same attitude of criticism of her surface abstraction that is continuously subjected to mockery and debasement in his play is also shared by Alboyacian in his study. The more fervently directed accusations mainly by Zohrab, Baronyan and Alboyacian could be answered by reminding them of the notion of "woman" as the central issue in her principles, political and philosophical approaches and eventually her novels. When these critics complain that there is no "daily life" described, nor "events of the time" represented, they fail to see that in essence her principle of writing in abstraction bears the aim of talking about "woman" at a philosophical level, instead of talking of women in general or rather particularly on Armenian women in their daily social life.

It is the inevitable outcome of palimpsestic study to reveal the fact that both content and form serve for the ideology of the literary piece. Thus, romanticism was Dussap's conscious choice for her novels because it served her purpose. During her years as a writer, romanticism had already been replaced by realism. Consequently her novels, which were full of romance, were considered outdated and her romanticism was taken as a flaw by her male contemporaries. As a means of her "palimpsestic" reasons, her surface romanticism was simply overlooked by her critics. However, once the careful reader realises the effect of "duplicity" throughout the novel she at the same time notices the fact that *Mayda* is one of the most "realistic" novels written in the Armenian language.

Dussap's choice of epistolary style was another conscious literary enactment on her part as the "witty" woman writer. By the use of epistolary style, she subtly confines the reader's attention only to the "female talk". At this level, the so-called problematic of Dussapian abstraction emerges. As Luce Irigaray's psychoanalytic convictions point out that for the male, the female is thought to be a chaotic being with her fluid, hysterical, obscure characteristics in contrast to his rigid, visible, reasonable entity, the dense female talk presented in *Mayda* becomes an alternative voice to reconstruct these dubious implications. This doubtful quality, clearly called palimpsestic style of writing, forms the essence of *Mayda*. On the surface, the reader simply comes up with the "logically" narrated tragedy and misfortunes of a widow with a daughter. Srpuhi Dussap is first disapproved for her defective choice of sentimentalism the romantic movement suggests, then partly accepted by the same male canon since her narration is, though seemingly, based on female submission and thus regarded as appropriate. It is true that like the form and style of the novel, the contents with its obvious subversiveness was met with harsh male criticism. Yet, it hardly suggests male criticism realised the undertones, her literary wit that succeeded to bury the most dangerous ideas so that it could be handed down to posterity.

Mayda, as an example though a rather early and primitive one of Irigaray's 'le parler femme' (womanspeak) and Gilbert and Gubar's 'twisted', 'double-talk', bears strong palimpsestic qualities. Toril Moi defines Irigaray's 'parler-femme' as something which "emerges spontaneously when women speak together, but disappears again as soon as men are present"¹² (144). Indeed, the narrative (by Mrs Sira and Mayda) inside narrative, the conflict between Mayda and Herika, the evil woman, Mayda's attempts for survival with her

¹² This definition, at a striking level, overlaps with Gilbert and Gubar's definition of the palimpsest as "works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards" (73).

daughter, all of them indicate and revolve around a community of women, and all is made possible by the epistolary form of the novel.

There is almost nowhere in the novel that these women, namely Mayda, Mrs. Sira and Herika avoid enacting “double-talk”. The novel mainly consists of the correspondence between Mrs. Sira and Mayda (only rarely do we come across correspondence between Mayda and the Count, between Herika and Bedros, and at the end between Dikran and Sira). Nevertheless, the novel bears two levels of potents. Mrs Sira, through her letters to Mayda, supplies her with philosophical, intellectual needs, while Mayda’s enactment and also application of Mrs Sira’s credos are materialised by Herika. In short, Mrs. Sira thinks and Herika acts for Mayda. Such a formula reminds one of Greimas’s structuralist theory upon his narratological model. According to the scheme, the object becomes Dikran, the so-called male protagonist. Other components of this scheme “sender” and “receiver” are acted by Mrs. Sira and Mayda respectively. What Sira “sends” and Mayda “receives” is the male “object” Dikran. Accordingly, “helper” and “opponent” have central significance: “helper” Mrs. Sira and “opponent” Herika strive for Mayda’s act of survival. The reason I interpret within Greimas’s model is that they are supposed to act on Mayda’s behalf as she was not supposed to. In other words, Greimas’s model itself turns out to be the surface structure while I aim to go deeper than Greimas who studies the deep structures of the narratives and reveal double deeper structure narrative, as western thought considers woman as the “copy of a copy” since Plato. Back to his scheme of narratives, the “subject” Mayda is supposed to be helped by those women who help her cover what she genuinely thought through codes, cryptic literary craft and so forth. Therefore, it is not surprising that the nineteenth century (or beforehand) is replete with women writers with such designs and being the output of such engaging design, Mayda could also be entitled as the palimpsestic woman.

Having revealed the roles of the characters, I intend to proceed with the next Greimasian concepts of desire and quest, which emerges in Gilbert and Gubar's analysis as the female version of *Pilgrim's Progress* specifically applied for *Jane Eyre*. Putting aside the surface picture of Mayda's unfortunate story, the deeper structure declares that Mayda is a woman who craves for love, passion and freedom only. Moreover, she desires all these without being confined to any sort of male trap, specifically to marriage. Subversive enough for her century, Dussap rightly chooses to tell (or "show" in Booth's term) Mayda's "desire" and her story of quest in "silent" and secure ways of palimpsest. To follow the novel according to the idea of quest, I intend to analyse it mainly in three parts: first beginning and blossoming, second conflict and finally dis-functioning as an ultimate end. Mayda's enactors Mrs. Sira and Herika both bear feminine and masculine qualities, since both reason/logic and action belong to the masculine gender. Mrs Sira writes to her from a Greek island where she stays for the treatment of her illness. Her physical detachment from Mayda throughout the novel, her letters full of philosophic statements as answers to Mayda's casual and more earthly complaints turn her into a godly figure from the first moment. Besides, the fact that she stays on a Greek island reinforces the suggestion of a female philosopher. This feature makes us regard her as a "god" rather than a "goddess" who is reduced to beauty, aesthetics and sexuality in a male-centred context. Sira seems to lack all that "feminine" quality in her words. In the first place, she seems to repeat male thoughts when she reiterates the allegory between light and social patriarchal convictions, prejudices and lies. Irigaray's criticism of Freudian psychology is worth remembering. As very well known, Freud forms the link between male gender and sight while he suffices to schematise the female as the dark continent. This leads us to another common fact that male gaze or his scopophilia worships the concept of light since visibility is the one and only criterion for "truth". Despite the light-male, or sun-male pairing, Mrs Sira never seems to avoid using it in her advice for Mayda.

“Instead of staring at the dark, move your eyes towards another luminous point, since the arch of the future is never doomed to stay in the dark” (16). Or at the end of her second letter, she almost draws Mayda’s definition as a new self: “You are an individual now not a shadow, you are a voice nor an echo, you are the dawn that celebrates the new day. No, you are hardly pitiable” (19). Mrs. Sira’s stratified character firstly informs us of Dussap’s own thoughts about women and how they should act for a possible female emancipation. That is why, it could also be interpreted that Dussap in the disguise of Sira awakens Mayda into being a free woman. Secondly, Mrs Sira as merely a fictional character opens for us the subtext underneath the voice-of-the-Author simplicity. Therefore, on the surface level, her remarks might seem as mere encouragement and distant support of a friend. Nevertheless, she prepares the reader as well as Mayda for the introduction of the new woman’s progress through her authoritative sentences. Indeed, as a god figure her tone sounds almost like a command even in her first letter with which the novel starts. The very first sentence “Death snatched your father, mother and husband from you and became cruel to you, you say” (15) syntactically implies an almost pseudo-omnipotence that she bears in her tone. Learning about Mayda’s past from Mrs. Sira’s letters instead of Mayda’s reinforces once again her godly figure who reports the almost Job-like misfortunes Mayda experiences. Her strict, rather masculine tone proceeds even when she advises her what to do or accuses her of her misdeeds in the past, passivity, slavery within the boundaries of marriage as a just god. In time, the reader of the subtext witnesses the fact that Mrs Sira enacts some “master plan” for her new way of life. But this is done only through language, writing and “delivering”. Before making Mayda restart her new life, Mrs Sira “shows” her the way to avoid the failures of the past. Through the first several correspondences, we learn that Mayda had gotten married at the age of fifteen and had led a life under the wings of marriage “which turned out to be

[your] sole existence” (17). Mrs. Sira’s remarks, which are far from a sentimental approach projects relentlessly through several pages:

How you have existed so far was with your husband only (. . .) .You have always thought and acted according to the social rules and tastes of the society. Have you ever been able to rebel against society while you were supposed to comply with the social expectations?(. . .) You have never had the courage. Your husband became your guide, and the biased world became your school. (18)

Sira also persistently presents formulaic credos after such accusations as components of her master plan: “ Prejudice is injustice, injustice is lie and lying means to spit at the face of truth” (19). The dual pattern of her sentences exists in this last instance as well. While on the surface she suggests Mayda should avoid the vanity which forces women into passivity, underneath, though vaguely, she urges Mayda to seek her own truth by rebelling against the patriarchal society. Sira explains this urge by using an analogy of battlegrounds and soldiers in hopes that Mayda should show her protest against the unjust male-dominated social order. In other words, her employment of such an analogy draws the frame of Sira’s definition of how a free woman should act. In this sense, Sira becomes the mother-god figure who designs an alternative world order for the woman setting off on her quest. Since there is no principle for the concept of quest and since every female quest has its own meaning, Sira the helper/sender guides her not only with her criticism but also with her cryptic support.

On Mayda’s side, the novel begins with her lamentations and continual complaints for her unfortunate fate. That as an orphan and a widow now, Mayda almost begs for Sira’s help reinforces Sira’s mother-god role once more. Mayda’s imploring words when she says “Oh you, my second mother, help me in this bitter life of mine, guide me with your wise counsel” sounds almost like a prayer. It is indeed a prayer of a woman who has lost her way in her quest and thus meaning in life. Either as a mental mother figure, or as a spiritual mother-god, Sira enables her to “get out of the dark, get out of lies” (24). Female as the dark continent (of

Freud's reduction) is put to the shade of palimpsest, still preserving its vague, semi-obscure if not all, appearance of female text.

Mayda as an attentive student of Sira's philosophy shows Sira's influence on her while she reiterates things Sira accused her of in previous letters, which also proves that admitting her faults is the first step of her quest. Sira's advice in her opening letter of the novel to be both a mother and a father to her daughter is now repeated by Mayda. Then under the trance-like influence, she herself narrates her past life and her fault at having existed under the shade of her late husband's wealth and power. Then, the next step is her moving into a new and modest neighbourhood where she can live with her daughter. In the rest of her cathartic letter, Mayda continues to narrate her small though significant achievements for the sake of progress. The reader is informed that, as every Dussapian female protagonist, Mayda is a woman who has received a 'proper' education. From then on, she focuses on her daughter Hulyane's education with the aim of preparing her against the misfortunes life may bring about. Moreover, Mayda starts to teach a few Armenian girls from the neighbourhood the Armenian language and history. Towards the middle of her letter, she mentions the existence of the sea that consoles her *ennui* and mourning during her walks around the quay and the appearance of the moon. These two mediums, the sea and the moon foreshadow the hidden desires that gradually accelerate inside her. Having dual and shaky implications, we can claim that the sea represents Mayda's own feminine identity in turmoil. As the natural mirror that reflects her own identity, Mayda in other words looks for ways she can fulfil herself. However, the moon has a distinct and/but rather more complicated significance. According to the western binary opposition in which female is equated with the passive moon, Mayda's search of solace in the moon reflects her search for an alternative identity within her quest. However, as soon as the eastern symbolism is considered, the situation gains a different version of interpretation. Contrary to the western pairing, the moon symbolises the male and

according to this relation Mrs Sira's constant reference to the sun when she tries to 'enlighten' Mayda ceases to be incoherent. Ironically, Sira turns the western metaphysics of gender upside down and could be said to have constructed the "sun" metaphor for feminine truth instead of its masculine (Western) version. As feminine truth necessitates self-fulfilment, the quest issue becomes ineluctable when she is impeded in her "way" of fulfilling her-self. Therefore, Mayda secretly craves for sexuality, which is one of the requirements of female desire and ultimate quest. Yet, Mayda's desire for her own identity or self overweighs the subject of sexuality, which only becomes a means for her subjectivity. Her thoughts to commit suicide when she confesses "How many times I wanted to throw myself into the waters, wanted to be submerged, get lost and cease to live" is intriguingly linked with the idea of spiritualism which she mentions at the beginning of her letter. Idea of religion and desire to return to God as a reaction are frequently expressed by Mayda throughout the novel. Though there is no remarkable change in her melancholic and pessimistic tone, she says that a recently moved family, the Torkomadunis, are her neighbours now and immediately starts to introduce them. By this introduction, Mayda subtly enters into the inevitable romantic affair with a relative of the family, which was foreshadowed by the sea and the moon imagery.

Sira's answer to Mayda's letter that implies the advent of an affair is significant. She writes : "Why do you choose to torture yourself persistently when the love of your child is inadequate to fill your heart? Your child is a part of you, hence you and she have become an entity together. To satisfy that need in your heart you long for something outside of you" (34). Sira's attitude on love, her advice to Mayda urging her to love freely was unexpected and not welcomed to the time's male writers, who protested and raged against Dussap. Still, Sira stands as the spokeswoman of the 'new philosophy' that a woman should love without restraint, without any compensation or imposition if she desires to be a free human being. Sira indeed represents a Greek godly figure without leaving her earthliness when she warns

Mayda about the fact that religion can reduce her and affect her progress in negative terms. Palimpsestic dual discourse once more reveals that literary styles, structures or even plots that advocate conventional discourse could actually be employed for the ends of feminist discourse. It is generally said that Dussap was influenced by Rousseau and Goethe when she wished to write a novel with romantic qualities. Such information remains in the upper level while the subtext could conclude that Dussap had intentions to write in the romantic style since it facilitates the assertion that woman is an equal being, and therefore she needs the freedom man possesses. When Rowe reminds us of the fact that Dussap used equality that romantic movement evoked in her novels, it also implies that Dussap, completely contradictory to Rousseau's misogynistic stance, turns the male hypothesis upside down and utilises it as a narratological disguise. Victoria Rowe notes:

For Dussap romantic love is connected to goodness and self-development, and she is capable of undermining existing power structures. Because romantic love is a personal emotion, the moral authority of love is located in the soul or self of the individual female character and authority is not located outside of the self but within it. (48)

The introduction of Mrs. Torkomaduni's cousin Dikran becomes the turning point of Mayda's story of desire and quest. The two immediately fall in love with each other; yet, Mayda's description of Dikran's personality causes alarm. Mayda expresses Dikran's tendency towards dictatorship:

His ideas on women are closer to slavery in respect of freedom. Unlike your [Sira's] thoughts on emancipation, he wishes to reduce women by the principle of morals. Hence he tells me that any reform on the issue would mean corruption. According to him, it is thoroughly foolish to let women work freely. Instead, they should leave their work since the fair sex is only apt for her humble private place(. . .) He is a dictator though a lovely dictator (36-37).

This statement is followed by an accident which is unlikely to be acknowledged as such. The immediate symbolic reaction of her female urge is for the first time presented into the

narration. That Mayda accidentally drops her fan, which was once her deceased mother's, and Dikran jumps into the water to pick that up sounds more than just an 'accident' as soon as the subtext is read. Mayda, using her fan which is a maternal weapon in her hands does not actually use that in order to hide the tears on her face from Dikran, but to challenge him by leading him into the depth of the waters, which signifies the female terrain. Sentimentalism with a few tears by either sex is one of the indispensable scenes in romantic literature. Thus, Dussap presents her fragile, sensitive and melancholic protagonist Mayda while she spontaneously portrays her "real" fears of the coming patriarchal execution that is marriage. The same night gives more evidence of her inconsistencies under the theme of the excitement of the woman in love. The most important one among them is revealed through Mayda's overtone in her prayer to God for help at the same night of the incident. She reports her suffering: "It seems to me that my prayer was completely harmonious with the universe and God let me. It was as if I became one with God. I wished to live no more, praying non-stop when suddenly I felt a touch on my shoulder(. . .)" (38). This same motive of escaping to God is a recurrent theme in Mayda's character. When Dikran kneels in front of her, Mayda's reaction to Dikran is compelling: "Trembling and almost hysterical 'Stand up, I said with an imploring voice, 'run away, let me run away'"(38). The surface level presents this scene in its conventional romantic pattern. In contrast, the muted text reveals Mayda's reaction of stepping back from the patriarchal impositions Dikran has started to make.

On the one hand, Mayda never denies her love for him, and on the other she states her hesitations without letting go of her complaining and depressive mood. Mayda's character in hesitation and indecision is a deliberate figuration of the person in bad faith. Mayda seems to comply with the context of the patriarchal definition of femininity though she rebels against the rules by acting passive and weak to flaunt responsibility. Whereas the deeper structure of the romantic text clearly reveals the fact that having been aware of marriage as a social plot of

patriarchy, Mayda is aware of the outcomes of a love affair. In short, Mayda shuttles between loving a man and avoiding marriage. Furthermore, that Dikran is a young man who received his education in Paris, and therefore is expected to be a refined as well as reformed character is parodied through the substructures of Sira's, Mayda's and Herika's letters.

Mayda's gradual indecisive tone reaches its peak in the proposal scene. Mayda experiences the ineluctable scene of the proposal with the terror (an)other woman causes. The following excerpt seems quite reminiscent of Jane Eyre's mysterious narration of Bertha Mason's presence.

When on our last night everyone was asleep and only the moon was awake Dikran came to see me on the quay near our house (. . .) How sublime and deep his voice was when he said: "Mayda, I promise you that neither the earth nor the sky will ever be able to tear us apart" and having said this he put a golden ring on my finger(. . .) I sighed. When we were parting I looked towards Dikran's room and I thought I saw a woman watching us. Oh Lord, how scared I was. No, no, I was not mistaken, and sure enough I saw Herika. "Poor me" I said with fear. When I looked again at the room I saw nothing, as if what I saw had been a mere shadow that had disappeared. (45)

The proposal scene forms the centre of the novel, as the plot is enriched after this scene. Another enrichment is related to Mayda's search for identity, since after this crucial scene her suppressed mind finds a way out through the "Other woman" pattern. The probable gothic tone is suggested beforehand by the existence of the quay. Its nearness to her house implies that the water/fluid/obscure as her complementary has the potential to offer something "unpleasant". It is the 'haunting' appearance of Herika that accelerates the ongoing unpleasant desires to emerge and to become the major motive of the plot. This scene is followed by the pattern through which Mayda and Herika act simultaneously while Herika, who is presumed as the "opponent" evil woman actually becomes her second "helper". If Sira has nurtured her mind with her thoughts as a mother figure, Herika always comes to her help as a sister. It is for this reason that Mayda immediately sees Herika, or more accurately,

wishes to see her when the wedding ring is put on her finger. From that moment onwards, the subplot develops around the central theme of solidarity between these two women while the surface structure only reflects the conflict between these two rivals since the couple's happiness is constantly postponed by the machinations of this evil woman. In more common terms of phallogocentric language, the narration on the surface presents a novel based on angelic vs. demonic acted by Mayda and Herika.

In this context, I intend to draw up a concise survey on the parallels between these two women. What is parallel between them belongs to the hidden terrain of palimpsest. Therefore, although under the text they go hand in hand in perfect harmony, it is the complete opposition between them that the surface of the text chooses to present. According to their classification within the frame of binary opposition, the first thing to be mentioned becomes appearance. Herika's beauty attracts Mayda's attention in almost every incident. In her introduction of the family, Mayda's tone, which is far from envy, is significant when she describes Herika. She writes:

This family consisted of a lady of the house and her two sons, one of whom has delicate health. Thus they had to move here, the Anatolian part of Istanbul because of its wholesome weather. He has an enchanting wife though with imperious beauty. Her beauty moved me though I could hardly bear any sympathy towards her. (33)

After some pages, Mayda continues to talk of her beauty:

And the tall lady, Herika Torkomaduni, is so beautiful that she can be considered as a wonder of nature. Her smooth and white skin, fiery black eyes, dark arched eyebrows intensify her facial beauty, her tall figure. Her beauty could be considered .As for her disposition, I have already noticed she is arrogant and tyrannical. She has made a slave of her husband. He hears with her ears and sees with her eyes. He is a gentle poor soul, who welcomes subordination. Herika is his god. To love and obey her is his religion. (36)

Indeed Herika's beauty is a beauty with extreme confidence and audacity. When Herika criticises Mayda's plain looks in Dikran's presence, she receives an immediate retort from Dikran. He, as Mayda narrates, says that "The greatest wealth for a woman is her virtue" (43). In sum, Herika becomes the epitome of opposition against anything male discourse dictates to women. Her conceited manners, arrogant looks and her celebration of her beauty reinforce her ultimate rebellious character. Herika's existence anywhere in the novel is accompanied by her passionate obsession with her self. She acts as a free woman even though she is married. Hulyane's wedding illustrates her characteristics the best. Before the waltz, Herika wakes Mayda up from the dreamy scene of her daughter's marriage ceremony with "such ferocious eyes that as if [I] were her prey and she were preparing to devour me" (64). During the ball after Hulyane's wedding, Herika's almost passionate waltzing is enchanting even to the female viewer Mayda. Mayda's description of her dance as "she moves as if intoxicated, with accelerated movements (. . .) and when the music died away and when her beautiful bosom heaved and freed her lust you would guess that she was at pain for the brevity of her passion" (64) sounds as if Herika makes her own 'tarantella', which implies the female dance of celebration of her soul, mind and body, instead of appropriately dancing the waltz with a man, which is the proper way. Unlike Mayda's plain looks, Herika's beauty as well as her lust strengthens her free rebellious soul. It is Herika who fulfills her body and sexuality by dancing freely. In spite of Herika's active stance, Mayda only holds a passive enchantment. However, what they have in common is the "gaze". Herika's peremptory looks over her is always mentioned by Mayda's apparently terrified sentences to Sira. Besides, Herika's habit of the gaze, which conventionally and exclusively belongs to the male, is overlooked by the common reader. It seems natural on Herika's part to accomplish such a male habit since she is posited as the evil woman. However, Mayda too is a constant looker onto Herika. But Mayda escapes from the common reader's execution through her

duplicitous strategy of scaring. She ends her letter narrating Hulyane's wedding ceremony with a curious question: "During the wedding ceremony she casts such evil looks at me that she feared me though I did my best to ignore her. What has she got to do with my destiny?"(65). Mayda's plain look, virtue and propriety seem to bear the overtones of a "dead-angel" rather than an angelic figure. In comparison to that, as an evil, rebellious woman, Herika is the embodiment of earthliness. Her name Herika¹³, which means "great" (or wonder) in Turkish, represents once again the buried messages the palimpsestic novel desires to deliver. Herika's greatness stems from her freedom in her every action. Nevertheless, most of what she does is regarded improper and Herika is reduced to a fallen woman and is despised by the surface text. Secondly, Herika as an Armenian woman with a Turkish name fits into the definition of the Other. It is Herika's evil but free stance that makes her a living female figure. Her lust in the subtext is valued since she wishes to love as much as possible and much more importantly be loved and even worshipped as a goddess by men. She is a rather early embodiment of contemporary feminist discourse in many ways. Although she has affairs with men other than her husband, her approach remains the same. Her description as a woman with voluptuous desire in sexuality is genuinely linked with the desire to be unique, simply an individual. The surface impropriety of her audacious stance covers her desire to fulfil herself in every field including sexuality in order to be free and equal with men. Dikran's refusal is met by Herika's vengeance at the surface. In deeper levels, Herika's vengeance is interpreted in another dimension and reveals itself as detestation of artificiality of male convictions and that of love as a masculine strategy of commodity. Thus, Herika plays the goddess by choosing her lovers and treating them as slaves. There are only three pairs of letters between Herika and her recent lover Bedros through which the

¹³ In addition to the signification of Herika's name, her name also emerges as a cleverly hidden feminist cry as Herika can also be regarded as a version of the statement "Herik e.", meaning "(that is) enough!" in Armenian.

reader hears her voice directly. Herika's almost sadistic approach when she daringly demands to be worshipped by men seems compatible with her *femme fatale* stance in the novel. Her autocratic female voice is heard around this sadistic axis:

The beauty I possess hurt many male hearts. Is it a reason for me to love all of them who sighed after me? Neither sigh nor tears could conquer my heart. I want sacrifice. And whoever is ready to sacrifice himself can be sure to govern me (. . .) Many wanted to marry me but my husband won because of his great family name and his wealth. His silent obedience of my unexpected wishes and his forgiveness of my flaws gradually increased my contempt for him. I have been married for six years now and all this time my contempt has increased. It is sure he loves me though his weakness is greater than his love and I am certain that he would have treated any woman he had married in the same way. But I want a singular victim, singular love. I desire the thing which is only sacrificed to me and rejected from others. Finally I desire a heart and an approach like yours. (57-60)

On the other hand, Herika embodies in herself the idea that a woman should be sexually free. Besides, her disrespect for what the society calls "love" has strong relations with her determined and free "feminine" self. Having realised virtue is a "man-made" trap in gender relations she only cares for passion instead of passive romance. Hence, her hatred for Dikran stems not from being rejected and thus imprisoned in shameful frustration, but from her disregard of patriarchal impositions. When Herika narrates to her lover Dikran's rejection, she cannot help belittling his virtue: "Someday, I finally had the nerve to confess my love to him. He coldly reminded me of the fact that he is a relative of my husband and mentioned his gratefulness towards him and what not (. . .)"(60). "What not" clearly signifies her rejection of what patriarchal society calls "proper". Thinking from her point of view, Herika becomes the foremost individual character who thoroughly experiences emotions and sexuality in the novel.

Furthermore, apart from regarding the male as a mere sexual object, Herika manipulates men also for the purpose of female solidarity. "You pine away and waste your life away in vain. I hear nothing and believe in nothing. I demand proof and service/worship.

To love means to be the slave of your love, to obey her, to serve her wishes even the most extraordinary ones (. . .)” (57-58).

The haunting quality of Herika is proceeded by her activating the “evil” plan. Having told her love in the past now she requires vengeance. She writes a conclusion which displays how determinedly her mind works according to her passions in addition to surface appearance of a witch: “ No I did not forgive him but I kept on hoping. But one day when I heard that he loves another woman I started fuming with anger. To belittle me for another. Hence that was the reason of his fake virtue”(60). While the common reader concludes that Herika is solely the victim of her romantic emotions and thus considers her a weak character, the proceeding lines of the letter serves for the female reader’s interpretation of the evil woman’s plotting. She confesses: “I kept my silence, kept their secret, buried my grief into my heart, kept my vengeance still and kept my promise to myself to separate those two hearts who think noone knows about their affair. This man is called Dikran Kntuni and the woman is Mayda. It is high time to act” (60-61). Her passionate remarks exceed the conventional love theme at a deeper level and turns out to be a means for her other ends, such as impeding Dikran from Mayda’s way.

The word *kordzel* (to act) in the novel which is used by both enactors Sira and Herika is the female signifier upon which the essence of the novel is founded. Having two meanings, the signifier is presented to the convenience of the palimpsestic style. The first common meaning, synonymous with “to act, function, perform” naturally grabs the common reader’s attention. On the other hand, the second “hidden” meaning “to weave”, mirroring the system of the palimpsest on the microstructural level, takes the reader to the core of female ideology the novel rests upon. Herika’s intense desire for acting revolves around the marital ring. In this manner, she starts her acting by manipulating the ring that is a patriarchal element of imprisonment for female emancipation. Herika’s penetrated gaze onto the scene of proposal

is significant as her narration with respect to the functions of both “seeing” and “speaking” uncovers another “truth”: “I also saw he took off a ring from her finger and put on another” (60). It is only Herika’s narration that provides the reader through her words that are disturbing, alarming and subversive to the female gaze. Her machination starts when Mayda lends her ring to a girl in death-bed. When the girl who is a friend of Mayda’s daughter takes the ring Herika is also present in the room. Needless to say, Mayda’s inability to reject the ill-stricken girl’s request and giving her the ring especially in Herika’s presence reinforces the seeming “unconscious” though the deceptive rhetorical functions of the palimpsestic style once again. Accordingly, Mayda and Herika together form a conflict against the male action of entanglement. Taking the ring out of the girl’s finger soon after her expected death, Herika activates her machination by getting her new lover/object to take it to Dikran in Paris. Herika’s “time to act” machination has far more significance than that of simply an evil plan. Weave /act is presented as the female way of survival. If writing and his-story is merely restricted within the terrain of man, the ideology of “to weave” emerges as an attempt for a possible her-story, emancipating writing into the female zone. Back to the weaving/action of the novel’s plot, Herika’s “weaving” a new story against Dikran’s is achieved by her male object taking the ring to Paris and claiming that Mayda is an immoral woman who promises to marry any man she meets. Consequently, Herika succeeds to “weave” out of the possible advent of male imprisonment. Synchronically, Sira as her mentor stresses the fact that she should act/weave her own life. When Mayda wrote that she was searching for the lost ring in despair Sira shows how to be reasonable: “calm down, but always act/weave, search” (57). On the one hand, criticising how such objects could manipulate one’s behaviour and victimise us, Sira advises Mayda to be reasonable. On the other hand, Sira’s lesson on being reasonable functions as a subtle parody of patriarchal equivalence of male-reason. According to this, Herika’s narration which uncovers Dikran’s flaw of being “jealous like Othello” proves right

at the end that he lacks reason (61). That Sira urges her to go to Paris immediately after her daughter gets married is another significant step in the female plot since both agree upon the fact that she will be free when Hulyane gets married. By the time Mayda leaves for Paris, Herika's weaving action was already accomplished since Dikran had married a woman in England, where he went after the bad news.

Considering Herika's first "woven" machination was through lying, weaving as a female action also suggests craft (even including witchcraft). As the fundamental indicator of the palimpsestic style of *Mayda*, it furthermore brings the aspect of unreliability of female narration or unauthoritative motives as also seen in *Jane Eyre*, which may easily deceive the reader. However, lying as weaving or vice versa as a narrative style employed underneath actually aims to destroy and uproot the male meaning, interpretation or truth.

Mayda's Paris adventure results in another vital initiation in her story. The Paris chapter, though through her letters, opens up by her fainting in a market-place immediately after she went to Dikran's house and was told that he would be back with his young bride in a couple of days. The act of passing out serves for the romantic effect of sensitive emotions on the surface while her fainting could also be the symbol of awakening and rebirth, which Mayda has been experiencing through manifest and latent motives in the novel. Hence, passing out and the subsequent idea of awakening lead her to meet the Count who looks after her during her vulnerable condition. During her rest both in the Count's mansion and in the city of Paris, Mayda's narration is replaced by the previous depressive and dark 'voice'. Her first step directed into a church after her recovery suggests her former desires to unite with religion in harmony to govern her feelings. Before realising the ceremony Mayda moves away with the spirituality the church effects upon her. The way she explains her feelings are worth mentioning:

It is undeniable that the sacred music affects my wretched soul, because the tune weeps, sobs and sighs. I was so carried away that I heard and saw nothing around

me. It was as if I was elevated and every sign of humanity had turned into vagueness and I was united with God(. . .).(80)

Having witnessed the church ceremony of a woman's taking the veil, she sympathises with the woman and decides to choose religion as her unique aim for the rest of her life. Since the concept of subject is always related to and equated with the male gender, the female is always in an uneven position of search for her entity as a subject. As Toril Moi notes this female deprivation by emphasising Irigaray's theory that mysticism is a medium where the female can fit in with respect to her search of subjecthood. Moi paraphrases Irigaray's theory on the issue: "For Irigaray, mystical discourse is the 'only place in Western history where woman speaks and acts in such a public way'. Mystical imagery stresses the night of the soul: the obscurity and confusion of consciousness, the loss of subjecthood"(136). Such a link clearly reinforces Mayda's escape to religion only through which her subjecthood would avoid nineteenth century morality and patriarchal impediments. Furthermore, Mayda's very tone of spirituality has sexual connotations. As Moi continues with such a quality noting "Touched by the flames of the divine, the mystic's soul is transformed into a fluid stream dissolving all difference. This orgasmic experience eludes the specular rationality of patriarchal logic: the sadistic eye/I must be closed (. . .)"(136). Hence, Mayda's obsessive desire to "unite with God" can be interpreted as both an escape from patriarchy, thus a medium of female emancipation for identity, and also a medium where she can fulfil herself evenly because of the fact that mysticism and female conscious/unconscious both subsume the qualities of fluidity, obscurity and illogicality.

Mayda watches the ceremony of conversion with great sympathy as the woman's hair is cut and she is dressed in black. She proceeds her narration mentioning the effect of peace she was impressed with. She writes: "To give up everything that is earthly, to put a barrier between the past and present and to dedicate myself to God. This was the idea that was

conceived in my mind and I had the immediate intention of acting/weaving” (81). The above mentioned theory introduces itself by Mayda’s desire to become a nun, which is her ultimate escape from patriarchy. Therefore, it is not at all a romantic coincidence as the fictional element or flaw to meet Dikran with his wife in the church. Having just expressed the decision to fulfil herself with religion since no patriarchy would allow her to be a free subject, Mayda’s passing out the moment she sees them in front of her signifies nothing but female fear/anxiety. However, Sira protests against her decision to be a nun and fervently preaches to Mayda the indispensibility of motherhood and freedom even if the risk of female subjecthood is challenging and her desire to be a subject will always be impeded: “Do renounce those decision of yours, do compete, yet be tortured and die if you will have to but die free and remain a mother”(84). The reason Sira urges her to struggle against the hardships of life is profoundly linked with the fact that passivity religion imposes is another way of female reduction, which she considers as a defeat. Sira, as the representative of female wisdom and the feminist of the novel, incessantly stresses that female subjecthood can be constructed only by weaving herstory. Neither Mrs Sira nor the Count who confesses his love for her cannot change her mind. It is Herika, as the “other” feminist/ “activist” of the novel who retains Mayda from her determination of devoting herself to God by another machination that focuses on her motherhood this time. With the help of her lover Bedros, Herika sets out to destroy Mayda by “weaving” slander on her daughter Hulyane and destroy her marriage. Mayda’s letter in which she explains with a solid determination to bring to light the evil plans on her daughter’s marriage is followed by her decision to remain a mother. Subsequent event of the surface structure is the acknowledgment of Herika as a fallen woman. Having been wounded by Herika’s latest lover, a soldier, Bedros confesses everything to Mayda and the rest who hearing the gunshot surround the injured man in the forest. Another muted parody is revealed when Bedros confesses all the machinations Herika planned and eventually declares

that she is the “satan” as if he were completely irresponsible of the evil plan. When Mayda at the end informs that Herika is “sentenced to a long stay in a hospital” (98), it is significant how Sira cannot help expressing her disapproval of Herika’s imprisonment. She openly questions patriarchy :

Who gave them the permission to act freely and the right to oppress a woman because of the freedom man has? Who gave them such a right? Is it nature? I do not think so since the same circumstances, same passions, same virtues and same vices are given to both sexes. Then why on Earth does what man regards right for himself become incorrect and regarded as dishonourable and contemptible when it is related to woman? (99)

Sira’s feminism openly written on the surface for the nineteenth century reader is subtly mocked by the dishonourable attitudes of the male characters. Having realised he was the victim of Herika’s evil designs, Dikran writes a letter of apology to Mayda in which he wishes to be forgiven. However, Dikran’s subsequent letters in which he insists to come and see her in person and beg for her forgiveness ends with the final letter in which this time almost in a victoriously happy tone he declares that his wife died together with her child during childbirth. Dikran’s statement “ Here I am free again and I run to you trampling upon a couple of graves. You are mine, and your ruthless lips will expel me no more. It is not an illusion and you are mine Mayda!”(119) reveals the morality male gender represents. According to the sub-process of the style of the novel, it is not surprising that Mayda informs Sira that Herika fled from the hospital and “her memory becomes a frightful picture of a horrendous ghost who protects me day and night” (116).

Herika’s evil design is subtly weaved through the letters until the climax of the murder. After Mayda’s information that Herika ran away, Sira’s subsequent letters are full of information about a mysterious beautiful woman whom her Muslim neighbour has taken as his second wife. While Herika, under the disguise of a curious neighbour, is informed about

Mayda's situation by Sira, Mayda's nightmares of Herika remarkably signify her female anxiety and the coming of the inevitable marriage with Dikran incessantly reminds her of constant failure of female desire underneath. The first nightmare of all three is already mentioned above with a ghostly appearance. She refers to Herika saying "(. . .)my enemy whose mouth pours forth flames while the radiance of this Dantean hell illuminates me and she threatens him with swords in her hand and a frightful smile on her face. I am petrified" (117). Herika in this passage of Dantean hell is represented as the transcendental ideal woman unlike the traditional interpretation of Herika as an evil woman in hell. Using Dante who is one of the canonic figures of Western literary history is a continuation of subversive female ideology and its primeval deconstruction. In other words, portraying her monstrosity within a patriarchal literary canon on the surface also suggests her transcendence since she also gives up the immanence by abandoning the "angelic". Compatible with the structure of palimpsest, such a female deconstructive act explains feminine herstory which is accomplished by the very utilisation of patriarchal components (a canonic writer). Through this style the female writer achieves both her end of female talk on truth and pretends to take refuge in the male canon against the woman who apparently horrifies her. Eventually, it is Mayda's extant fear/anxiety that turns her into a medusa petrifying at the sight of male threats. The second nightmare is that in which Herika wrestles with Hulyane and screams. In deep structure, Hulyane, as the heir of female tradition needs training by her queen mother and 'stepmother' Herika for the sake of female solidarity. The final nightmare reads "I was sitting next to Dikran looking at him silently in enchantment when suddenly Herika attacked me and stabbed me on my chest. I woke up in terror and called for his help but he was not there"(117). While the first two nightmares are hidden messages for Herika and Hulyane respectively, the final one is subtly related to herself. Female enchanting look upon the male, reminiscent of Gilbert and Gubar's analysis of Snow White's stepmother and her reduction

from the male gaze of the mirror, similarly reduces Mayda into silent immanence. Therefore, she desires to be annihilated on the point she feels to be chained to the 'tradition'. When she "wakes up", which is the symbol of spiritual and physical liberation, Dikran is absent. Unlike the first two nightmares, the third one has not happened yet and therefore, foreshadows the ultimate end of Mayda.

Mayda delivers the good news that "Dikran is hers after all"(120) and their eventual marriage is followed by her gradual illness with coughs and fatigue. For the last time Mayda expresses her fear of seeing Herika again (as surface reason) to Dikran (and the common reader) and Sira (her mother figure) and Herika comes to rescue her. Herika's appearance of "a woman in oriental outfit" signifies her disguise continues to bear the characteristics of an Other both physically and ideologically. Similar to Mayda's final nightmare, Herika comes closer to Mayda to stab her but she is stabbed by Dikran who defends her instead. Thus though at a figurative level, palimpsestic defender Herika seems to make the surface defender Dikran to 'love' her by the sexual intercourse the penetration of the knife offers. On another level, Herika, being murdered by Dikran, rescues Mayda by literally imprisoning him and thus reducing his freedom.

Herika's final evil plan of detaching Dikran from Mayda ends with Herika's own death. It is profoundly symbolic of the fact that her death or absence presupposes the 'death-end' of Mayda's fate as an individual woman and Mayda's ultimate death as well. On the surface structure, *Mayda* appears as a tragic novel which has an unfortunate ending with the heroine's death. Implying the fact that on such circumstances the woman is doomed to die, Dussap leaves the dreams pertaining to the possibility of female quest to her successors. As for Dussap's Mayda, she is finally heard in Dikran's narration, which is the last letter written to Mrs Sira quoting Mayda who says: "If you ever hear a voice in the silent night that whispers to your ear "I love you" make sure that it is my voice which is dead for everyone but will

always be alive for you”(142). On a deeper level, the heroine’s death could be seen as a challenge against patriarchal impositions instead of a defeat. Thus, the novel becomes the indicator of how/why female subjectivity (or female Bildungsroman) could not be accomplished. While she is forced to remain a “dead angel”, still her whisper of love suggesting any kind of death (symbolic or literal) becomes her answer for resisting the law of patriarchy. For this reason, the word ‘end’ could be either interpreted as a tragic ending or the heroine’s determined dis-functioning against the patriarchal impediment of female subjecthood as a feminist end.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The mythic pattern is the basic level on which both novels rely upon structurally. In other words, the analysis of this particular myth provides a plot structure for both novels in terms of feminist discourse. Then, the style of palimpsest follows and elaborates the same discourse through several devices. Therefore, I intend to display other similarities and distinctions between the two novels this style includes.

Both Jane Eyre and Mayda are orphans who experience exclusion though in different degrees. Thus, although a father figure is absent from the start, both heroines suffer from patriarchal figures. As for the loss of the mother, both find surrogates for their guidance and survival. However, beyond the pain of their exclusion within the social stance of orphanhood, there rests a medium for individualism. In other words, although they seem to be anxious (Mayda) or angry (Jane) for the constant exclusion they undergo in society, it is actually the impediments on the way of their quests that make them feel restless and furious. Both female reactions are supported and consolidated by the doubles they are provided with. The structure never differs: the doubles enact things that both heroines are not supposed to do. However, Jane's relation with her double does not possess the unitariness of Mayda, who only acts in accordance with Herika. The multiplicity in *Jane Eyre* stems from the fact that the female community in the novel consists of more than two women unlike *Mayda*. In other words, in every step Jane encounters pairs of women who show her what to do or not to do. Even Jane's most important double, Bertha, who is the only one that conforms with the rule of acting for the heroine, is introduced into the same pattern of pair, namely with Grace Poole. Both heroines are plain and never strive to better their appearances. However, the main doubles are portrayed by inexorably sensual, exotic and even wild beauties, like the

monstrous Bertha or satanic Herika. Both demonic women have the effect of petrification upon the heroines either through their voices (Bertha's) or appearances (Herika's). Apart from the main helpers, who are disguised as troublesome "opponents", other helpers in both novels provide the essential maternity heroines need. Although what these maternal figures provide seems to be just maternal love and compassion at the surface, it has on the contrary a lot to do with a special education or initiation the heroine should receive for her development and struggles. Exemplifying it, Miss Temple and Helen Burns teach Jane how to tell/narrate her story and even "lie" about it. They show the ways to take the "pen" from male hands for the purpose of "weaving" her story. As for Mayda, she is constantly reminded to work and to act, which is particularly used for its pun in Armenian and conceals the message: "Weave Mayda!". Both heroines disgust and reject their doubles instead of arranging a relationship based on solidarity and the palimpsest underneath reverses the appearance in a way that solidarity becomes the actual bond between doubles and heroines while the rejection is in both cases projected towards men. Last but not least, poverty is another common issue that are similarly shaped by both heroines. Mayda never complains about her modest life after losing her parents and husband and therefore her understanding of destitution likens to Jane's attitude of poverty. Jane equates poverty with degradation (18) and her chiding Hannah the housekeeper of Rivers' house on the subject saying "Some of the best people that ever lived have been as destitute as I am; and if you are a Christian, you ought not to consider poverty a crime" (326) is strikingly similar to Dussap's notion of poverty which she fervently criticises in her articles as well as her novels.

Stylistically, the structures of both novels are at odds since *Mayda* is an epistolary novel while *Jane Eyre* uses first person narration and an attempt at the novel as a female Bildungsroman. Although the distinction is clear-cut, there is an intrinsic parallel between the two types of narration. That is, although Mayda's discourse – openly as well as covertly- is

posited upon the epistolary, still as a whole the novel suggests how it cannot be a Bildungsroman, or, in other words, exemplifies how/why the Armenian woman cannot have or gain a voice, a story, an identity, an authorship on/of her own. On the contrary, Brontë is said to have attempted to write a novel in the epistolary style, in hopes that she could allude to Richardson's *Pamela* but eventually her failure made her write in the first person. Her use of "Reader" ceases to serve conventional narrative rules and functions as a substitute form of epistolarity. Thus, mirror reflections of both novels' styles overlap each other in a reversal that the reader of palimpsest is much accustomed to.

Proceeding with the two plots, we can argue that they are by all means contrasted to each other, since *Jane Eyre* tells her own story of how she received her voice while *Mayda* tells, through her letters she wrote and received, her story that although her helpers worked for her victory and freedom she has no choice but death as the indispensable ending. Hence, both endings could be said to be the most differing points in plot structure. Remembering Patricia Ingham's analysis of Victorian novels through signs and narrative syntaxes, meaning patriarchal notions and plot structure respectively, it is possible to apply the same pattern for *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda*. Such a structuration reveals that although both novels advocate the same feminist ends and discourse *Mayda* rests upon a predicate (to 'weave') due to its simple and unitary plot. However, *Jane Eyre*'s structural palimpsestic level is miniaturised into a sentence form: "I look, I see, I weave" (derived from Woolf's example). There are surprising similarities of these explicitly different structured plots. Above all, both novels, however different plots they present, are narratives roughly proceeding over identical steps: each heroine starts a quest after a cruel or destructive event, then a female community teaches them how to handle the "Until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent" rule (1). In other words, they train the heroine's voice and her notion of palimpsest. The heroine either wins the fight, like Jane does, or leaves the battlefield, like Mayda.

There are also similar scenes in both novels. For example, in both novels there is a scene in which men are threatened by women's use of the water element. Jane Eyre "baptised the couch afresh, and, by God's aid, succeeded in extinguishing the flames which were devouring it" (139). "It", as her object of desire, had to be endangered by her "opponent" Bertha and rescued by the angelic heroine. Similarly, Mayda almost drowns Dikran by "accidentally" dropping her fan into the sea. Another one of the most conspicuous elements is the emergence of the evil woman which has a haunting quality. Jane Eyre questions Mrs Fairfax about possible ghosts in the manor, and in the whole of the Thornfield chapter, Jane is indeed haunted by the "ghostly" figure of Bertha Mason the madwoman whenever she needs her. Similarly, Mayda's realisation of Herika's witnessing the marriage proposal of Dikran is more than a coincidence, an intentional or "wishful"-thinking of her cry for help. In addition to that, Herika's fierce and furious gaze does more than horrify Mayda as if she has seen a "ghost". The gaze is another common characteristic in both novels since both writers present the gaze mainly through the females. In *Mayda*, it exclusively belongs to the Mayda-Herika pair. The mutual use of gaze is restricted by the two and thus almost turns into a silent language between both women that could only be deciphered in palimpsest. Jane Eyre uses the gaze as well but only for her authorship. In this sense, Jane's almost obsessive gaze upon Blanche Ingram is very much the same gaze of Mayda that is pointed upon Herika. Blanche's pride and beauty enchant Jane's eyes in the same way Herika's perfection and rebellious existence enchant Mayda. Apart from the female gaze, the laugh of the mad/bad woman is the other significant theme common in both novels. As mentioned earlier, transformation from Temple and Helen Burn's subdued smiles to subversive and defiant maddening laughs of Bertha becomes one of the linguistic signs of palimpsest as female discourse. The equivalent of Bertha's disturbing laughs appears through Mayda's nightmare at the end of the

novel in which Herika “threatens him [Dikran] with swords in her hand and a frightful smile on her face” (117).

Another similarity is the fact that both heroines faint only when they suggest a change, an escape, a new move toward a beginning. Strikingly, the “secondary man”, St. John and the Count as the rivals appear after the incidents of passing out. Furthermore, these two men bear other similarities as well: both are passionate personalities and yet contradictory statements are exclusive to them. Both Jane Eyre and Mayda at one point realise that they are not truly loved but in danger to be turned into objects for male ends. Jane Eyre would go with St. John without marrying him but she realises his missionary idea of converting Indians into Christianity will suffocate her identity and mind since he only wishes her to join him as his wife for the purpose of using her for his “service”. In short, she would be worse than a fallen woman by obeying St John as it would mean to become the “slave of the slave”, which is another version of patriarchy’s conviction of woman as the “copy of the copy”. Mayda also chooses not to fall in love with the Count when she realises that she is loved because of her resemblance to the girl he loved desperately and lost. Mayda perceives from his narration that their union would be fake since he only looks for a substitute, a mere copy of his dead love. Like St John, the Count chooses to go east for missionary purposes, when like Jane’s intentional hearing of Rochester’s cry, Mayda finds a way out – or nudges the reader of the palimpsest- by getting gradually ill.

Ending the novel in male voice is common in both novels since the surface text has to pay tribute to patriarchy. By quoting St. John at the end of her story, Jane actually takes her revenge as Carolyn Williams notes, by quoting “these last words of the book about last things, which is itself the last book of the Book of Books- this is having the last word, with a vengeance” (80). In other words, the ending voice seems to be a man’s, but in fact quoting from the Revelation Jane shows that after the judgement day Thornfield experienced Jane,

reminiscent of Christ in Revelation, returns to Rochester and “idyllic life in their new home” (Sternlieb 22). However, in *Mayda* the last letter, and naturally the last voice belongs to Dikran, who informs Sira about Mayda’s death. Although Dussap’s ulterior design is similar to Brontë’s, her way of mocking patriarchy is different. Dikran could talk/write only when Mayda is absent or in other words only when she refuses to live according to men and she dies.

Both novels appear as romances with various other styles and devices. However, “determined refusal of the romantic” is what they hide between the lines since they seem to tell/write romantic pieces but actually show/write their rejections and uncompromising voices underneath (Rich 94). What they celebrate is the subversiveness under the protective loom of the palimpsest. Or to close with Beauvoir “ ‘all knowledge of fate comes from the female depths; none of the surface powers knows it. Whoever wants to know about Fate must go down to the woman’ meaning the Great Mother, the Weaver Woman who weaves ‘the world tapestry out of genesis and demise’ in her cave of power” [qtd. in Gilbert and Gubar 95]. So, here we have two female stories: Jane’s of genesis and Mayda’s of demise.

AFTERWORD

Both *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda* could paradigmatically be grounded on the interpretive terrain of the myth of Arachne. The tale of Arachne is the model pattern for these novels in terms of gender politics that the style of palimpsest uncovers. The mythic tale of Arachne is a story based on thread/threat, the first at the surface while the second underneath it, functioning against patriarchy. Thereby, male authorship and his right for pen is destroyed by this new alternative of female writing. To clear it up, if male authorship and therefore, existence are accomplished by the equivalence between male genital and the pen, then female has the loom, which is equated with pen and paper, and the tapestry, that is the text for the right to create her-story and thus identity.

The reason this study is concluded with a discussion of a particular myth and its discourse is because both *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda* share the same mythic paradigm circling the feminist discourse they advocate. With the conflation of the mythic pattern the palimpsestic style reaches a clearer understanding and the celebration of female writing can thus be acknowledged.

It is a known fact that myths, like tales, are subjected to patriarchal manipulation and consequently utilised for the victimisation of woman as the Other by its discourse. Arachne's myth forms no exception and hence serves for the patriarchal order of the world. In this manner, patriarchal attitude and interference into the text reminds us of the rules palimpsest works with. In other words, having been patriarchal weapons, the mythic realm of discourse are the very works of male-oriented palimpsest. Although masculine type is characteristically based on tyrannically subduing the female, the feminine palimpsest mainly works for the sake of constructing her speech securely. Against such a male trap, the female writer/reader has nothing to do but "look" underneath the text, and act which is followed by "see"ing and "unfold"ing. This last attempt is also known as telling or narrating. Secondly, the female act

of “unfold”ing the masculine palimpsest is also closely connected with the signification of the myth of Arachne. Yet, paradoxically, this particular myth “knits”/narrates woman’s authorship of herself while it simultaneously “unfolds” the masculine level. Last but not least, the masculine two-levels of narration unalterably circle around the aspect of visibility. In other words, what is told and shown are both posited on the surface level by the male writer – the microcosm of Western metaphysics- who fails to go deeper and into dark obscure lines and levels. The female writer/reader, on the other hand, is free to disseminate into various levels, and she manages her surface propriety while burying her authority in darkness. Referring to Gilbert and Gubar, she fights against the “anxiety of authorship” while simultaneously “schizophrenising” her sense of reality for the sham and true society of readers.

To give a brief account of the myth: Arachne’s gift of weaving is challenged by the goddess Athena, the patron of the art of weaving. Arachne offends the goddess by undermining her, and continues to defy her in spite of her warnings. This results in a weaving competition between the two. While Athena weaves the scene in which she shows Poseidon and herself with an olive tree, Arachne prefers to picture Zeus’s infidelities in her tapestry. Outraged by her disrespectful choice of subject, Athena destroys Arachne’s tapestry and loom, a fact which drives the young girl to suicide. Then Athena takes pity on her and does not let her die; instead she turns her into a spider which only weaves webs instead of weaving on looms. Changing Arachne into a spider is the way Athena takes her revenge.

In the interpretation of the myth of Arachne, one finds out striking similarities with the style of palimpsest and the psychology of the woman writer. In *Speculum*, Irigaray argues that woman is “the other of the same” through numerous patriarchal –phallogocentric-psychoanalytic structures. She analyses the truth linking it with the concept of castration. Deconstructing Nietzsche’s critique of truth, she concludes that “Truth depends upon the

“other of the same”, on the “naturalisation” and therefore surreptitious incorporation of what is supposed to be excluded” (Whitford 114). The final conclusion that “the symbolic is completely inadequate for representing the woman” (118) is displayed through the myth of Athena. For Irigaray, Athena represents the patriarchal woman as, first of all, she is born from Zeus’s head instead of a woman’s womb; therefore she is born as a “father’s daughter”. Secondly, Irigaray postulates Athena as the “other of the same” relating the head of Medusa on her shield with male’s fear of castration. In this manner, Athena the woman becomes the very object of male symbolic level since “it is his fears that he turns away from and projects on to woman” (115) and woman is eventually turned into the representative of death. Since death signifies “the other of the other”, by embodying it through “woman”, male sets out to govern both “the other of the same”/woman and “the other of the other”/death. All in all, it is the woman who is twice reduced to nothingness while the male strives to master his fears of castration/death over her.

With the elaboration of Irigaray’s interpretation of goddess Athena as the conventional woman with respect to full patriarchal exploitation of woman, Arachne’s myth becomes easier to decipher. We see that the rivalry of Arachne and Athena over the talent of “weaving” is, though at a more symbolic level, synonymous with the battle between the angelic and the demonic. A competition of weaving between two oppositional women is above all a most engaging issue since the act of writing/weaving a text/tapestry by two different female threads collide in conflict. The goddess figure, as the name suggests, draws the parallel that patriarchy looks on the proper traditional woman as someone who deserves to be on a pedestal, be treated as a “goddess” or as an angel –dead or alive or as a supernatural being. As it is expected, her loom never fails to tell and show the glorification of her agents. Unlike her, Arachne’s threads turned out to be “threats” since she blatantly mocks and humiliates Athena’s realm on the whole. Such an act not only elevates her as the advocator of truth –in

terms of feminism- and the critic of man but also promotes her to the authorship she yearns. Athene's use of her power for the destruction of such subversiveness represents her firm stance as the advocator of patriarchal convictions. The angelic woman is never expected to subvert the existent male order. However, the end of the story does not glorify the patriarchal order since Athena the goddess brings Arachne back to life. Turning Arachne into a spider instead of a woman is the only way for the "father's daughter" to let the demonic woman continue to weave/narrate female secrets, fears, hatred and anger. The cobwebs, consequently, represent the medium of palimpsestic deeper structures unlike the tapestries, the texts which are –and must be !- under male domination.

The apparent rivalry and opposition between Athena and Arachne are embodied in the form of the writer/narrator in both *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda*. In this manner, apart from providing clues for the two texts within the mythic level, the pattern that the myth suggests, both with manifest and latent structures, Charlotte Brontë and Srpuhi Dussap are also analysed as cautious writers. In other words, the mythic paradigm answers the questions how and why a woman writer needs to be a palimpsestic writer, how a palimpsestic work of a woman functions, or how must the palimpsestic writer tell her own truth? Palimpsest thus could be interpreted as the grammar of female plots and narrations as seen in *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda*.

On a level of phrases, *Jane Eyre* is literally too filled with relevant words of the myth. Namely, knitting and sewing are present almost everywhere in the novel. Apart from being one of the most conventional activities of Victorian women, knitting and sewing of particular women in the novel reinforce what this dissertation advocates. It is significant that Jane learns about the facts and truth of her past and parents eavasdropping on Bessie and Abbot while they are knitting. Servants, as inferior as Arachne in terms of class, hold the hidden truths that are uncovered during the action of knitting. Intriguingly, there seems to be a

distinction between knitting and sewing in terms of the degrees of authorial power of each woman. In this sense, although both activities have phallic connotations, knitting holds a rather passive role of narrating; however sewing refers to dominant and assertive female impulses on truth-telling. Accordingly, Mrs. Fairfax occupies herself with knitting and yet it is not coincidental that her particular activity fits in the passive qualifications of her deafness and inability of narrating events. Hannah, the servant in Rivers's home, also knits and indeed holds a passive position in the place. On the other hand, there are women like Grace Poole who, as Jane notes, "she sat and sewed- as companionless as a prisoner in his dungeon" (153). Such an observation reinforces the idea that there is more potential danger in the activity of sewing, which matches with subversiveness and brings on exclusion like Arachne's. It is obvious that needlework as a female pursuit is much more threatening for the male as it implies strong phallic assertion of the female. Similar needling activity with perilous connotations is also familiar with Rosemary Oliver, the girl St. John falls in love with. Jane's observation that "she knew her power" accordingly implies that she can use her beauty competently for the use of manipulating men. In other words, sewing as a female activity turns out to be synonymous with female power of overcoming men by using female crafts such as appearances like Rosemary does. As for Bertha Mason, her dwelling instead of her activity, namely the third floor is narrated by Jane with the help of allusions of spider and weaving: "I saw a room I remembered to have seen before, the day Mrs. Fairfax showed me over the house: it was hung with tapestry; but the tapestry was now looped up in one part, and there was a door apparent, which had been concealed" (196).

When Jane is told to look after the attacked Mr. Mason on the third floor, her thoughts about the place is again proceeded over the imagery of spider: "And this man I bent over-this commonplace, quite stranger- how had he become involved in the web of horror?" (198). It is not a coincidence once again that while Bertha's third floor represents Jane's restless mind, its

portrayal with tapestry and webs also reinforces Bronte/Jane's obscure approval of the emergence of female discordance. Lastly, the activity of walking is the spider imagery on behalf of Jane's restless and upset female mind. Her statement saying "restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes. Then my sole relief was to walk along the corridor of the third story, backwards and forwards" (101) is strikingly reminiscent of subdued woman/spider Arachne as the activity of walking back and forth is directly equated with "weaving" the -third- story.

In *Mayda* also, the verb "to weave" is posited so crucially that the novel's content and form rest on the very same predicate. As in *Jane Eyre*, the predicate form of the myth in *Mayda* points to the heroine's desperate yearning for action and Herika's help for constructing their text/tapestry. Under the light of Irigaray's interpretation of "truth", the employment of the mythic tale within the literary frame of *Jane Eyre* and *Mayda* elucidates the efficiency of the palimpsestic style. The patriarchal woman or father's daughter is the only alternative for the woman in order to appear, or more precisely to be visible in male discourse, history, or "truth". In the patriarchal surface text, *Mayda* fulfills or seems to fulfill her role likewise. Although Sira and Herika emerge as two "Arachne" figures who are acknowledged as outcast or fallen, it is Herika who accomplishes the role of Arachne through her defiant character. While *Mayda* hardly becomes a "threat" since she does not rebel against patriarchal requirements, Herika goes on with weaving her "thread" for herself and her double, *Mayda*. Remembering Herika's liberating dance, it is worth mentioning that quite like the death dance of the wicked queen of the tale of Snow White analysed by Gilbert and Gubar, Herika constantly informs her potential of "too much of storytelling" and eventually does her death dance against Dikran (55). The style of palimpsest reveals that female doubles are nothing but patriarchal trap through binary opposition. In other words, what is seen as double on the surface is actually sisterhood in the buried text. Solidarity ventures to weave female stories, her-story for the sake of truth even if the patriarchal rules force to weave spider webs.

APPENDIX
SUMMARY OF *MAYDA*

Mayda is the story of a young widow whose life becomes problematic after the death of her husband and her parents. Mayda, who has no money and has a young daughter to raise, writes about her problems to an older friend, Mrs. Sira, who lives in Corfu because of health reasons and throughout the novel acts as her mentor. Mrs. Sira criticizes Mayda's past in her married life Mayda had devoted herself totally to her husband. She blames her for having given up her identity, and having accepted as natural the social prejudices that her husband's societal rules imposed on her.

Mayda starts to live a new modest life. Her consolations in life are her daughter Hulyane, the small group of students to whom she gives history and language lessons, and her faith in God. She soon meets her neighbors, the Torkomaduni family with whom she starts to socialize. Mrs. Torkomaduni lives with her two sons, one of whom is married to a woman called Herika. Herika, from the first moment takes Mayda as a potential rival, and with her unfriendly behavior intimidates her.

Mayda meets Mrs. Torkomaduni's cousin Dikran who comes from Paris and soon the two fall in love. When she writes about him, Mrs. Sira encourages Mayda to love freely although she criticizes the inequality between the sexes. Before returning to Paris, Dikran proposes and gives Mayda a ring. On that same night, Herika witnesses the incident and decides to take revenge since she once had loved Dikran but he had turned her down, reminding her that she was married.

In the meantime, Mayda's daughter Hulyane and Mrs. Torkomaduni's younger son Levon have also fallen in love, and Mayda makes plans of marrying her daughter to Levon and then going to Paris to marry Dikran and live there. Hulyane's close friend Hranoush, who is in her deathbed, admires Mayda's ring and Mayda cannot refuse her wish to wear the ring for a short time. The incident of the ring is also witnessed by Herika. The sick girl's father Bedros is

one of her countless lovers, a fact which enables Herika to get hold of the ring as soon as the girl dies, planning to use it as her instrument of revenge. Bedros, who has become a real slave of Herika's, is ready to do anything she tells her to in order to win her love. Herika sends him to Paris, to find Dikran and tell him that Bedros himself is Mayda's lover and that she has given the ring to him as a token of love after Dikran left. The plan works out and the disappointed Dikran leaves Paris, goes to England, coming back married to another woman.

In the meantime Mayda's daughter gets married and Mayda goes to Paris to start a life with Dikran but she can not find him, and instead she receives the news of his marriage. Upon receiving the terrible news she faints, and when she wakes up, she finds herself being looked after by a French Count. Mayda and the Count establish a friendship while Mayda recovers in his home. The Count falls in love with her but she tells him of her love for Dikran, saying that she could love him only as a brother.

After her recovery she goes out for a walk, and she enters a church where she witnesses a ceremony held for a woman who is becoming a nun. She is emotionally stricken by the ceremony when suddenly she hears Dikran's voice. When she realizes that Dikran is there, visiting the church with his wife she faints for the second time in the course of the novel.

Mayda returns to Istanbul determined to live the rest of her life in a monastery, although everyone tries to change her mind. In the meantime, Herika plays a trick on Hulyane, making her husband Levon believe that she has a lover. When Mayda realizes that her daughter's troubles are caused by Herika she gives up the idea of going into a monastery and devotes herself to saving Hulyane's marriage. A serious fight between two of Herika's lovers, which results in the death of one, finally starts to bring out into the open some of Herika's evil deeds and Herika is dismissed from her husband's house and put into a hospital, an act that is heavily criticized by Mrs. Sira who believes that although she is evil as a human being Herika has her right to freedom.

In the meantime the Count visits Istanbul, is shown around the city by Mayda, then goes abroad as a missionary. Dikran, whose wife has died in childbirth and who has learned the truth asks for Mayda's forgiveness, comes to Istanbul, and the two finally get married. But meanwhile Mayda has gotten ill and her illness gradually becomes more serious. One day when Dikran and Mayda are taking a walk by the seaside Herika, who has run away from the hospital, attacks them and tries to stab Mayda, but Dikran tries to stop her and during the struggle he kills Herika. In the end, Dikran is put into prison and soon after Mayda dies.

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