

THE PROBLEM OF OTHERNESS IN *IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY* BY
J.M. COETZEE, *NIGHT LESSONS* BY LATİFE TEKİN AND
LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING BY JEANETTE WINTERSON

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ABSTRACT

THE PROBLEM OF OTHERNESS IN *IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY* BY
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Deploying some specific Kristevan theories such as the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* bases of language, *melancholia*, *abjection* and being a stranger, this thesis argues that J.M.Coetzee in *In the Heart of the Country*, Latife Tekin in *Night Lessons* and Jeanette Winterson in *Lighthousekeeping* bring a new perspective to the problem of otherness by eradicating the binary opposition between self and other, which renders their political stance very forceful. *In the Heart of the Country* demonstrates that the other is within the subject in the form of the *abject* and unless the *abject* is sublimated, the subject cannot come to terms with her self-isolation. Coetzee shows that a new discourse is necessary if one needs to get rid of the deep-rooted binary oppositions. *Night Lessons* is the sublimation of the pre-Oedipal Narcissistic union with the maternal other. It is analyzed through the female narrator's relationship with her mother in the light of Kristevan *abject* and *semiotic* signification. Tekin shatters the subject/object opposition by creating her own textual style which fuses fact and fiction. The political criticism is not given directly but embedded in the mother-daughter relationship. *Lighthousekeeping* is studied by underlining the transformation of *abjection* into positive signification and the negative effect of *melancholia*. Winterson

manifests her political perspective very explicitly and broadens the queer political perspective without risking it being downplayed into a totalizing metanarrative.

Keywords: Julia Kristeva, abject, the semiotic, the symbolic, melancholia

ÖZ

J.M. COETZEE’NİN *IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY*, LATİFE TEKİN’İN
GECE DERSLERİ VE JEANETTE WINTERSON’IN *LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING*
ROMANLARINDAKİ ÖTEKİLİK PROBLEMİ

Bulut, Bilge

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Bu çalışma Kristeva’nın dilin semiyotik ve sembolik salınımları, melankoli, iğrençlik ve yabancı olma teorilerinden yararlanarak J.M. Coetzee’nin *In the Heart of the Country*, Latife Tekin’in *Gece Dersleri* ve Jeanette Winterson’ın *Lighthousekeeping* romanlarının ben ve öteki arasındaki ikili karşıtlığı yok ederek ötekilik problemine yeni bir bakış açısı getirdiğini ve bu bakış açısının bahsedilen yazarların politik duruşunu çok güçlü bir şekilde ortaya koyduğunu savunmaktadır. *In the Heart of the Country* öteki denilen ögenin kişide iğrenç (*abjekt*) şeklinde bulunduğunu ve bu iğrençliğin yüceltilmediği sürece bireyin kendi soyutlanmışlık halini kabullenemeyeceğini göstermektedir. Coetzee kökleşmiş ikili karşıtlıklardan kurtulmak için yeni bir söylemin gerekli olduğunu göstermektedir. *Gece Dersleri* romanı anne ile olan Ödip Öncesi narsist birleşmenin yüceltilmiş halidir. Bu bölüm anlatıcının annesi ile olan ilişkisini Kristeva’nın iğrençlik ve semiyotik anlamlaması ışığında incelemektedir. Tekin özne ve nesne karşıtlığını gerçek ve kurmacayı birleştiren kendine özgü yazımsal tarzı ile yıkmaktadır. Romandaki politik eleştiri doğrudan gösterilmemiş, anne-kız ilişkisi içinde romana yedirilmiştir. *Lighthousekeeping* romanı iğrenç olanın pozitif anlamlamaya dönüşme sürecini ve

melankolinin olumsuz etkisini gözler önüne sermektedir. Winterson kuir politik bakış açısını toptancı bir üst anlatıya indirgemedi genişletmiştir ve kendi politik bakış açısını belirgin hale getirmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Julia Kristeva, iğrençlik, semiyotik, sembolik, melankoli

To my niece Güneş

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1.The Aim of the Study

This study aims to analyze J.M Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), Latife Tekin's *Night Lessons* (1986) and Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* (2004) in terms of their approaches to the question of the other by the theories of Julia Kristeva. The theoretical background of the thesis will be based on Kristeva's concepts of the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*, *abjection*, *melancholia* and being a stranger. The questions related to the problem of otherness have received considerable critical attention in a wide range of fields. Literature is one of the fields where this problem is foregrounded especially in the novels where social and political upheavals mark the distinction between the groups of people who consider themselves as belonging to a collective unity and outcast some people as the Others¹. Coetzee tackles the opposition between self and Other within the frame of colonialism and racism in South African apartheid. Tekin dwells on the political turmoil of the period before and after the 1980s in Turkey, the time when the 12th September 1980 military *coup* broke down the normal functioning of social order. Winterson deals with the otherness problem in terms of gender construction, queer and uncanny. The common ground among these three novels is that all of them register a novel approach to the problem of otherness and they all bring the maternal other into being through a subversive act of writing notwithstanding the differences of contexts and the eras they were written in. All the writers use literature as a means to narrow down the gap between the subject and the object, thereby rendering the constructed nature of the subject and object visible. The

¹ To avoid confusion, I will be referring to the *semiotic* maternal other as other ("o" in lower case) and the *symbolic* other as Other ("O" in upper case) in this thesis.

other common thread of these writers is that all of them have been exposed to harsh criticism owing to their peculiar writing styles and not writing politically and realistically enough. As a rebuttal to this point, in this study, I put forward the claim that all these novels are quite revolutionary because they go beyond the borders of self/other binary by the dialectic between the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language opening a place for the *abject* to be sublimated. Therefore, they carry the question of realism and political consciousness to another realm by going beyond the dualistic structure of language and self/other opposition.

This study draws on Kristeva's theories on the *semiotic*, *symbolic*, *abject*, *melancholia* and being a stranger. Her focus on the interconnection between language and body challenges the traditional view of writing by opening up a new space in writing where the *semiotic* discourse unravels the poetic dimension of language. The *semiotic* disrupts the syntactical linearity of language. French feminism in general is interested in writing the body and the psychological background it draws on foregrounds the maternal body and the pre-Oedipal identification with the mother or maternal body. The inscription of the body in writing takes its root from the realm where the archaic connection between mother and child energizes the speech of the subject and the subordination of the body to the mind is refuted. The characters' identification with the maternal body in the novels reveals how the signification process can be altered and how this alteration enables them to overcome the hegemony of all systems and discourses. This thesis uses Kristeva's theories on language while exploring the third space between subject and object. Kristeva has produced a large number of theories starting from the 1960s to the present. This study will benefit from her studies by focusing on her theories on poetic language in the 1960s, the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* bases of signification she introduced in the 1970s, her theories on horror, love and melancholy in the 1980s and the psychic problems individuals encounter due to the lack of a *semiotic* dimension in their speeches which took place in the books of Kristeva published after the 1980s. The primary sources to be focused on by Kristeva are *Desire in Language* (1980), *Powers of Horror* (1982), *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), *Tales of Love* (1987) and *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991).

As these writers' preoccupation is to transgress the *symbolic* structure of language in which the self and other opposition cannot be broken, their writing style becomes revolutionary. What I mean by revolutionary draws on Kristevan terminology. The *semiotic* can be transgressive and disruptive because the *semiotic* bursts open the *symbolic* base of language by bringing the body to the foreground. When body and language are aligned, the discourse gets a subversive force. Kristeva finds the distortion of the *symbolic* by the *semiotic* signification revolutionary because the *semiotic* upsets the privileging of the symbolic and it leads to a change in the essence of the hierarchy of the signifier and the signified which is inherent in the *symbolic* language. The language which is produced by the mutuality of the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* leads to change in the production of the subject and opens up a new space for alternative subject and object formations. Accordingly, there can be a meta-commentary on the selected novels of these writers in terms of their political consciousness and this meta-commentary can lead these novels to be analyzed from a larger scope than those of some critics, who do not find these texts realistic and political enough. Kristevan approach to the *semiotic* base of language will be helpful in this respect to show that the essence of the otherness problem does not lie in what these novels deal with but how they lay bare the impossibility of representation unless the *symbolic* element "what philosophers might think of as meaning proper" (Oliver "Introduction" xiv) is amalgamated with the *semiotic* element "associated with rhythms and tones that are meaningful parts of language [where] bodily drives are discharged"(Oliver "Introduction xiv).

The reason why these three specific novels are chosen in this study is that the self/other problem is in the core of all these novels and that the way they go beyond the borders of language has similarities. Besides, all the novels explore very delicate and problematic topics such as racism, *coup* and gender. There are a good number of novels which deal with these problems but these writers depart from the mainstream writing styles that their contemporaries have adopted. For instance, Coetzee has brought a new perspective to South African literature. As Penner points out, "if Coetzee's novels are not seen by some of the readers as being self-sufficiently relevant to, or specific about

the present turmoil, it is because he addresses a more fundamental question about the cognition and language of worldwide colonialism” (27). He means that Coetzee regards the turmoil of the apartheid from a larger perspective by focusing on what the causes of the turmoil is. There are many other writers such as Nadine Gordimer, André and Brink Breyten Breytenbach who have widened the understanding of literature in South Africa in that they have set the South African literature free from the shackles of the binaries between the colonizer and the colonized. Coetzee is in this group of writers, and he has worked “on the principle that the novel should not supplement history, but establish a position of rivalry with it” (Head, *Introduction* x). With his knowledge about European theories on writing and his in-between position of being a white writer writing about South Africa, he has written “particular works from the English canon with a view to reconstructing European ‘realities’ in postcolonial terms, not simply by reversing the hierarchical order, but by interrogating the philosophical assumptions on which that order was based” (Ashcraft 32). So, he writes both from the inside and outside as an English speaking Afrikaner. He defies the socially and historically mimetic representations of the apartheid regime novels and challenges the nature of realism. His novels enable the readers to think about racism from a wide array of perspectives ranging from the ontology of fictional form, the impossibility of mimetic writing and the problem of alterity.

The interrogations of the critics as to how Coetzee is engaged with the problems of realism and fiction have been the concern of the novelist, as well. He explicates the role of the novelist in South Africa “as a force for representation [of the] unrepresentable” (Coetzee *Doubling* 67). He thinks that historical facts, realism and depredations of South African apartheid are beyond representability owing to their inexplicable emotional and psychological effects on people. The oppressor and the oppressed are far from being categorized in binary oppositions. They are entwined into each other. Therefore, a new form of address is required to talk about the pain within South African context especially for the white novelist.

In the Heart of the Country has not been analyzed as much as his other more popular novels such as *Disgrace* and *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Besides there is no study on

this novel dealing with the alterity problem from a Kristevan perspective. Therefore, this study will close the gap in academic studies in this respect. While Kristeva's theories on *abjection* and her conceptualization of the foreigner will be the main backdrop of this chapter on a larger scale. Firstly, these theories will show that Coetzee brings a new dimension to self/other and colonizer/colonized binary by focusing on the in-betweenness of his characters, thereby establishing a *negotiation* between self and Other. Secondly, this analysis will help us bring a meta-criticism to the critical approaches to his novels, claiming that Coetzee has a very forceful, ethical and political stance in this novel. This novel, like the other two novels in this thesis, makes one question what political is. In this respect, Kristeva's theoretical approach to language and how revolutionary language can be political will serve as the backdrop of this argument.

The second novel in this thesis, *Night Lessons* by Latife Tekin, who has brought a new aspect to the understanding of novel writing in Turkey, is one of her most complicated and elusive novels in which she deals with the traumatic effects of the 12th September 1980 *coup* by pushing the boundaries of conventional realistic representations. In Turkish literature, there is a phase of literary movement called *coup* novels. Especially after the 12 March 1971 Turkish military memorandum and 12th September 1980 *coup*, Turkish writers started writing about these political upheavals and their focus shifted to words representing the traumatic effects of the *coups*. As Bayraktar underlines, what distinguishes the *coup* novels of the post-1980s from those belonging to the post-1970s is that their "aesthetic concerns became much more significant and the mediated nature of representation was considerably emphasized" (105). Tekin is one of these writers who dealt with the adverse effects of the military intervention and the atrocities of traumatic state violence in the aftermath of the 1980s in her novels. Different from the novels of the post-1970s, she does not write in a documentary style and her understanding of realism does not rest upon the conventional representations of historical realities. She is in the vanguard of a new understanding of aesthetic representation of realism. She has used novel genre as a means not to document or record history by leaning on the realistic conventions but as a conduit between realism

and aestheticism. *Night Lessons* dismantles the authoritative representation of historical events and pushes the limits of language by foregrounding the fusion of writing and body. The writer never speaks exclusively in her own voice; there are many narrators whose voices harmonize, quarrel and sometimes contradict each other. Similar to Coetzee, Tekin writes both from the inside and outside of real history. She was a member of the Leftist group in the 1980s and she witnessed all the political upheavals of the time in person. After she noticed that her political stance did not overlap with that of her militant friends, she parted company with the political organization; so she could be an observer both from the inside and outside. In *Night Lessons*, she writes about her disappointment with the way that the leftist group treated the working class people. She believed that if the working class people were to defend their own rights, they were supposed to have the freedom to speak for themselves because lack of freedom to speak was another form of oppression on people and it was not different from the violence of the state during the *coup* years. Therefore, she writes from an in-between position in *Night Lessons*; she never falls in the trap between self/Other, leftist class/ working class. The novel creates a third space between these two binaries and this third space enables her to avoid adopting an authoritative position in writing. To have a broader perspective about Tekin's writing style and her own ideas about *Night Lessons*, I arranged a meeting with her in person in Bodrum Gümüşlük in 2016. I asked her a lot questions ranging from her ideas about women writers' position in Turkey to the conditions that prepared her to write *Night Lessons*. As the whole interview is too long to be inserted in this thesis, I will be referring to her own words where necessary.

Although the thematic issues are considerably different in *In the Heart of the Country* and *Night Lessons*, the positions of the authors as the ones who experienced the historical events as an insider but wrote as an outsider make it possible to analyze these novels in the same study. Both Coetzee and Tekin explore and play with language to be able to write outside the limits of it. In this thesis, language will be referred to as Kristeva's *symbolic* base of signification in which the hierarchy between self and Other is fixed. As the *symbolic* base of language "is embodied in the Law of the Father"

(Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 75), it cannot be used as the only means to disrupt the self/Other opposition. In my analysis, I will demonstrate that Coetzee and Tekin's writing styles can be interrogated as the melting pot where the "interaction between these two terms [*symbolic* and *semiotic*] constitutes the signifying process" (McAfee 15-16). The dialectic between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* in these novels creates a new type of discourse by which the *symbolic* base can be undercut and the *semiotic* element "makes itself felt-discharged-into" the *symbolic* (Kristeva *Revolution* 24). Kristeva is against the binary thinking of Western tradition; she states that these two types of signification are knit together and when their interrelation is enacted, the rupture between the dichotomies such as nature/culture, body/ mind and self/Other can be shattered. Thus, the Kristevan analysis will be helpful in the stylistic and contextual analyses of these two novels. In both of them, the main characters coalesce body and mind and they adopt the maternal other in order that they can overcome the anguish resulting from the traumatic experiences of the specific historical events.

The third novel *Lighthousekeeping* by Jeanette Winterson has been chosen because its approach to self/Other dichotomy bears resemblances to the aforementioned novels. It is a novel about a girl called Silver who is brought up in a lighthouse by a blind lighthouse keeper called Pew. It is a text infused with a queer aesthetics that goes beyond the borders of heteronormative love. The reason why this novel has been chosen for this study is that it does not have a lesbian hero as visible as it is in the other novels of Winterson such as *Oranges are not the Only Fruit*. Although many of Winterson's novels are accepted as coming out novels and they have been studied in terms of gender and queer identities, *Lighthousekeeping* has not been studied much and "the affirmative expressions of lesbian experience and lesbian feminist critique that feminist scholars have valued in Winterson's earlier writings [...] are foreclosed in this novel" (Jenzen 180). Agreeing with Jenzen, this study will try to demonstrate that the implicit lesbian experience in the novel saves it from being categorized in the straitjacket of lesbian feminist critique. As mentioned before, Coetzee has received a lot of negative criticism owing to his avoidance of color bars and explicit and visible representations of historical facts. Likewise, Tekin has been expected to represent the

historical disasters and unveil the historical facts more realistically like the novels written after the 1970s. By the same token, Winterson's novels have been classified in feminist or lesbian critiques and she has been exposed to harsh criticism as she has not written in accordance with the expectations of the readers who have looked for a lesbian love story in her novels. For instance, as Lyenne Pearce has pointed out related to *Written on the Body*, "many feminist readers and critics have felt cheated by Winterson's handling of gender, while Winterson herself has further problematized the issue with her reluctance at being cast as a 'feminist' or 'radical lesbian'" (119).

The reason why Winterson has been both welcomed and negatively criticized at the same time lies in the incoherent nature of lesbian fiction definition. Lesbian fiction has always been a contradictory issue because its terminology has branched out into lesbian sensibility, lesbian-feminist fiction and queer literature. Until the 1990s, there were different tactics to decide if a fictional text must be read as a lesbian text. One approach was to include everything that touches on the gender subversion like Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928) in lesbian fiction. Another approach was to pay attention to transgression. The lesbian novelist Bertha Harris even argued that "lesbian should be read as she is socially perceived, as a monster, and therefore, novels about monsters should be read as lesbian novels" (in Abraham 296). Another group put forward the idea that all sorts of texts must be entailed in lesbian literature as long as the writer is lesbian. Most of these suggestions were limited due to their hostility of heterosexual culture. While some groups wanted more acknowledgements of lesbians by the lesbian narratives, some others feared that a more expansive approach could erase the sexual content of the lesbian narrative. (Abraham 296).

The parameters of lesbian fiction at the beginning of the 1990s incorporated the postmodern ideas in lesbian fiction changing their focus from "the analyses of narrative space, lesbian sensibility, the writing of erotics and the body to the postmodern lesbian" (Farkas 37). It is inevitable that Winterson has been both applauded and frowned upon during her career amongst all these changing attitudes. After publishing *Oranges*, she was categorized in lesbian feminist fiction and the novel was celebrated as a coming-out novel. However, Winterson departed from manifest

lesbian heroines in her next novels and she plunged into postmodern writing. Then, a bulk of analyses have been riveted to her postmodern techniques and to what extent she stays faithful to lesbian politics while using post-modern techniques has been questioned; the arguments have centered on “whether postmodern narrative has the subversive power to undermine patriarchal and heterosexist discourses, or whether it merely constitutes a textual play engaged in the continuous deferral of meaning” (Farkas 45). The same questions have been asked about whether Winterson fits into the category of queer theory “which calls attention to the fact that the division between masculine and feminine is not a fixed divide, but a performance” (Makinen 139). This study does not follow the path opened up earlier by the other theorists. The oft-repeated questions such as lesbian fiction/queer fiction/metafiction/postmodern fiction/magical realism will be avoided not to iterate a similar path in the analyses of Winterson. Therefore, a meta-criticism can be introduced as to the reception of her novels if specific categories are left behind. This study will try to show that lesbian and queer criticism can be under the threat of being turned into another form of hierarchy as long as it is contrasted with other forms of narratives which are not concerned with lesbian heroines. Trying to grope for a visible coming out story or a lesbian experience has the risk of downplaying the text to a single signifying system.

Given that the definitions of lesbian and queer fiction have never been stable, studying Winterson’s novels from a broader perspective can be more fruitful. This broader perspective is enacted in *Lighthousekeeping* by Winterson’s bringing love and storytelling as the main tenets of subject matters to the fore in the novel. The novel bursts the constructed nature of heteronormativity open by not explicitly displaying the binary between heterosexuality and homosexuality but presenting love and storytelling as the two requirements of identity construction. Kristevan theory will be helpful in this context to show that love can be regarded in diverse forms and it does not have to be related to the romantic attachment between two people, either heterosexual or homosexual. Love of the imaginary father and different alternatives of love in the novel will be expounded on in this study drawing upon Kristeva’s explanation of the history of love. Besides, the other main issue in the novel such as

the importance of one's learning to tell his/her own story will be connected with adopting the maternal other and putting subjectivity "in process/on trial" (Kristeva *Revolution* 22). In tune with the other novels, *Lighthousekeeping* brings a new dimension to the self/other binary by focusing on the subject's adoption of the maternal other, which is on a par with the *semiotic* domain and *semiotic* aspect of signification which renders language dense and obscure and thus disrupts the empiricist view of language. In the novel, the rift between words and things distorts the correspondence between signifiers and signifieds and it evinces that language is not disconnected from the body. The body/mind dualism is rarefied in the novel; while Silver overcomes *abjection* through adopting and welcoming the *semiotic* "bodily energy and affects" (McAfee 17), the other main character Babel Dark cannot reach a compromise between body and mind, and his destiny ends in suicide. Winterson lays bare the significance of embodying another discourse that is not limited with the demarcations of the binaries in the *symbolic* language and in this respect her thematic concerns and narrative techniques constitute a complex constellation that can help one rethink the relations between fact and fiction.

As for the layout of this thesis, after the theory chapter, J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* will be studied within the framework of colonialism and racism. Before the analysis, there will be some information about the style of Coetzee and why and how his place in postcolonial literature must be distinguished. Later, the female narrator's relationship with her father and mother will be analyzed. The *abject* father's transformation into an imaginary father figure and the traumatic effect of the father and his discourse on his daughter will be studied. Next, the colored servants and the narrator's interaction with them will be analyzed and how Coetzee erases the color bars between the white and the black will be unveiled. Lastly, how the narrator makes a pact with her own body and realizes that the real *abject* figure is herself will be studied along with the stylistic analysis of the novel. The contextual and stylistic analyses will demonstrate how Coetzee writes from an intermediary position between the opposites and how the *symbolic* base of language is pulverized by the *semiotic*

configuration that the narrator adopts by bringing her body into close proximity with her mind.

The next chapter will start with Tekin's position in Turkish literature and how *Night Lessons* has been studied before. Then, the narrator's position in the family as a savage figure and the rupture between her and her mother will be examined. Next, the narrator's estrangement in the political discourse will be focused on by dwelling on the language and gender discrimination problem in the Leftist movement. Lastly, the sublimation of the *abject* mother through *semiotic* writing will be studied by pointing at how the metaphors, folkloric language, fragmentation of time and space, shifting subject positions and multiple narrators unveil the dialectic between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* and enable the narrator to create her own discourse.

In the last chapter before the conclusion, Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* will be studied in four main parts. After introducing the critical studies on Winterson and *Lighthousekeeping*, the dyadic unity between the female narrator and her mother will be studied. Then, story-telling and love will be explained as forms of the sublimation of the *abject*. The following explanations will be about to the narrator's public life experiences as *thetic* moments. In the following part, the other main character, Babel Dark's life will be analyzed in terms of otherness. Lastly, the linguistic elements will be scrutinized in order to show how Winterson tampers with the *symbolic*/patriarchal language within the theoretical framework of Kristevan *abjection* and signification.

The whole study, in general, will try to connect these three novels in terms of their approach to the problem of otherness. As the meta-criticism of this study is the political consciousness of the writers, the connection between body and writing will be underlined after the whole contextual and stylistic analyses are completed. Although politics can be thought to refer to the antagonisms between classes, different political groups or the conflicts between people and nations, this thesis puts forward the idea that body is highly relevant to the discussions revolving around politics. Therefore, the narrators' bodily experiences especially the traumas they encounter due to personal affairs or state violence will be underlined in the discussions of the *abject*.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Julia Kristeva and Her Theories

As the theoretical background of this thesis is based on Kristeva's ideas on language and subjectivity, some background information about her theories and the definitions of the basic terms to be used in this study are necessary to connect the theories with the analyses of the novels. The main points Kristeva underlines in her studies are the theory of poetic language, *abjection*, *melancholia*, love and borderline cases of subjectivity in the widest sense. The theoretical expansion of Kristeva's ideas on the meaning of the subject began against the backdrop of the political revolution in 1968 in France when the avant-garde critics and writers spoke out their ideas in the journal *Tel Quel*. Their main concern was about the requisite for questioning the relevancy between the material and cultural production that Marxist understanding put forward. The avant-garde critics tended to forsake the direct relationship between them and believed that cultural activities had the revolutionary potential for change. They "foregrounded issues relating to racial and sexual difference, desire, the treatment of the mad and the rights of prisoners" (Lechte *Kristeva* 8). Their focal point was the status and production of the subject amidst the conflicting ideologies. They argued that just like the subject, the cultural productions are always in process and they are not irreducible to the finished product. They believed that not only the external elements per se such as the cultural, political or economic structures but also the internal elements, primarily the language with the sound and the rhythm of a word result in the production of meaning. Kristeva raised questions as to the essence of how the capitalist mode of production negated the significance of how that production came into being. The shortcoming of the capitalist production, according to Kristeva, is not to interrogate the "*process qua process*" (Lechte *Kristeva* 16). She calls this process as:

significance which is precisely this unlimited and unbounded generating process, this unceasing operation of the drives toward, in, and through language; toward, in, and through the exchange system and its protagonists-the subject and his institutions. This heterogeneous process, neither anarchic, fragmented foundation nor schizophrenic blockage, is a structuring practice, a passage to the outer *boundaries* of the subject and society. Then-and only then-can it be *Jouissance* and revolution. (*Revolution* 17)

In other words, language is the backbone of revolution as it begets, shapes, reshapes, distorts, triggers and manipulates the subject. It is the language that speaks through the subject with all its external boundaries. Subjectivity is a dynamic process because people are surrounded by all phenomena including culture, history and language. Western philosophic tradition, which Kristeva calls “archivists, archeologists and necrophiliacs” in *Revolution in Poetic Language* (13), is mistaken about considering the subject as a finished product. Rather, “the experience of subjectivity is not that of coming to awareness as a ‘self’, but of having an identity wrought in ways often unbeknownst to the subject herself” (McAfee,2). Language is not a medium used and oriented by people; on the contrary, it produces subjects, the subject’s interaction with the others, the way how s/he produces cultural productions and revolution eventually through the language that creates *jouissance*².

² Kristeva does not give an exact description of *jouissance* but explains it by the paintings of Giovanni Bellini. In three versions of “Madonna and The Child”, the Madonnas are holding a baby but there is a clear emotional distance between the child and the mother. The faces of Madonnas do not look at their babies directly and they “intent on something else that draws their gaze to the side, up above, or nowhere in particular, but never centers it in the baby” (*Desire* 247). Kristeva states that the lack of peace between the mother and the baby causes melancholy. There seems to be a jubilation but the mother is absent in the paintings as her eyes look into vacancy rather than the baby. The inaccessible enjoyment that the baby is after is expressed through “the folds of coloured surfaces, the juxtaposition of full tones, the limitless volume resolving into a contrast of “hots” and “colds” in an architecture of full colour” (*Desire* 248). Kristeva maintains that Bellini unveils the *jouissance* in the painting qua painting because “the absent, dead, and mute mother, situated beyond the Law determines the fascination” (*Desire* 248). So, the law stands between the baby and the mother and the inaccessibility between them is reflected by the artistic talent of the painter. Despite the jubilation of the corporeal fusion between them, melancholy can be read in the eyes of the mother as she is detached from her baby by the Symbolic Law. The baby can never reach the “elsewhere” of the mother but it seems to be happy in her lap. So, Bellini’s painting “is confronted with the very function of *jouissance*” (*Desire* 248). The unutterable, unreachable sense of *jouissance* cannot be directly painted or written about, but it can be felt in the artistic production or in the writerly texts. The painter or the writer can express the inexpressible; art is a means to seek *jouissance*. Especially the avant garde poets of the 19th

Kristeva brought a groundbreaking perspective to the speaking subject by her introduction of the subject as “in process/on trial” (*Revolution* 22) who is “constructed in the field of thought developed after Marx, Freud and Nietzsche” (Moi *Sexual/Textual* 151). Kristeva follows a similar path to these thinkers as she defines the subject as a “dynamic [one] in movement and in the throes of production, in contrast to the punctual, phenomenological subject of consciousness” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 114). According to her, the Cartesian ego is a myth and the speaking subject is the nexus of “a place where the inner drives are discharged into language, where sexuality interplays with thought, where the body and culture meet” (McAfee 2). Kristeva’s studies on subjectivity unsettles the conventionally accepted notion of the “self” in Western philosophical tradition. As this study will be dealing with the constructed nature of subject and object dichotomy and how the texts mentioned bring a different perspective to this binary opposition by establishing a third space which does not deconstruct the binary but offers an alternative to it, Kristeva’s ideas on subjectivity will be helpful theoretically.

One of Kristeva’s most important contributions to contemporary theory has been the distinction she makes between the *semiotic* and *symbolic* modalities of signification. She states that there is an interconnection between these two modalities and this interconnection gives rise to poetic language. Poetic language is constructed within a signifying process where the “semiotic system [is] generated by a speaking subject within a social, historical field” (*Revolution* “Introduction” 1). The subject, she maintains, is a speaking being and s/he is constituted by language. Therefore, the speaking being always addresses another and language cannot be thought as separate from the social and historical context. She defines significance as the “unlimited and unbounded generating process, the unceasing operation of the drives toward, in, and through language; toward, in and through the exchange system and its protagonists-

century revolt against the fixed meaning of *symbolic* discourse by pulverizing their texts by the semiotically charged language and they approach the sense of *jouissance*. She considers *jouissance* and revolt intertwined with each other.

the subject and his institutions” (*Revolution* 17). The subject who learns how to use language decenters “the transcendental ego, cutting through it, and opening it up to a dialectic in which the syntactic and categorical understanding is merely the liminary moment of process” (*Revolution* 30).

There are two ways that lead the subject to signification. The first is the mirror stage and the second is the castration. In the mirror stage, the subject whose body is agitated by the “semiotic motility” (Kristeva *Revolution* 48) starts to shape an imaged ego and although the subject does not step into the world of objects yet, s/he separates himself/herself from the unified image reflected in the mirror. Lacan claims that this image is the inchoate version of the Symbolic world where the subject will encounter the objects totally separated from him/ her. The child’s first utterances which cannot yet be defined as proper language emerge at this time. So, the first signification starts when the subject uses the sign as a form of break from the maternal body. The second stage of signification is the recognition of castration, which “puts the finishing touches on the process of separation that posits the subject as signifiable” (Kristeva *Revolution* 47). The subject encounters the other objects (people) and separates himself/herself from the mother. The mother represents the alterity as she is not the “guarantor of demands” (Kristeva *Revolution* 47) any more.

The *jouissance* that is generated by the fusion with the mother’s body is transmuted into the genital and such a shift “transfers semiotic motility onto the symbolic order” (Kristeva *Revolution* 47). The separation enables the enunciation and the mother is repositioned as the Other because the perception of the child’s relation to the others changes. The positioning of the mother as the Other is a precondition for the child to communicate with the others in the Symbolic domain. The break between the signifier and the signified is “synonymous with social sanction” (Kristeva *Revolution* 48). The child realizes that language can be used to point out objects and events and there is a difference between self (subject), and other (object). Kristeva sees language not as an isolated and static entity but as a dynamic signifying process where “bodily drives and energy are expressed literally discharged through our use of language” (McAfee 14). Language operates through the fusion of the *symbolic* and *semiotic* bases of language.

While the *symbolic* is “an expression of clear and orderly meaning”, the *semiotic* can be seen “as evocation of feeling, or, more pointedly, a discharge of the subject’s energy and drives” (McAfee 16). Oliver explains these two terms in the following way:

The symbolic element is what philosophers might think of as meaning proper. That is, the symbolic is the element of signification that sets up the structures by which symbols operate. The symbolic is the structure or grammar that governs the ways in which symbols can refer. The semiotic element, on the other hand, is the organization of drives in language. It is associated with rhythms and tones that are meaningful parts of language and yet do not represent or signify something. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), Kristeva maintains that rhythms and tones do not represent bodily drives; rather bodily drives are discharged through rhythms and tones. (“Introduction” xiv)

It should be noted that despite the clear definitions of the two terms by McAfee and Oliver, the *semiotic* and the symbolic should not be considered as two separate modalities. Kristeva does not address them in a hierarchy, and she avoids a dichotomized understanding. There is always a dialectic between them, and they are interdependent. The *semiotic* appears “within but simultaneously withdraws from fixed meaning. It is the heterogeneous, affective, material dimension of language that contributes to the meaning, but does not intend or signify in the ways the symbols do” (Keltner *Thresholds* 22). She asserts that language and body are inseparable and through the *semiotic* element, bodily drives manifest themselves in language. In this sense, Kristeva challenges the traditional theories which put forward that language and body are distinct categories.

Before the acquisition of language which corresponds to the pre-Oedipal and mirror phase, the child conceives himself as a whole and believes the illusion he sees in the mirror. Upon being immersed in language, he is enveloped by the culture he lives in. Language is the medium that initiates the child’s understanding of himself as a separate being from the mother. Until language starts to shape the child, he has the misconception of considering himself as a whole being. Yet, language enables him to see himself as disintegrated. This is where the *symbolic* functions and inaugurates the process for the child to turn into a speaking subject. According to Kristeva, the first separation between the child and the mother starts with birth although the child does

not recognize such a dyad and continues believing in being a part of the mother. Yet, once he starts speaking, the child strips himself of the *semiotic* realm since the conception of “I” and “the other” starts to be more clear. In this respect, although Kristeva summarizes the signification process as shaped by firstly the mirror stage and then the castration, she broadens Lacan’s theories by emphasizing that the birth is the beginning point of separation between the child and the mother. Although the mirror stage marks this separation distinctly, the actual disengagement from the mother starts when the mother gives birth to the child. (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 142-143)

Another term that will be used in this thesis is the *semiotic chora*. It is the place purged off the use of symbols, syntax and grammar and where drives are foregrounded. Yet, the *symbolic* via imposing a certain structure on drives detaches the child from his drives. The baby’s coos and babbles in the *semiotic* are the disarticulations before stepping into the *symbolic*. Kristeva names this sphere as the *chora* which is a “non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their states in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated” (*Revolution* 25).

The *chora* is a receptacle similar to the mother’s womb, but it has its own motility as it has a peculiar rhythm. The rhythm moves along the discourse that “moves with and against the *chora* in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and refuses it. Although the *chora* can be designated and regulated, it can never be definitely posited” (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). That is, the *chora* is like a container capable of both shaping and being shaped by the movement outside. *Écriture Féminine* embarks on scrutinizing how the affective power of this energy shapes the text because “even the most plain-spoken language is an uneasy merger between a sound image and the meaning it is supposed to denote” (McAfee, 23). The interplay between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* is more foregrounded in certain texts and Kristeva points out that “the very practice of art necessitates reinvesting the material *chora* so that it transgresses the *symbolic* order [...] No text, no matter how ‘musicalized’ is devoid of meaning or signification: on the contrary, musicalization pluralizes meaning” (*Revolution* 65). For the *semiotic chora* to pluralize meaning, *thetic* break, where the child starts brushing aside his *semiotic* and musical energy in order to obtain the

integrity he needs by facing the other, is significant. Kristeva underlines the fact that “[...] the semiotic we find in signifying practices always comes to us after the symbolic thesis, after the symbolic break, and can be analyzed in psychoanalytic discourse as well as so-called artistic practice” (*Revolution* 68). The *semiotic chora* will be referred to in this thesis when the narrators’ relationship with their maternal other are explained. In every novel in this thesis, the archaic bond between the mother and the child as the springboard for the identity formation of the characters is foregrounded. Thus, the *semiotic chora* as “the locus of the drive activity underlying the semiotic” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 129) will be mentioned as the energy that generates the signifying process.

The artistic practice where the *semiotic* punctuates the *symbolic* is a ubiquitous element of the texts Kristeva calls the *genotext*. She states that the *genotext* is “a process, which tends to articulate structures that are ephemeral (unstable, threatened by drive charges, ‘quata’ rather than ‘marks’) and nonsignifying” (*Revolution* 86). Being nonsignifying and unstable, the *genotext* does not disrupt the meaningful unity of a text. Rather, it crystalizes the meaning where the structural linguistic rules lag behind. The *genotext* deploys the melodic devices such as intonation and rhythm. The *phenotext*, on the other hand, is stabilizing the correlation between the signifier and the signified with the help of semantic and grammatical rules. In other words, there are two levels that a text operates: the *genotext* delves into the pre-symbolic places of the psyche; it manifests how the writer nourishes himself/herself by the gratification of the rhythm, musicality and the refractory power of the *semiotic*. The *phenotext* obeys the rules of communication and requires an addresser and an addressee (Kristeva *Revolution*, 86). Kristeva states that only some avant-garde texts manage to facilitate the *semiotic chora* and they can be accepted as *genotexts* (*Revolution*, 88). All the novels in this study are examples of *genotexts* because their semiotically furnished language ruptures the *symbolic* and offers alternative subject formations.

The *thetic* starts in the mirror stage and is completed when the child goes through the Oedipus complex. It is the backbone of signification and “no signifying practice can be without it” (Kristeva *Revolution* 62). Kristeva explains “the thetic phase – the

positing of the *imago*, castration, and the positing of semiotic motility – as the place of the Other, as the precondition for signification, i.e., the precondition for the positing of language. The *thetic* phase marks a threshold between two heterogeneous realms: the semiotic and the symbolic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 48).

Firstly, the child is immersed in the *semiotic chora*; s/he utters coos and babbles to express itself. The first meaningless sounds s/he vocalizes let him/her discharge energy. But these sounds do not signify an object; the subject and the object do not necessarily signify different positions. After the mirror stage, the child recognizes himself/herself as a different being from his/her environment. Even the sounds s/he utters refer to another object. This break, however, does not necessarily separate the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* with rigid demarcations. Both in the “realm of metalanguage (mathematics, for example) or literature, what remodels the symbolic order is always the influx of the semiotic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 62).

As the *thetic* is a precondition for signification, Kristeva never undermines its necessity. However, when the drives cannot be sublimated by the *thetic*, three situations emerge. Either the subject becomes neurotic or psychotic or the subject leads these drives to be sublimated in artistic practices which are called “second-degree *thetic*” (*Revolution* 50). The way that the *semiotic* sneaks into the *symbolic* is expressed by Kristeva as musicality

which is not without signification; indeed, it is deployed within it. Logical syntheses and all ideologies are present, but they are pulverized within their own logic before being displaced toward something that is no longer within the realm of the idea, sign, syntax, and thus Logos. (*Revolution* 63)

Thetic refers to the thesis of the binaries in Cartesian logic. It refutes the notion of a unified subject, which is seen as a stabilized and transcendental being, by the Western metaphysics. As it is “the precondition of the difference between the signifier and the signified, denotation and connotation, language and referent; in effect it is the basis of all theses and antitheses, of all oppositions” (Lechte *Kristeva* 135). If the subject has some disorders in the mirror stage or cannot successfully go through the castration process, s/he cannot constitute the *symbolic*. It results in psychosis where the subject

tries to resist the social censorship and the distinction between the signifier and the signified is dissolved. Besides, the negation of the *thetic* phase may lead the subject to “imagine the thetic at the place of an object or a partner. This is a fetishist mechanism, which consists in denying the mother’s castration” (Kristeva *Revolution* 63). The subject who projects his/her drives on another object has proclivity for enjoying “anal eroticism [...] the prototype of such objects is excrement since it is midway between an autoerotic body, which is not yet autonomous from its eroticized sphincters, and the pleasure the mother’s body or her supposed phallus would procure” (Kristeva *Revolution* 64).

Kristeva warns that “it is the thetic, and not fetishism, that is inherent in every cultural production” (*Revolution* 64). She states that psychoanalysis studies confuse fetishism and the *thetic* because they regard the production of art as an act of fetishism. The poet is thought to create poetry as a substitute for the *symbolic*. However, according to Kristeva, “what distinguishes the poetic function from the fetishist mechanism is that it is a *signification* [...] no text, no matter how musicalized, is devoid of meaning or signification: on the contrary, musicalization pluralizes meanings” (*Revolution* 65). So, the text still signifies an object and the signifier/ signified connection is not erased. The *thetic* is challenged when the *semiotic* breaches the *symbolic* through poetic language because poetic language would “wipe out sense through nonsense and laughter” (Kristeva *Desire* 142). In other words, the *semiotic* would “induce a *jouissance* that is prior to the mirror stage, and thus prior to the thetic” (Lechte *Kristeva* 135). So, the *semiotic* does not preclude the *symbolic* from being uttered in grammatical sentences; it always exists within the *symbolic*. Artistic practice, through implementing poetic language, “does not relinquish the *thetic* even while pulverizing it” (Kristeva *Revolution* 69).

The *thetic* is of significance in this study in all of the novels because all the main characters go through the *thetic* moment many times. In this thesis, I interpreted the experiences they go through which put them into conditions when they face the necessity of stepping into the *symbolic* as the *thetic* moments. They challenge the *thetic* break when they cannot consider the self and the other as separate modes. Especially

in *Lighthousekeeping*, the female narrator goes through a healthy subjectivity process without leaving the *semiotic* behind and her experiences in the public spaces point at the *thetic* moments in her life.

The other basic Kristevan concept is *abjection* which will be made use of in this thesis. *Abjection* is related to the primordial horror which is caused by the mother as a threat to the *symbolic* order. The mother is the mediator between culture and nature and “no signifier can uplift it [the maternal body] without leaving a remainder, for the signifier is always remaining, communication, or structure, whereas a woman as mother would be, instead, a strange fold that changes culture into nature, speaking into biology” (Kristeva *Tales* 259). Kristeva makes it visible that identity construction is wrought by many forces including language culture, body, sexuality and desires. Her interrogation into the connection between language and body shows that there is a (maternal) other in the psyche of subjects which is both fascinating and repelling. This other which she calls the “*abject*”, referring to the child’s identification with the mother is to be denied so that the subject can integrate himself/herself in culture. However, this denial is partly successful because the *abject* continues haunting the child causing him/her to be in a quandary. The child has to renounce the narcissistic union with her first love to be a subject but “with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling” (Kristeva *Powers* 13) because it is a part of herself. Therefore, the subject is never a unified or autonomous being because she always carries the (maternal) other in her psyche. The maternal body which is supposed to be expelled to become a self animates the *symbolic* and it radically deforms syntax and causes “semantic fuzziness” (Kristeva *Powers* 191). Therefore, the *abject* and the *symbolic/semiotic* bases of language cannot be thought separately. The way the *abject* other finds its way in the *symbolic* emerges in the “trans-syntactic inscription of emotion” (Kristeva *Powers* 204) and puts the individual in touch with the drive-based materiality of language. One’s self is never fixed and settled because it is always in interaction with the maternal other which is to be jettisoned in order that subjectivity can be established. *Abjection* and how it is sublimated by the *semiotic* base of language will be one of the main concepts of this study as the texts studied in this thesis dwell

on how one comes to terms with the maternal other and “find[s] a balance between the excesses of nature and the constraints of culture” (McAfee 3).

Kristeva defines *abject* as something “that beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects” (Powers 1). It results from both desiring the emotional bond with the mother and rejection of that emotionally charged fascination in order to survive in a civilized society. Even before the mirror stage, the infant starts separating himself/herself from the mother and the border between the subject and the object is developed. *Abjection* starts when the child starts to jettison her mother which seems to be a part of himself/ herself. The mirror stage and the acquisition of language deepen the gap opened up between the mother and the child but “what is abjected is radically excluded but never banished altogether. It hovers at the periphery of one’s existence, constantly challenging one’s own tenuous borders of selfhood” (McAfee 46). In order for the ego to be constructed in the *symbolic*, *abjection* is necessary. However, as it is never entirely cast off, it belongs both to the realm of the conscious and the unconscious. The *symbolic* cannot completely “ensure separation” (Lechte Kristeva 159). The *abject* is not a definable object; it is the ambiguous place between the subject and the object. It is “not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and autonomous. The *abject* has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to *I*” (Kristeva Powers 1). There is an intermediary space between them; the abject straddles both the subject and the object. Kristeva makes an analogy between the abject and the “improper/unclean” (Kristeva Powers 2):

Loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste or dung. The spasms and vomiting that protect me. The repugnance, the retching that thrusts me to the side and turns me away from defilement, sewage and muck [...] Food loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection. When the eyes see or the lips touch that skin on the surface of milk-harmless, thin as a sheet of cigarette paper, pitiful as a nail paring- I experience a gagging sensation and, still further down, spasms in the stomach, the belly; and all the organs shrivel up the body, provoke tears and bile, increase heartbeat, cause forehead and hands to perspire. (Powers 2-3)

Milk and blood are particularly marked by Kristeva as they are highly associated with the body of the mother. The subject wants to cleanse his/her body from everything that

is evocative of the mother. The milk is the way that the mother nourishes the infant and the blood is the unclean place where the child is expelled from the genitalia of the mother. Defilement marks the boundary between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. In order to strengthen the attachment to the *symbolic* (Law), religion and rituals of societies turn the cleansing of the body into a purification ritual. The maternal and the feminine are presented as unclean in the Old Testament and milk is prohibited because it connects the child to the mother. In the New Testament, Christ is welcomed as “the steady repression of the maternal element and the evolution of that mode of social and political rationality called ‘western’” (Lechte *Kristeva* 164-165).

The presence of a corpse is another phenomenon that sets off *abjection*. It puts death in proximity to the subject “as in true theatre, without make up or masks, corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live” (McAfee 32). Thus, the *abject* is neither the subject nor the object, it is the jettisoned object that people find unapproachable but intimate. Kristeva states that “it is not [merely] lack of cleanliness or health that causes *abjection* but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (*Powers*, 4). The *abject* is the state of being stuck in between because the umbilical bond with the mother is an invisible life and death force on the child all through his life. It is a realm of plenitude and the child longs for this plenitude of no borders. The child at the outset, before the mirror stage, goes through the experience of primal narcissistic identification with the mother. The line between them is fuzzy until the child learns how to develop himself into being “I” different from the mother. Yet, the fact that “he was once in her and now here he is outside her” aggravates the child and “he hates that body but only because it can’t be free of it [...] he must renounce a part of himself-insofar as it is still one with the mother-in order to become a self” (McAfee, 48). The womb is the most familiar thing to the child, and what seems to be uncanny is the home-like place for him as a matter of fact. Even after learning language and being acculturated, the return of the repressed will always haunt the child. Therefore, the *abject* is both repelling and seductive for him.

Becker- Leckrone defines the *abject* as the thing

that harkens back to the shadowy beginnings of our pre-history, both individual and collective [...] pre-symbolic, *abjection* yet persists and returns in flashes, at places of strain or moments of crisis within the symbolic system. (30)

Shaped by the discourse and norms, the child experiences the throes of being both “I” as the part of the culture he lives in and finding a substitute for his lack and the visceral feeling of repudiating and leaving behind “non-I”. The “non-I” is called the *abject* by Kristeva, because the child has left a part of himself behind. Kristeva advocates sublimating the *abject* rather than repressing it and states that the subject is produced by multiple matters of the body, culture and the mind. Everything that we abhor in our body, every fear subjugated by culture after the castration process, everything that bears the reminiscence of our connection with the mother can be called the *abject*.

The real poetic work for Kristeva is the one that shatters the reader by unsettling the border between life and death and exposes the reader to the instability of meaning. She focuses on the initial separation from the mother’s body and its repercussions in the subject and the texts and “plumbs the depths of these turbulent waters to identify where the first, formative moments in the separation of self from the other takes place. These moments prepare the structures of meaning [that] govern and condition me” (Becker-Leckrone 32). Signification exists in human body even before the child learns how to speak and *abjection* situates the child in between the borders of subjectivity where there is a vague meaning of subjectivity. Writing is a way of regenerating the *abject* for Kristeva. The writer who is fascinated by the *abject* does not shy away from perverting the language and experimental literature. Like *abjection* itself, a text is to unsettle its readers through fascination and repulsion. The stability of meaning should be under constant threat and it must challenge the reader. A text grasps the *abject* by embracing the delirium, “its dizziness, giddiness, both pleasurable and unsettling, its ‘passion’ and *Jouissance*” (Becker-Leckrone 49). *Abject*, *abjection* and the sublimation of the *abject* are the major issues in this dissertation. The *abject* will be studied as the in-between space between the subject and the object. Through sublimation, the characters in the mentioned novels get “the possibility of naming the

pre-nominal, the pre-objectal, which are in fact only a trans-nominal, a trans-objectal” (Kristeva *Powers* 11) other.

The connection between narcissism and love is one of the other focal points of this study. In his article “On Narcissism”, Freud refers to primary narcissism as “libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation, a measure of which may justifiably be attributed to every living creature” (“On Narcissism” 73 74). Primary narcissism is aligned with the ego-libido. The libido is directed inwards to the self rather than an exterior object. Secondary narcissism, on the other hand, concerns the libidinal reinvestment of the self in an object. It is a normal process of development as the subject needs to transfer his libidinal investment to another person rather than his/her mother as the source of auto-eroticism. This is stirred by the object libido and it is directed to the persons or objects outside the subject. So, secondary narcissisms “arises through the drawing in of object-cathexes as a secondary one, superimposed upon a primary narcissism that is obscured by a number of different influences” (Freud “On Narcissism” 75).

Freud sees the development of the ego as a departure from primary narcissism leaving the individual with the wish to recover the blissful state. Kristeva reinterprets Freud’s primary narcissism and creates her own narcissistic formula. She claims that “neither screen nor state, primary narcissism is already a structure” (*Tales* 374). Kristeva argues that this narcissistic structure is prior to the oedipal ego (22). It is a kind of identification which differs from “an undifferentiated autoeroticism” (Oliver *Kristeva* 72); the child’s identification with the mother is to be given up for the subject to emerge. Kristeva says that it is “a violent, clumsy breaking away, with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as securing as it is stifling” (*Powers* 13). Oliver argues that “[a]bjection is a way of denying the primal narcissistic identification with the mother, almost” (*Kristeva* 60). The child is left with a double choice. S/he longs for a narcissistic reunion with the mother but in order to become a subject, he has to renounce his/her mother. As the *abject* continues to haunt the child, the primary narcissism is never entirely left behind, so *abjection* means renouncing a part of the subject itself.

Kristeva argues that there is a lack in Freud's explanation of primary narcissism because it is an objectless stage. In the myth of Narcissus, Narcissus identifies with his image and he mistakes the image reflected on the water for an other. Kristeva opposes Freud and states that even though the image on the water belongs to Narcissus himself, there is still an object although it is identification without differentiation (Oliver Kristeva 71). Narcissus, who has no other external object other than his image, which is his reflection is not completely without object. *The object of Narcissus is psychic space; it is representation itself, fantasy*. But he does not know it, and he dies (Kristeva *Tales* 116). If primary narcissism has no object, the infant must be locked up in a closed system where s/he cannot identify with an other at all until the mirror stage. By reshaping Freud's primary narcissism, Kristeva explains that "love" is in the framework of narcissism. She states that:

The experience of love indissolubly ties together the symbolic (what is forbidden, distinguishable, thinkable), the imaginary (what the Self imagines in order to sustain and expand itself), and the real (that impossible domain where affects aspire to everything and where there is no one to take into account the fact that I am only a part). (*Tales* 7)

Love ties the knot among all the registers and it is shaped by primary narcissism. Kristeva states that primary narcissism establishes the first form of symbolization and "a narcissistic destiny would in some way underlie all our object choices" (*Tales* 22). The child firstly identifies herself/himself as a part of her mother's body. This archaic identification is carried out by the breast of the mother. While thinking that the breast connects himself/herself with the mother, s/he also learns that s/he cannot have the breast whenever s/he wants. Therefore, the breast becomes not an object, but a semi object. But the not-yet object thing is a model, a pattern that is related to the oral phase of the libido. Later, the same pattern continues when the child learns language. Through repetition, the child invests her/his libido onto the other speaking being as the secondary form of narcissism. Kristeva states that what saves the child from a whole identification with the mother is the breast of the mother which will turn into a speaking object in the future:

This enigmatic, nonobjectal identification might be related to the internal, recursive, redundant logic of discourse, which is accessible within the ‘afterspeech’ it is an identification that sets up love, the sign, and repetition at the heart of the psyche. (*Tales* 25)

The enjoyment taken from “chewing, swallowing, nourishing oneself” leaves its place to the enjoyment “with words...In being able to receive the mother’s words, to assimilate, to repeat, and reproduce them, I become like him: One. A subject of enunciation” (Kristeva *Tales* 26).

Narcissism is a shield against emptiness. Without the borders that the mother sets up between the semi-subject infant and semi-object breast, the *symbolic* subject-object distinction will be a failure; therefore “our claims and desires toward a true object laden with all the pomp of good and beauty as defined by paternal and social codes, is a revival of narcissism, its abeyance, its conciliation, its consolation” (Kristeva *Tales* 22). What she means by emptiness is “intrinsic to the beginnings of the symbolic function [that] appears as the first separation between what is not yet an Ego and what is not yet an object” (Kristeva *Tales* 24). In other words, the archaic identification with the mother through orality enables the subject to protect herself/himself from the emptiness that will appear between the subject/object and the signifier/signified in the future. Therefore, all the signification system roots in primary narcissism; the mother acts as the key point in this stage.

Nevertheless, Kristeva does not think that the mother is the sole guide in the child’s signification process. The imaginary father is a conduit for the *symbolic* order. He is the combination of father and mother because the mother has already gone through the castration period and is enveloped in the *symbolic*. Given that the archaic connection between the mother and the child is enforced by the *semiotic* mother who has adopted the logic of the *symbolic*, the maternal body is the conglomeration of the *symbolic* and the *semiotic*. Besides, as the child does not know any sexual differentiation before the *symbolic* order, “such a father is the same as ‘both parents’” (Kristeva *Tales* 26). This loving father figure has “a metaphorical function that gives way to the metonymic paternal function; love gives way to desire” (Oliver Kristeva 78). If there is no

maternal diversion to the Imaginary father, the child cannot find a substitute object to direct his love to and ends up as a borderline patient or schizophrenic in his later life because s/he is stuck in autoerotism. S/he does not let anybody love him/her; s/he has objects but these objects arouse hatred in him/her if the mother is too protective and does not put a bar between herself and the baby. Kristeva explains it as the inability of love. The autoerotic person

cannot allow himself to be loved except by a maternal substitute who would cling to his body like a poultice [...] Such a false mother is the only 'farthering' tolerated by one who, henceforth, will indolently be able to enjoy, coiled up about his erogenous zones. (Kristeva *Tales* 35)

So, the subject must agree to lose the mother in order to name and resubstitute her in another person in the *symbolic*. Love is woven by the mother who does not block the infant to be stuck in the imaginary and leads him/her to the Imaginary father. Both parents prepare the child for the *symbolic* where he will have learned that s/he is already detached from the maternal. Merging with the mother and being embedded in the *semiotic* causes the subject neither to love her mother nor himself/herself in the *symbolic*. In this respect, Kristeva foregrounds the maternal function in the signification process of the child but she is careful to warn that what is necessary for the child is not the *abjection* of women but *abjection* of the maternal body (Oliver Kristeva 89)

Kristeva forges her notion of love by employing Freud's theories. In Freudian theory, love is aligned with narcissism which shapes the individual's object choices. The object choice depends on parental and social codes but it is also rooted in

a disposition that chronologically endows narcissism with an intra-symbolic status, dependent upon a third party, but within a disposition that chronologically and logically precedes that of the Oedipal Ego. (Moi *Kristeva Reader* 240-241)

Our love relationships with the Others are founded upon both by our social codes learned from our parents and by the archaic bonds with the mother that precede ego formation and language acquisition. Kristeva questions "how the baby successfully moves from a closed structure (primary narcissism) where the other does not exist to

an open structure (secondary narcissism) permitting socio-symbolic exchange” (Gambaudo *Crisis* 132) and in tune with Freud, she argues that the narcissistic structure is prior to the oedipal ego (Kristeva *Tales* 22). Oliver states that the narcissistic structure “sets up the very possibility of symbolization [...] because “this structure [...] enables the child to negotiate between the maternal body and the Symbolic order” (Kristeva 70-72). As for this archaic transference from the *semiotic* to the *symbolic* which is generated by the narcissism of the subject, the “imaginary father is clearly identified as an agency within the maternal enabling an early transfer from the maternal to the imaginary father” (Gambaudo *Crisis* 135).

Kristeva reads narcissism as a positive agent through which the modern subject can have a healthy relationship with the other because if the subject suffers from “narcissistic depression” (McAfee 60), the depressed subject “would feel personally wounded- the loss she suffered was part of herself, in so far as the wound was suffered before she could distinguish her mother from herself” (61). The wound blocks the subject’s ability to articulate her loss in language and she cannot symbolize it. Therefore, the conduit between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* is blocked for the narcissist and causes melancholy. Therefore, the melancholic is buried in the *semiotic* because her only object is sadness; “for such narcissistic depressed persons, sadness is really the sole object; more precisely it is a substitute object they become attached to, an object they tame and cherish for lack of another” (*Black Sun* 12). Therefore, love and *melancholia* can be seen as the two opposing poles of subject formation and they emerge according to the individual’s acceptance of her loss or denial of the loss and being buried in her own image like Narcissus. Lechte explains that

[a] certain degree of narcissism is [...] a precondition for love. However, the narcissistic person is not necessarily capable of love; for love requires a Third party (Other) whose role is to make possible the identification with another who is like oneself. Consequently, the other (object) of love is impossible unless the Other (Ideal) is also involved. (Julia Kristeva 170)

As primary narcissism is already a divided structure because the child can never be “one” with her mother, and social identifications with the Other in the *symbolic* are substitutes for the archaic attachment with the mother, the subject faces her own

unstable and divided nature. The imaginary father figure, by helping the child name and symbolize her loss, forms the basis of the narcissistic structure. As this imaginary father figure disengages the child from the engulfing maternal body and prepares the child for the *symbolic*, as “an ideal other who lacks nothing” and whom the semiotic body identifies with” (Oliver *Kristeva* 78), Kristeva states that the imaginary father figure “insures the subject’s entrance into the universe of signs and creation” (*Black Sun* 23).

The possibility of love which results from the positive narcissistic structure of the individual and *melancholia* which is caused by the negative narcissism are also related to Kristeva’s ethical and political aims in psychoanalysis. If the subject cannot negate the narcissistic process and locate it in a different form in the *symbolic* [by connecting with the other people and substituting the Others for the maternal other], separation between herself and the outside world is never activated. The *symbolic* father or the father figures who have the *symbolic* function are significant for the individual to transfer her desire from the maternal other to the Other in culture. The imaginary father, who is the embodiment of the mother and father, is the herald of the paternal father and it helps the child to move into the *symbolic* order. As Gambaudo summarizes

On the socio-symbolic side, the change in the representer of the paternal means the disconnection of the symbolic subject from their affective life, that is the suppressing of the life drive and return of the death drive. If the imaginary father is a pre-cursor of the paternal symbolic, the failure of the paternal function appears later as a disconnection subject/symbol. This disconnection testifies to the subject’s encounter with paternal agencies incapable of fulfilling the subject’s need for social containment [...] The failure of the paternal function on both accounts leads to the possibility of a new structuring of the individual, a narcissistic type. (179)

Kristeva believes that narcissism is one of the biggest maladies of the modern life. The society we live in is a narcissistic society where individuals cannot reach the means to symbolize their affective narcissistic bonds with their primary love object (the mother or a person who has the maternal function) in the *symbolic* life. Unable to express these affective emotions, society accommodates a large number of borderline subjects who are “under the sway of affects and drives that are cut off from any symbolic life

encompassing and supported by connections with others” (Beardsworth 170). Beardsworth names it “the tendential severance of the semiotic and the symbolic” and explains it as the nihilism of modern individuals due to the fact that “the failings of modern institutions and discourses have left the burden of connecting the semiotic and symbolic on the individual, and the suffering subjectivity that psychoanalytic practice encounters is the suffering of this burden” (14)

So, the “modern nihilism” problem lies in the individuals’ inability to connect the *symbolic* with the *semiotic*. Beardsworth uses the term “nihilism” to point out the impasse over unexpressed and unsymbolized drive affects as the modern institutions and discourses cannot provide any ways by which individuals are able to release the tension of the drive-based affects that lie buried in their psyches. As people cannot name this psychic disturbance which shows its effects on the body, they cannot connect with the Others as they are detached from the maternal other which will provide them with the chance to realize that differentiation already lies in one’s own self. An individual who cannot accept and sublimate the otherness in herself cannot welcome the Other in the *symbolic* and therefore becomes a victim of the “social and political ills of Western cultures: xenophobia, racism, nationalism, misogyny, and sexism” (Beardsworth 170).

Kristeva offers two solutions for the aporia of the modern man: psychoanalysis or aesthetic productions. Psychoanalysis helps the patients who claim to suffer from loneliness and isolation from society by showing them the real problem lies in the way they turn a blind eye to their own strangeness; psychoanalysis is “experienced as a journey into the strangeness of the other and of oneself, toward an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable” (*Strangers* 182). Likewise, artistic practice or aesthetic “can offer a transition from the new suffering world or psychic prison (narcissistic constriction) to the new amatory world or the psyche as ‘open system’: formation, deformation, and transformation of the subject and meaning” (Beardsworth 170). A positive narcissism and love are important in this study because all the novels pivot around love as the solution for the aporia of the modern man. Coetzee considers the problem of South Africa as “the failure of love” (*Doubling* 58); Tekin’s female narrator jolts out of a

fixed subjectivity thanks to her maternal love and Winterson's notion of love brings forward a revitalized understanding of the novel. Love as the core of *Lighthousekeeping* will also be explained by Kristeva's explanation about how Eros was transformed into a religious model in Christianity. The connection between Eros, Diotima and Babel Dark in the novel will be interpreted in the related chapter but some theoretical information is necessary beforehand.

Kristeva states that in Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, "where the mythic discourse tumbles into philosophical discourse, we apprehend the first assertive apology for Western Eros under the guise of homosexual love" (*Tales* 59). Religion has remodeled the Greek Eros and Psyche story in order to fit it into a more morally acceptable schema. Therefore, the essence of love (Eros) has been encumbered by the heterosexual and normative yoking. Plato reversed man's love for God, which has homosexual connotations, and explained it in a more philosophical fashion; he refashioned man's love for God "soar[ing] on a winged flight toward the supreme God through the glowing, soothing, ebullient vision of the Beautiful" (Kristeva *Tales* 59). In *Symposium*, Eros was explained as the philosopher's desire to reach the ultimate sense of 'being one' with God; it is mainly "the desire for what man lacks" (Kristeva *Tales* 62). Likewise, in *Phaedrus*, he associated love with desire and argued that "man [is] yearning for fusion with the supreme God, a yearning at the same time for immortality" (in *Tales* 63). Eros is the "intermediary" power which Plato called "daemon"; he is the bridge between body and soul. The fallen man, through Eros, can soar up to God and "climb toward the celestial" (in *Tales* 63) where he can reach the soul of God; as man is the crucible where body (Eros) and soul (Psyche) dwell together, he can reach God only through the association of the two.

In *Symposium*, Plato also refers to "mania" in love. Rather than moving to God, this kind of love is more feminine and the origins of it go back to an ancient time where "dual, spherical beings would move about, wholly sated with themselves, so much so that they made the gods jealous" (in *Tales* Kristeva 69). Plato reproaches the dual nature of androgynous love. Gods punished them by cutting their bodies in two, causing each of them to look for the other part; this punishment was "sexualization"

of the former dual androgynous whole. So, love took a new form in which “each sex is the ‘symbol’ of the other” (Kristeva *Tales* 70). Kristeva states that the androgyne loves the person because he is enthralled by his own image. He is “otherless, [c]oalescing in himself, he cannot even coalesce; he is fascinated with his own image. We are of course dealing with the homosexual fantasy of androgynism, not with biological makeup” (Kristeva *Tales* 70).

Socrates, in a similar fashion, considered Eros as an erected body whose wings melt and whose body softens when he flies up to heaven. During this process, the wings of Eros get swollen “in a state of ebullition and effervescence- which may be compared to the irritation and uneasiness in the gums at the time of the cutting teeth-bubbles up and has a feeling of uneasiness and tickling” (in *Love* 64). Kristeva argues that the metaphors that Socrates uses to describe the effervescence of Eros- “warming, swelling or ebullition” (in *Tales* 64) bear sexual connotation. The delirium of the prophets, philosophers or the poet who experience this kind of sublimated love (Eros) welcome the “*philosophical discourse* [...] where the phallic domination is elevated and metamorphosed into apprenticeship of the Good and the True” (Kristeva *Tales* 67).

In connection with the psychosexual development of the child, a boy and a girl experience this heavenly androgynous place before they are separated from their mothers. Yet, when the mother detaches her body from the baby, she sexualizes him/her. If the child continues to be haunted by the image of the mother as his/ her other half in fantasy, “he fears the speech that differentiates, cuts off, identities. His love chatter is a panicky flight away from the joys and discontents of sexualized love” (Kristeva *Tales* 71). Unable to find another substitute “other half” in language, the androgyne is very close to psychosis: “absorption of the feminine by man, veiling of the feminine in woman” [...]; the androgyne is a phallus disguised as a woman; not knowing the difference, he is the sliest masquerade of a liquidation of femininity” (Kristeva *Tales* 71). Boys desexualize the homosexual Eros after they forsake the mother by virtue of heterosexual love. However, “there remains [...] an erotic dynamic that has become soul” (Kristeva *Tales* 76). Each sex yearns for the

“androgynous” aura of the undivided body after s/he is sexualized; the only place where they can experience this state of euphoria is the *semiotic chora*. So, the mother has the function to sexualize and enculture the child. As the ancient Gods did, she separates the body and the soul; therefore “the ideal Ego of man powerfully withstands the devastating upheavals that are to the contrary induced by sexual, homosexual passions” (Kristeva *Tales* 75). S/he detaches herself/ himself from “homosexual Eros” (Kristeva *Tales* 75). Kristeva notes that Freud names the desire for Eros as “death drive”: “umbilicated with death in his aggressive thrust toward the desired object, warding off death through symbolic fecundity, which creates objects of wisdom, man goes round the feminine, which is his abyss and his night” (*Tales* 76).

Borrowing from Plato, Kristeva also states that there is a master-slave relationship between Diotima (the soul/the female/the Phallus) and man. Through “spiritual procreation”, man ascends towards the “supreme vision”, which is “no longer dialectic knowledge but the mystery of path toward what is wanting [...] an intellectual transposition of a pagan jouissance” (*Tales* 74). The phallic mother figure Diotima becomes the *symbolic power*

that thwarts the traps of penial performance, would in short begin with an appropriation of archaic maternal power. Man, as he displaces his desire onto the field of knowledge, finally works out the recipes of Diotima who relieves him of the deadly unleashing of his erotic passion and holds up to him the enthusiastic vision of an immortal, unalterable object. A tracing of the ideal mother, that object of ideal knowledge allows man to build up his Ideal Ego. (*Tales* 75)

In other words, the path of Eros soaring upwards to reach unity with God/ Good/ the soul is led backwards; while flying up to the celestial soul, his feathers are swollen; yet Diotima, as the “symbolic power- the mother who has the Phallus- educates him to transpose his desire; therefore, man [...] remains constituted by the appeal of the tumescent-detumescent penis” (Kristeva *Tales* 75).

Melancholia is another topic that Kristeva delves into by referring to Freud. Melancholy and depression are mentioned as the same traumatic conditions in *Black Sun* although depression is a milder form of melancholia. *Melancholia* in its simple

definition is the subject's eternal sadness for the loss of the mother. Every subject goes through melancholy at different levels. It encapsulates both love and hatred. It is a form of love because the love for the lost mother is never forsaken; it also brings forward hate as the subject hates the mother since she is the source of sadness and the subject is afraid of being devoured by that force and brushes aside his/her yearning to be with the pre-Oedipal mother in the *symbolic*. Kristeva marks a difference between objectal depression and narcissitic depression. Objectal depression emerges after the subject goes through the *thetic* break successfully but in his/her grown up days, recognizes that a loss that s/he cannot name pushes him/ her to sadness. Narcissistic melancholic people, on the other hand, suffer from the same sadness but their melancholy emerges before the *thetic* break. This kind of depression emerges when the subject loses his/her primary love still in the *chora* (McAfee 60). Kristeva explains such kind of depression as below:

Their sadness (the narcissistic individuals) would be rather the most archaic expression of an unsymbolizable unnamable narcissistic wound, so precocious that no outside agent (subject or agent) can be used as referent. For such narcissistic depressed persons, sadness is really the sole object; more preciously it is a substitute object they become attached to, an object they tame and cherish for lack of another. (*Black Sun* 12)

As the subject cannot differentiate between self and other in the *semiotic chora*, she cannot canalize his/her love for another person to the *symbolic* and sadness takes the place of the object, so “the melancholy person appears to stop cognizing as well as uttering, sinking into the blankness of asymbolia or the excess of unorderable cognitive chaos” (Kristeva *Black Sun* 33).

Kristeva names the loss that cannot be uttered as the *Thing*. She also calls it the “black sun” which alludes to the poet Gerard Nerval “whose poem ‘The Disinherited’ contains the phrase *soleil noir* or *black sun*” (McAfee 67). The melancholic person does not withdraw from the *symbolic* entirely but reshapes it in accordance with the domination of the affects/drives:

If loss, bereavement, and absence trigger the work of the imagination and nourish it permanently as much as they threaten and spoil it, it is also noteworthy that the work

of art as fetish emerges when the activating sorrow has been repudiated. The artist consumed by melancholia is at the same time the most relentless in his struggle against the symbolic abdication that blankets him. (Kristeva *Black Sun* 9)

Kristeva associates melancholy with the black sun “bright and black at the same time” (*Black Sun* 13) as it is the root of both hatred and love. The language that a melancholic uses is not on a par with the language of a healthy person. As the melancholic still lingers on the memory of the lost object of desire in the present time, his/her writing is laden with music:

...primary identification proves to be fragile, insufficient to secure other identifications, which are symbolic this time, on the basis of which the erotic Thing might become a captivating Object of desire insuring continuity in a metonymy of pleasure. The melancholy Thing interrupts desiring metonymy, just as it prevents working out the loss within the psyche. How can I approach the place I have referred to? Sublimation is an attempt to do so; through melody, rhythm, semantic polyvalency, the so-called poetic form, which decomposes and recomposes signs, is the sole “container” seemingly able to secure an uncertain but adequate hold over the Thing. (Kristeva *Black Sun* 14)

While in the normal case, separation from the mother results in the establishment of the *symbolic*, the melancholic invests the metaphorical correspondence of the loss in the musicality of language. Yet it does not mean that every melancholic turns out to be an artist because for the melancholic, “language has to work as a translation of loss, while being quite distinct from the loss itself. While affect can be metaphorized and used for artistic ends [...] loss is real for the melancholic” (Lechte *Kristeva* 78). The *symbolic* is not barred from the melancholic entirely, the melancholic people still have a grasp on it but they know that

a signifying sequence, necessarily an arbitrary one, will appear to them as heavily, violently arbitrary; they will think it absurd, it will have no meaning. No word, no object in reality will be likely to have a coherent concatenation that will also be suitable to a meaning or referent. (Kristeva *Black Sun* 51)

Kristeva correlates melancholy with the disavowal of negation. Language is meaningful to subjects because they negate the loss of the mother. A person who does not fall into melancholy reacts to the loss as: “I have lost the essential object that happens to be, in the final analysis, my mother” (*Black Sun* 43) is what the speaking

subject says. “But no, I have found her again in signs, or rather since I consent to lose her I have not lost her (that is the negation), I can recover her in language” (*Black Sun* 43). The melancholic people do not negate the loss of the mother; on the contrary, “they cancel it out, suspend it, and nostalgically fall back on the level of object (The *Thing*) of their loss, which is just what they do not manage to lose, to which they remain painfully riveted” (*Black Sun* 44).

Kristeva also explains the similarity between death drive and *melancholia*. She likens the *symbolic* withdrawal of the melancholic to Freud’s death drive (*Thanatos*). Melancholic people do not shield themselves against death and they cannot tolerate Eros. They prefer to “be with the Thing up to the limit of negative narcissism leading them to Thanatos. They are defended against Eros by sorrow but without defense against *Thanatos* because they are wholeheartedly tied to the Thing” (*Black Sun* 20). As a result of being detached from the *symbolic*, the subject goes through a disintegration of the self; she turns to a narcissistic state; therefore “depression is the hidden face of Narcissus” (5). Both the death drive and the narcissistic state threaten the unitary being of the subject and “the subject loses cohesion, the ability to integrate its experiences, and it risks further disintegration” (McAfee 64).

In *Black Sun*, Kristeva offers the Imaginary Father figure, which was mentioned before, as a solution for the melancholic. The Imaginary Father is different from the *symbolic* father in that he does stand as a figure of oppression. He provides for the subject a soft passage from the Imaginary to the *symbolic*. Thanks to him, the subject “makes such a triumph over sadness [...] such an identification, which may be called phallic or symbolic, insures the subject’s entrance into the universe of signs and creation” (*Black Sun* 24). It is necessary that the imaginary father transform into the oedipal father later:

The supporting father of such a symbolic triumph is not the oedipal father but truly that “imaginary father”, “father of an individual prehistory”, according to Freud, who guarantees primary identification. Nevertheless, it is imperative that this father in individual prehistory be capable of playing his part as oedipal father in symbolic Law, for it is on the basis of the harmonious blending of the two facets of fatherhood that the abstract and arbitrary signs of communication may be fortunate enough to be tied to the affective meaning of prehistorical identifications (*Black Sun* 24)

So, by referring to the imaginary father of Freud, Kristeva dissents from the Symbolic father of Lacan because the imaginary father does not represent the Law or the institutions that stand for the embodiment of the Law. Rather than being a strict law maker figure, “the father of an individual history” acts as a catalyst between the mother and the child.

Melancholia is also related to self-hatred and matricide. Especially for the female child, blaming the mother as the source of all depression is stronger than in the male child. The melancholic subject transmutes her matricidal desire into murdering herself/himself in the symbolic:

In order to protect mother I kill myself while knowing-phantasmatic and provocative knowledge-that it comes from her, the death-bearing she- Gehenna....Thus my hatred is safe and my matricidal guilt erased. I make of Her an image of Death so as not to be shattered through the hatred I bear against myself when I identify with Her [...] She who is death-bearing, therefore I do not kill myself in order to kill her but I attack her, harass her, represent her... (Kristeva *Black Sun* 28)

As the female child’s first object of desire is the mother and it is harder for her to canalize her feelings to the other sex than for the male child, she locates her mother as the source of hatred. As she identifies herself with her mother, her hatred is aggravated. The hatred is diverted to herself because she needs to purge herself from the matricidal drives. She buries her mother inside her metaphorically in order to get rid of *melancholia*. The matricidal drive is inherent in the fear of castration. She will either let her bond with her mother be prolonged, which means that she will allow her mother to “pulverize me [her] into melancholia” (Kristeva *Black Sun* 28), or she will get over castration period and find another substitute for her desire in the *symbolic*. Either choice is burdensome for her because as Kristeva states “tremendous psychic intellectual, and affective effort a woman must make in order to find the other sex as erotic object” (*Black Sun* 30) makes the object choice of woman harder than of man.

Kristevan theories on melancholy and love corroborate and substantiate my argument in this study. By bringing the other/the body back into theory, these novels manifest the political and ethical consciousness of the authors forcefully. *Melancholia* is going

to be studied as “narcissistic depression” (McAfee 60) which refers to the suffering of one who has lost his/her primary love while still in *semiotic chora*. Kristeva explains this notion as the sadness of the narcissistic depressed person which stems from “the most archaic expression of an unsymbolizable, unnameable narcissistic wound, so precocious that no outside agent (subject or agent) can be used as referent” (*Black Sun* 12). If the melancholic person cannot let herself free of the overwhelming sadness of the object she has lost in the *chora*, “suicide is not a disguised act of war but a merging with sadness and, beyond it, with that impossible love, never reached, always elsewhere, such as the promises of nothingness, of death” (*Black Sun* 13). Thus, *melancholia* can draw one to suicide if it is not sublimated or the narcissistic person cannot find a means to relieve the tension of this lack. Love, on the other hand, is the reverse side of *melancholia* because “in the rapture of love, the limits of one’s identity vanish, at the same time that the precision of reference and meaning becomes blurred in love’s discourse” (Kristeva *Tales* 2). She suggests that love can offer a possibility of seeing oneself as the other and therefore alleviates the fear the Other creates because after recognizing her own otherness, the subject realizes that a self is divisible and it is not unified. Love can function as a mediator between a “self” and an other/Other.

As for the connection between subject/object dichotomy and *melancholia*/love, and their pertinence to this study, this study argues that love can be a solution for the subject/object dichotomy whereas melancholy bars the individual from having a healthy relationship with the other because the melancholic cannot utter her loss linguistically and regresses to the archaic state. For the melancholic, the signs lose their drive affect. However, especially art can restore the melancholic sadness as the musical and poetic properties of language, which are generated by semantic polyphony, enable the subject to have a hold on the *symbolic*. Art acts as the translator of the suffering of the loss of the mother. It activates the *symbolic* production and the loss of the mother is articulated in signs. While a melancholic person is withheld from the *symbolic* so s/he cannot recognize an Other, love renders a union with the external Object possible. Although the recognition of the other does not offer a perfect harmony, language saves the subject from being engulfed in asymbolia. In this study,

especially in *Lighthousekeeping* chapter, the consequences of finding one's own language and evading *melancholia* will be the main focus of analysis.

2.2. Kristeva's Understanding of Politics

Kristeva's understanding of politics is based on her arguments about the condition of being a stranger. Who the Other/stranger is necessary to be able to explicate how *abjection* can be analyzed in terms of colonization in Coetzee chapter. Kristeva considers the foreigner as a symptom "that precisely turns 'we' into a problem, perhaps makes it impossible, [t]he foreigner comes in when the consciousness of my difference arises, and he disappears when we all acknowledge ourselves as foreigners, unamenable to bonds and communities" (Kristeva *Strangers* 1). Although there is no direct connection between *abjection* and being a "stranger" in her theories, the *abject* as "immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady; a terror that disassembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it" (Kristeva *Powers* 4) can be read as the expelled other who reveals the fragility of identity in subject/object division.

One establishes her identity against the threat of the other who reminds him/her of his/her own strangeness. In *Powers of Horror*, the *abject* is related to Freud's primal repression. Once the child is separated from the maternal body, s/he has to *abject* the maternal body because it is a necessary condition for the subject to construct a distinct identity. If the maternal body is not rejected and separation from the mother fails in the psychic realm, the subject cannot establish her own separate identity. What is *abjected* is what is excluded and expelled from the subject's own self. Therefore, for the maternal other to be *abjected*, "[a]n unshakable adherence to Prohibition and Law is necessary if that perverse interspace of *abjection* is to be hemmed in and thrust aside. Religion. Morality. Law" (*Powers* 16). The mother must symbolically be murdered so that the individual can enter language. The *abject* disturbs social order. However, the *abject* mother is never entirely jettisoned. The *abject* "remains on the periphery of consciousness, a looming presence, as we've seen is the case with filth and death. So, too, with the mother. In fact, this fear of falling back into the mother's body, metaphorically at least of losing one's own identity, is what Freud identified as the

ultimate source of the feeling of uncanniness” (McAfee 48). As the uncanny is “what was once familiar” (Freud “The Uncanny” 151), the fear generated by the strangeness of the other results from one’s own fear of encountering her own otherness. The ego protects itself against the people or the objects who remind her of her own other repressed maternal connection. Nevertheless, the maternal body is never entirely buried in the unconscious and it strikes and animates the *symbolic*. It emerges in the poetic side of language; it challenges the symbolic and emerges in the “trans-syntactic inscription of emotion” (Kristeva *Powers* 204). As the *abject* never entirely recedes, it always challenges the subject. If the *abject* can be sublimated in language and it is never entirely cast off, it shows us that the symbolic (Law or prohibition) is not an impenetrable border either. The *symbolic* is always exposed to be infiltrated through by the *semiotic*. This is why alterity must be regarded as a constructed notion because it does not naturally emerge; the borders between self (individual, nation or colonizer) and the other is established in order to keep the other (the colonized, the foreigner, the stranger) at bay. This border is an imaginary one which is substantiated by the system, law, religion, state powers and so on.

In *Strangers to Ourselves*, Kristeva argues that “with the establishment of nation states we come to the only modern, acceptable, and clear definition of foreignness: the foreigner is the one who does not belong to the state in which we are, the one who does not have the same nationality” (96). She views national identity as awareness of difference and the acceptance that there is a group called “we” and “they”. She also explains this border between “we” and “they” in psychological terms, applying Freud’s notion of the uncanny to the crisis of identity and the difficulty of recognizing alterity:

Also strange is the experience of the abyss separating me from the other who shocks me-I do not even perceive him, perhaps he crushes me because I negate him. Confronting the foreigner whom I reject and with whom at the same time I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container, the memory of experiences when I had been abandoned overwhelm me, I lose my composure. I feel "lost," "indistinct," "hazy." The uncanny strangeness allows for many variations: they all repeat the difficulty I have in situating myself with respect to the other and keep going over the course of identification-projection that lies at the foundation of my reaching autonomy. (*Strangers* 187)

The foreigner/ stranger is seen as a threat who can disrupt the harmony and the unity of the supposedly homogenous “national” group and therefore, s/he is expelled as the Other and even received with both fascination and repulsion (Kristeva *Strangers* 96). She adds that as today the slave/master hierarchy is abolished, “if not in people's unconscious at least in our ideologies and aspirations”, the native cannot feel at home, either; ‘every native feels himself to be more or less a ‘foreigner’ in his ‘own and proper’ place, and that metaphorical value of the word ‘foreigner’ first leads the citizen to a feeling of discomfort as to his sexual, national, political, professional identity” (Kristeva *Strangers* 19).

Although nation states try to secure their own safe boundaries by the sense of belonging, this is a fantasy because the homogenous societies cannot properly work on the principle of inclusion and exclusion. The more the boundaries are tried to be strengthened, the more fundamental the nations become, resulting in political violence or xenophobia. Kristeva reads this wider political issue from a more individual psychological perspective and tries to broaden it by referring to the uncanny and the fear of the other. She connects the disruption of borders of the self by the “uncanny” other who creates fear with the foreigner who disrupts the national identity of national states. The fear of the uncanny can also be associated with the fear of the *abject*. As one’s secure sense of self is disrupted by the uncanny other, who is disgusted or who triggers fear, and as the foreigner/stranger reminds one of her own fears of being engulfed in the maternal other, the nations expel and *abject* the Others not because they are different from them, but because the foreignness is already inherent within one’s own self. If the *abject* is “a somatic symptom [...] a structure within the body” (Kristeva *Powers* 11), and *abjection* refers to a body that is separated from the maternal body in order to have a separate identity, the borders between self and other are not only drawn by psyche but also body. Therefore, while dealing with the problem of otherness, the body and its borders are an inseparable part of this study.

The problem of alterity is also highly affiliated with drawing the boundaries of the body which are always exposed to the intrusion of the stranger. Just as nations demarcate their boundaries by substantial borders to keep themselves safe from the

foreigners, the individual draws a border between her body and what disrupts the boundaries of her body. The analogy is striking between the individual and the nation. Just as the individual's body is always exposed to the outside and the others' bodies, a nation's concrete boundaries between the natives and the foreigners is never stable. As the contextual background of Coetzee chapter is colonization and the target novel dwells on the tension between the colonizer and the colonized, the web of connections between the *abject*/uncanny and the expulsion of the stranger play a preponderant role in the analysis of this novel. Although Kristeva's focus is on nation states in *Strangers to Ourselves*, the concept of being a stranger in a country and sublimation of the *abject* which "is nothing else than the possibility of naming the prenominal, the pre-objectal, which are in fact only a trans-nominal, a trans-objectal" (Kristeva *Powers* 11) will provide a backdrop to the in-between situation of the female narrator in the novel.

Kristeva does not view *abjection* only from a nationalist perspective but also presents it as a larger social and cultural phenomenon. According to her, human civilization and culture are established upon excluding the other, the foreigner and "this attitude towards foreignness [is] a necessary and constitutive feature of our self-identity" (McAfee 3). Kristeva does not present her theories on the subject and other as a solution to the hatred and division between individuals, but as a theorist who came from Bulgaria and lived in France, her personal experiences of being a stranger in a country and her psychoanalytic approach to the problem of being a stranger suggest that "[t]he ethics of psychoanalysis implies a politics: it would involve a cosmopolitanism of a new sort that, cutting across governments, economies, and markets, might work for a mankind whose solidarity is founded on the consciousness of its unconscious-desiring, destructive, fearful, empty, impossible" (*Strangers* 192). That is, psychoanalysis can be used as an antidote to political and nationalistic divisions between self and other because bringing the body back to theory is quite an ethical and political act, too. Although she does not flesh out how the notion of "*abjection*" can be a remedy for the national identity problem clearly, her insights into the individual psyche and the role of the unconscious in identity construction

demonstrate that exploring the individual psyche can help understand the operations of the political discourse. As Oliver in *Reading Kristeva* pinpoints,

[w]hile Kristeva maintains that politics must be informed by a psychoanalysis that recognizes unconscious structures, at the same time she emphasizes the importance of a politics of individuals. That is to say, she is not content to analyze signifying systems, including political institutions, merely in terms of their structures. In addition, she is not willing to reduce politics to party or class struggles. She rejects political interpretations that merely absorb individuals into groups [...] She maintains that her own work has been primarily concerned with individuals rather than classes or groups. As a social scientist, she claims that she has tried to balance theoretical generalizations with an emphasis on the individual differences[...] much of her writing grapples with the problems of identity and how to think of individual differences without absorbing them into a stable and unified identity. (148)

Therefore, it could be suggested that Kristevan theories, which start with her interrogation in the language formation and the effect of language in the identity construction, reflect a very political and ethical dimension which cannot be restricted with “party or class struggles” (Oliver *Kristeva* 148). Her main focus is to show that the social practices, institutions and ideologies are established upon a certain signifying system whose boundaries are shaped by the borders between groups. These symbolic social constructions, groupings and restrictions widen the gap between the people who believe themselves to belong to a group and expel the other people as Others in terms of the borders they locked themselves in. However, with the help of psychoanalysis, these fabricated groupings between people can be questioned and their “constructed” nature can be unveiled by focusing on the fact that the signifying rules shape every social practice. Moreover, the individual is taught to respect her borders and whoever shatters the unity of her borders and whoever does not conform to the rules and supposedly unified nature of the group are expelled as the stranger.

Kristeva shifts the focus to the constructed nature of these ideological systems and approaches the problem from the perspective of individual identity which she thinks must be unleashed from the self/Other borders. The individual differences are so wide that they cannot be categorized in any groups because every individual goes through a different identity and subjectivity process; everybody’s signification system is unique and therefore rather than dealing with the opposition between self and other from a

macrocosmic perspective, by undercutting the operation of the signification system on the individual base, “the subject can understand the other, sympathize with the other, and more, take the place of the other, because the subject is other” (Oliver *Kristeva* 149). In “The System and the Speaking Subject” Kristeva explains it as follows:

What semiotics has discovered in studying 'ideologies' (myths, rituals, moral codes, arts, etc.) as sign-systems is that the law governing or, if one prefers, the major constraint affecting any social practice lies in the fact that it signifies; i.e., that it is articulated like a language. Every social practice, as well as being the object of external (economic, political, etc.) determinants, is also determined by a set of signifying rules, by virtue of the fact that there is present an order of language; that this language has a double articulation (signifier/signified), that this duality stands in an arbitrary relation to the referent; and that all social functioning is marked by the split between referent and symbolic and by the shift from signified to signifier coextensive with it. (125)

If the determinate “signifying rules” of the “ideologies” are shaped in accordance with the signifier/signified duality in language, the root of the chasm between different political groups or nations can be understood better. By foregrounding the body, she shows that the pattern of the language is already inherent in the body; the alterity is always present in the subject and therefore the subject can never attain a stable identity. The social relations which are founded upon the *symbolic* base of language and therefore do not let the individuals question their own split psyche force individuals to protect their own stable identity as if there was such a stability. So, when we “flee or combat strangers or foreigners, we are struggling with our own unconsciousness” (*Strangers* 289). Kristeva proposes that being a stranger can be understood by interrogating

the types of operation characteristic of the two sides of this split; thereby exposing them, that is to say, on the one hand, to the bio-physiological processes (themselves already inescapably part of signifying processes; what Freud labelled ‘drives’), and, on the other hand, to social constraints (family structures, modes of production, etc.) (“The System and the Speaking Subject” 126)

Thus, the border between identity and alterity is fragile, which in the end can result in “narrowing down the space between pain, frustration, violence and anger and conscious rational thought” (Oliver *Kristeva* 152). Such an attempt shows that

psychoanalysis is a political attempt and an altered vision to micro-politics of the individual subject can bring a larger political and social transformation in society.

Artistic productions, particularly the literary texts which are categorized as “genotext” in Kristevan terminology have both ethical and political functions. The ethical stance of the writer is aligned with her political consciousness and Kristeva most of the time uses these words interchangeably. She states that:

Ethics should be understood here to mean the negativizing of narcissism within a *practice*; in other words, a practice is ethical when it dissolves those narcissistic fixations (ones that are narrowly confined to the subject) to which the signifying process succumbs in its socio-symbolic realization. Practice, such as we have defined it, positing and dissolving meaning and the unity of the subject, therefore encompasses the ethical. The text, in its signifying disposition and its signification, is a practice assuming all positivity in order to negativize it and thereby make visible the process *underlying* it [...] The ethical cannot be stated, instead it is practiced to the point of loss, and the text is one of the most accomplished examples of such a practice. (*Revolution* 233, 234)

Accordingly, every avant-garde text which focuses on the fragmentation of an individual cannot be accepted as ethical. For a text to be ethical, it should stand against the “normative” and “libertarian” ethics of the modern world because the subject is imprisoned in her make-believe world thinking that her ego is transcendental and unified. The texts which lay bare the impossibility of a transcendent and stable ego of the subjects show this impossibility in the writing practice. Therefore, a text which is not enclosed by linearity and “foreclosure of the subject-as-model” (Kristeva *Revolution* 233) can be claimed to have an ethical position. Yet this ethical stance does not give any moral lessons about how to be an ethical subject or how to topple down the existing *symbolic* systems or paternal Law; on the contrary, it shows that a real ethical text is the one which is not enclosed by linearity or the *symbolic* base of language. The *symbolic* is never an enclosed system and it has a fragile structure because the bar between the signifier and the signified is already fragile; the representational relation between them is open to be torn apart by the *semiotic* pluralization of meaning. The ethical, which “cannot be stated” (Kristeva *Revolution* 233) but displayed in process and practice, is also aligned with the political imperative of a text. Kristeva invites us to rethink the meaning of revolution and politics.

Revolution does not mean an attempt to overthrow the system. She states that “one cannot revolt against systems. I think that the possibility for individual revolt still exists. This could appear as too minimal, but I think that it is the only possibility that remains: individual interrogation” (*Revolt She Said* 113).

The system will always have an authority “which is referred to in psychoanalysis as the ‘paternal function’” (Kristeva *Revolt She Said* 109) that cannot be uprooted but the “need to revolt against the authorities is permanent” (Kristeva *Revolt She Said* 109). The political system Kristeva refers to is the social *symbolic* system which blocks the *semiotic*. In the interview carried out by Coward, she states that “I also have the impression that in our modern society [...] we think that everything is political. When we say political we say something which cannot be analyzed, it’s the final act. This is political...stop. It’s tremendously important, this final enigma, which is politics” (*Portable Kristeva* 343). She believes that people tend to see everything through the lens of politics as a result of which politics turns into a dogma, an “enigma”. This enigmatic membrane around the term political results in “a meaningless and passionless fetishization of politics” (Edmonds 214). However, attaching every problem to the political discourse does not bring a solution as “the very repetition of the political question represents the failure of the political discourse to give meaning to human problems” (Edmonds 215). Rather than turning the political into a fundamentalist concept, Kristeva offers psychoanalysis, love and art as the means which will lead the subjects to interrogate themselves. In the same interview, she underlines that “if artists and psychoanalysts act politically they act politically through an intervention on an individual level. And it can be a main political concern to give value to the individual”. (*Portable Kristeva* 349). When the subject can face her inner state and ameliorate herself by the acceptance of the primal loss, “it is not the accomplishment of a solitary individual, but rather depends on relation to others” (Keltner *Thresholds* 105). Kristeva explains how the individual can carry this accomplishment to the realm of society and how signification “assumes a social relation of speakers” (105) by referring to Freud in *Strangers to Ourselves*.

Kristeva's ideas on politics can also be explained by the murder of the father and creating new father figures. She states that the whole civilization is founded upon the murder of the father as Freud mentions in *Totem and Taboo*. Firstly, brothers revolted against their father and killed him in jealousy because he kept all the females for himself. Then they celebrated their father's death by ceremonies and feasts. Then, they replaced the dead father with an imaginary father figure. After that, they felt guilty and they formed a band together to relieve the guilt, as a result of which the dead father figure became stronger and he became a transcendental figure. Yet, later the rituals which connected the brothers became meaningless and they forgot what they were revolting against. When the brothers lost the father figure that connected them before, they turned against each other; "the father has been dispersed, digested, completely consumed" (Edmonds 222). As we cannot bring the father back to life, we invent a new imaginary father figure; this imaginary father figure emerges as a result of the loss of the father. In religious and secular discourse, new father figures emerged. When the father's memory is lost, "the possibility of bringing him back imaginatively, aesthetically, and artistically has been opened" (Edmonds 222). So, through imagination, this loss can be sublimated. Instead of revolting or rebelling against a dominant father figure, the loss of it must be accepted and revolution must not be considered as a riot against the paternal authority but as a chance to form new bonds among groups which do not exclude the others but come together in interaction.

Kristeva states that "[e]ach participant hopes to satisfy the need to confront an authority in his/her imagination; it becomes possible not only to protest indefinitely (the rite is repeated) but also to renew the rite" (*Non-Sense* 14). This new mankind will be the one "whose solidarity is founded on the consciousness of its unconsciousness" (Kristeva *Strangers* 192). This new imaginary politics is beyond brotherhood and parental authority and political discourse, whose fundamentalism and extreme fanaticism give way to alienation, exclusion or oppression of people. If the father figure in Freud's primitive social structure is not accepted as a transcendental figure, and the individual interrogates her own *unheimlich* and uncanny strangeness, a new form of political revolution can be created. The *unheimlich* feeling is caused by the

individual's disconnection from the mother, killing his father out of jealousy and then losing his entire connection with the mother (or the maternal).

As for the political revolution (in Kristeva's terms) to be actualized, there are two options for the individual; he will either refuse the uncanny ("Such an elimination of the strange could lead to an elimination of the psyche, leaving, at the cost of mental impoverishment, the way open to acting out, including paranoia and murder") (Kristeva *Strangers* 190) or accept the loss of the mother (and the father) and sublimate it through imagination. The imaginative possibility is actualized by deferral of meaning, displacement of desire and the sublimation of the maternal. It is not an escapist flight into the unknown realm of imagination but a means to activate the *semiotic* artistically or aesthetically through imagination. The political, in its traditional understanding, is not established by the power of imagination but on paternal authority and brotherhood, which have no real equivalence in the modern world (The authority is just the reformed version of the dead father whose power has got more intense as it is dead). So, Kristeva's notion of the politics must be regarded without the limitations of its conventional meaning. As Edmonds expresses:

This point is most evident in Kristeva's style. Her work cannot be judged according to its theoretical completeness, for she is not interested in giving a final and comprehensive theory of politics. The politics of her work is found in its effects on our own conception of how a political theory should work. Her writings operate on the boundary of the political as a sort of play that entices us beyond the political, that shows us a new space into which politics might move and become something else. In short, instead of asking the imagination to answer to the demands of politics, she asks politics to yield to imagination. Instead of imagination and philosophy serving politics, Kristeva calls for a politics that is imaginative. She works to identify the concept of the political itself with an imaginative analytics. (218)

If we turn back to the whole pack of above mentioned terms (love, *melancholia*, the uncanny, narcissism, tendential severance and the meaning of the political for Kristeva), it is seen that these terms are related to each other. Through a Kristevan reading, love is the possibility of seeing oneself as the other, and accepting the divided nature of the psyche. If the individual can see herself as divided and unstable, the Other in the *symbolic* will not be excluded as a stranger. That is, the individual's ability to form a social bond with the other people is based on accepting her own strangeness. If

the maternal other is not given a *symbolic* shape and the individual cannot overcome the loss of the primal narcissistic union with the maternal other, it may lead to borderline situations. In extreme situations, the relation with the *symbolic* is lost and *melancholia* smothers the individual with the death drive. “Tendential severance” as Beardsworth refers to is the inability of the modern human being to articulate and symbolize her loss because the new secular and religious discourses do not provide adequate means for the *semiotic* to be symbolized. This modern nihilism locks the person inside her psychic prison; she cannot experience a healthy subjectivity and therefore cannot connect with the Other people around her. Kristeva in her trilogy *Black Sun*, *Tales of Love* and *Powers of Horror* offers a psychoanalytical and cultural reading of these notions. Her works establish a threshold between individuality and collectivity; subject and culture; personal and public. They also unpack her ethico-political vision. Rather than the traditional “the individual is always political” motto, she puts forward that a new approach to love, *abject*, *melancholia*, narcissism and the individual crisis of symbolization can alter our perspectives to the totalizing form of selfhood and politics.

As this thesis deals with literary texts, I will limit my analysis to the power of the artistic or literal production, which Kristeva offers as a solution for the crisis of meaning and narcissistic society. The reason why I explained the ethical and political potential of Kristeva’s theories is not to validate her arguments but to benefit from them in my argument which is centered around the ethical and political stance of the authors I study in this thesis. The way that they foreground the body and the maternal pre-Oedipal *semiotic* base of language firstly manifests that they bring a novel approach to self/other binary and secondly on a larger scope enable us to bring a meta-commentary or meta-criticism as to the writers’ political stance in these novels. The meta-criticism I try to elaborate on in this study is that, all these novels are quite forcefully political and they disclose the ethico-political perspectives of the writers as long as “political” is recovered from its traditional understanding.

CHAPTER 3

IN THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY (1977) BY J.M. COETZEE

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that *In the Heart of the Country* brings a new dimension to the self/Other opposition, which can be explained by the dialectical relation between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*, and the sublimation of the *abject*, thereby generating a broadened perspective as to the political and ethical position of Coetzee as a writer. In this chapter, the relationship between the female protagonist Magda and her family members and the colored servants will be studied in accordance with Kristeva's theories of *abjection* and the *semiotic/symbolic* signification. Then, her own position as the real *abject* will be explained by focusing on the textual elements of the novel.

J.M. Coetzee occupies an outstanding place in South African literature and in postcolonial studies as both a novelist and essayist. He was born in Cape Town, and grew up in Karoo, "the vast desert and semi-desert area of The Cape Province" (Head, *J.M.Coetzee* 1) to Afrikaner parents. His family spoke English at home, but Coetzee spoke Afrikaans³ with his relatives. His familial background bears importance because as Wright suggests "J.M Coetzee is an outsider in the realm of white South Africa both as an English speaker with Afrikaans surname and by virtue of his own self-placement" (1). Coetzee cannot easily be categorized as a white writer who writes about the country where he lived and worked. The question of identity has been a problematic issue among the white South African writers and according to Ian Glenn, "Coetzee is not an Afrikaner, but a white South African inhabiting a very particular margin, since his background partly distances him from both Afrikaner as well as

³ It is a language that is related to Dutch and is spoken in South Afrika. ("Afrikaans")

English affiliations” (20). He sees himself closer neither to South African culture nor European culture because as a person who comes from a Dutch family (The Boers), he is historically among the descendants of the Boers⁴. Coetzee expresses that “being a white man in Africa is what is insupportable. Not because of the burden of guilt, but because of the burden of consciousness” (*Doubling* 116). The most noteworthy characteristic of Coetzee is that although he is well equipped with the information about South Africa, he has always eschewed talking about the country directly either in fiction or in non-fiction⁵. So, related to postcolonial studies, one issue that a Coetzee reader encounters is whether he is a diasporic writer in exile or a white writer/ First World elite who speaks for a Third World nation. Although Coetzee does not locate himself anywhere and tends to stay out of these categories, he remarks that

No Afrikaner would consider me an Afrikaner. That, it seems to me, is the acid test for group membership, and I don’t pass it. Why not? In the first place, because English is my first language, and has been since childhood. An Afrikaner (primary and simplest definition) is a person whose first language is Afrikaans. In the second place, because I am not embedded in the culture of the Afrikaner and have been shaped by that culture only in a perverse way. (*Doubling* 336-342)

Coetzee does not categorize himself as a South African novelist because of two reasons. The first is the language problem as his first language is English⁶. The second

⁴ When the British took the control of the Boers, although they are among the first settler groups in Cape Town, they were hegemonized by the British culturally, politically and linguistically. In this in-between situation, they tried to preserve their cultural “uniqueness and race purity” (Parker 5).

⁵He expresses his regret about the journals he wrote in the 1980s related to the “analyses of cultural stereotypes such as ‘the white tribe’ and ‘the Afrikaner’ and his articles on popular culture in South Africa in *Vogue*, *Reader’s Digest* and the *New York Times Magazine*” (*Doubling* 104).

⁶ But, it should be noted that he knows Afrikaans, too. For instance, *In the Heart of the Country* was firstly published in 1976 in South Africa and most of the dialogues were in Afrikaans. In 1977, when it was published in the United Kingdom and the United States in English, all the novel was in English.

problem is that he is not accepted as an Afrikaner because his cultural background has been shaped by English education and discourse. Language is a clear barrier between white and black South African writers. Ashcroft states that there is a difference between the settler countries and the colonized nations as to their affiliation with the dominant/colonizer country. While the settler countries have “a temporary illusion of a filiative relationship with that dominating culture, the exploited colonies have a more pre-colonial and traditional attachment to their indigenous culture that coexists with the new forms of imperialism” (25).

For a novelist who left Africa “to be part of a wider world” (Coetzee *Doubling* 336), exile is not a proper definition, either. Upon being asked by Atwell if he is an “Afrikaner”, Coetzee eschews giving a certain answer:

Afrikaner is a name; and naming and making a name stick is above all, as we know, an exercise in power. A child is born wild; we name to subjugate it. Am I, in these terms, an Afrikaner? The answer must be that I am not in a position to *make* an answer. At best I can contest whatever answer is given [...] The pool has no discernible *ethos*, so one day I hope it will have no predominant color, as more “people of color” drift into it. (*Doubling* 342)

It is clear that Coetzee is both an insider and outsider in South African Literature. His hybridity is different from that of the exilic and displaced intellectuals coming from the Third World countries; rather his in-betweenness is peculiar to the political and racial topography of South Africa. So, the analyses of his novels must be carried out without forgetting that they are written by a novelist who does not feel a sense of genuine belonging to any group. He thinks that being labelled in a group like “Afrikaner” or “European” is another form of invasion and domination. Although he confesses to Atwell that “South Africa, beyond the Cape, has always felt like a foreign territory to me [him]” (*Doubling* 337), his role as a novelist cannot be diminished to a Western intellectual trying to fathom the condition of the Other from an economically and culturally superior position. In contrast, he disowns the authorial power in an attempt to underline his non-positionality.

Coetzee's novels bear the imprint of his in-between position as a writer. One of his preoccupations in his oeuvre is a rigorous inquiry into the conversational, discursive, ethical and political interaction between colonizer and colonized as well as colonizer/colonizer, colonized/colonized, author/narrator, author/reader and narrator/reader. To be a stranger or to be the Other and the difficulty of understanding the Other, the interplay of fiction and reality, the representation and voicing the Other have always been one of the main areas of interest among postcolonial writers and critics. In South Africa, many white novelists such as Nadine Gordimer, Alan Paton, Dan Jacobson, Andre Brink, Breyten Brytenbach and many others tried to cut across the borders between black and white dichotomy, but Coetzee brought a groundbreaking innovation to the genre by his first novel *Dusklands* as "never before had a South African novel broken so obviously, even self-consciously, with the conventions of realism and so candidly its own artificiality, its own fictionality" (Watson, 15). Dominic Head also celebrates Coetzee as being the first South African novelist "to produce overtly self-conscious fictions drawing explicitly on international postmodernisms" (*J.M. Coetzee* 1). Coetzee believes that it is never possible to know the stranger entirely because even the person who talks about himself/herself cannot convey the whole truth because of self-deception and self-doubt. He is cognizant of this fact; therefore, he never trusts the accuracy of confession and autobiography and he avoids writing about South Africa in the form of a documentary.

The critical perspectives on his studies can be categorized under two headings. The first group is the ones who think that he downplays the significance of political realism in South Africa due to the self-reflexivity and meta-fictionality of his novels; and the other group who tends to consider his novels as political reflections of realities via various modern and postmodern techniques. The common ground between these two groups is that both of them deal with whether Coetzee is able to touch upon the political and historical issues sufficiently. It is argued that Coetzee trivializes the importance of real political realities of South Africa and he benefits from European discourse and many critics "charge him with an aestheticism which they considered politically irresponsible, or simply irrelevant; they demanded him of an explicit form of

commitment which his novels evidently eschewed” (Huggan& Watson 3). Huggon and Watson suggest that Coetzee’s novels cannot be labelled as South African as he intentionally abstains from employing “official versions of ‘anti-apartheid’ thought and literature as he has had to with the equally official versions of South African race thinking” (4-5). Despite the accusations of writing apolitically⁷, Coetzee, by his unique techniques, was considered “a more profoundly political writer than any exponent of Agitprop” by later critics (Huggan& Watson 4). He is also thought to subvert the traditional literary genres of South African writing such as *Plaasroman* (Farm Novel) and therefore could spurn the dualistic thinking inherent in these genres by foregrounding “parody and reflexivity as oppositional linguistic acts”. (Parry, 38).

The critical studies on *In the Heart of the Country* are limited when compared to the other novels of Coetzee. Head notes, it “is Coetzee’s most difficult and forbidding novel” (*J.M. Coetzee* 49) because of its difficulty of reading and analyzing. Likewise, Glenn states that the novel is “the least read and has had the least critical attention” (120). It was also adversely treated by Cherry Clayton who labelled *In the Heart of the Country* “as mere showing off” (in Watson 25) because it abounds in intertextual references to various philosophers. However, Martina Ghosh-Schellhorn predicates the intertextual references in the novel on Coetzee’s African/European background and regards them as the multifaceted properties of the novel. She states that Coetzee’s readers were “as bilingual and bicultural as he was [is]” (50), therefore, he combined the intertextual references to aforementioned European texts along with some “less familiar [...] South African Anglophone literary tradition of farm novels” (50), thereby

⁷ Teresa Dovey’s opinions are in tune with those of Huggon& Watson as she questions whether Coetzee has been able to bring a solid solution to the postcolonial problem of otherness even though he benefits from “prior modes of colonial discourse” as he cannot unproblematically recuperate the history of the postcolonial”. (139). Nadine Gordimer explicitly states that “until *Age of Iron*, J.M. Coetzee’s fiction has made no mention of South Africa, has been distanced from it” (“Preface” Huggan& Watson xi). Yet she also states that Coetzee’s novels still address South African context and he “forgets the language and thought-patterns of literary theory when he visualizes a man digging in a municipal garden, a man tracing the worm-scroll of a scar on a waif’s eyelid, a woman washed up on a desolate shore”. (“Preface” Huggan& Watson xi)

appealing to both European and Afrikaans literary traditions. She defines Coetzee as a novelist who is aware of “being situated as a white South African writer who typically is in between yet very much a part of both these South African literary traditions” (50). She furthers her argument by explaining that the main female character in the novel is a self-estranged one due to her position assigned to her at birth. Although she anticipates a “synthesis of master and servant” (55) in the novel, she comes to the recognition that the political situation of South Africa does not let such a synthesis to be actualized. By pointing at the failure of the harmony between the master and the servant and the unreliable and inconsistent voice of the narrator, Ghosh-Schellhorn asserts that “Coetzee addresses the problem of rationality in the context of a settler colony’s insane politics of domination” (56).

A.M. Nashef in his article “Words: Magda’s blessings” analyzes the novel in terms of Lacan’s mirror stage. He argues that Magda (the female narrator) is stuck in the mirror stage because her father does not provide her with an imago. Therefore, language fails to function for her as she is bereft of signification.: “Magda’s inability to escape the ‘mirror stage’ condemns her to a life-long condition of fictitious presences, which she invents and re-invents repeatedly” (53). He also states that Magda manages to communicate through her body in the end although she is estranged from her body, and he explains it as *jouissance* (62).

Pippin dwells on the modern and postmodern elements of the novel. He states that the inconsistency and unreliability of Magda’s narration is related to Magda’s position as a failed self and her lack of authority over others. He argues that for Magda to have control in her life as a white colonizer, “reciprocal gestures as acknowledgement, love, esteem, solidarity, and respect” (31) are necessary; nevertheless, the colonial power structure does not provide Magda with any of these notions.

The problem of otherness was also studied by Attridge in “Modernist Form and the Ethics of Otherness: *Dusklands* and *In the Heart of the Country*”. He states that thanks to the formal devices that Coetzee utilizes to fuse realism and imagination, he never puts forward a straightforward moral or political message in his novels (13). He adds

that due to the repetitious rape scene in *In the Heart of the Country* “Hendrik and Anna [the colored servants] remain enigmatic presences” (29). As the scene is intentionally rewritten by Coetzee, the reader cannot assume any moral stance against the characters. Therefore, the significance of the novel, asserts Attridge, is not in the way Coetzee tells the reader the subjection of other races by the white, but how he utilizes form to show the “complex and freighted responsibility to and for the other, a responsibility denied for so long in South Africa’s history” (31).

Dominic Head in his article “*In the Heart of the Country*” analyzes the power change between Hendrik and Magda as an allegory of possible political upheavals. He also mentions that the body is the basic metaphor of the novel as the characters express their subjugation by or dominance over the others through the images of the body (44).

The use of a female narrator in the novel has also been analyzed. Wright regards the “self-negating narrative” of Magda in *In the Heart of the Country* as a woman’s “difficulty of occupying any clearly defined role during a colonial, apartheid, and/or gendered interregnum” (52). She adds that as Coetzee is a white male in South Africa, this masculine position grants him privileges therefore he feels restless; “he feels understandable degree of unease with his masculine subject position, complicated as it is by his status as white in South Africa” (Wright 53). He does not speak on behalf of a female voice but he “genuinely identifies with the white female subject position in South Africa” (Wright 53). Likewise, Ian Glenn studies the female voice in the novel as the double voice of Coetzee. By using metafictional devices, “Magda/ Coetzee [are] warning that this may not be a real flesh and blood character but one made of ink; and Magda/ Coetzee reflecting on the formal and thematic limitations of the text” (126).

The previous studies thus have offered a myriad of analyses of either Coetzee’s anti-racial or feminist concerns. They juxtaposed these two issues and presented readings from a thematic and structural angles. As Coetzee is a postcolonial writer and he uses many female narrators in his other novels as well (Susan Barton in *Foe*, Mrs. Curren in *Age of Iron*) the problem of otherness is a prevalent topic in these studies. His in-between position and to what extent he speaks for the European or the African nations

has been a common motif of these critical studies inevitably. Coetzee is cognizant of his precarious situation as he states that “there is no way of escaping the skin you are born with (can the leopard change its spots?)” (*Doubling* 96).

Although this dissertation has a similar approach to these studies in terms of its focus on the problem of otherness and the metafictional properties and although psychoanalytical perspective has been utilized in the previous studies (Nashef’s Lacanian approach), it diverges from them in an attempt to focus on Kristeva’s ideas on otherness. Although this novel has not been analyzed before in the framework of Kristevan theories, it is not to be read in isolation but rather bring a broader perspective to the previous studies in terms of the notion of alterity. This study will probe into the focal question “who the other is” by foregrounding how the discharge of bodily drives functions in the narrator’s understanding of alterity and signification process. In this respect, it will bring a new dimension to the whole package of criticisms on the novel.

Before starting the analysis of the novel, a short summary can be helpful to understand the context better. *In the Heart of the Country* is a novel about the solitude and loneliness of a white female spinster Magda who lives on a South African farm with her father and two colored servants named Hendrik and Klein-Anna. Magda’s mother dies immediately after giving birth and a new wife comes to the farm. As the voice of Magda, who writes in a diary form, is unreliable and mostly the events are the figments of her imagination written inconsistently, the woman who comes to the farm at the outset turns out to be Klein-Anna later. So, Klein-Anna is both the wife of Hendrik and the mistress of Magda’s father, whose name is never given in the novel. Magda kills her father twice; the first time she kills him and the new mistress with an axe, the second time she shoots her father in the middle of a sexual act. However, due to the narrative ambiguity of these murders, it is not certain whether she really commits patricide because he appears at the end of the novel as an old man with his sunken face. One of the most striking moments in the novel is the burial scene when Magda digs a hole on the ground and buries her father there with the help of Hendrik. The other moment that draws attention is when Magda is raped by Hendrik. As there are inconsistencies in the narrative and Magda retells the same events differently, the rape

scene is narrated firstly as a violent act and then as an event that Magda half-willingly submits to. There is a perpetual tension in the novel as Magda is sexually attracted not only to her father but also to Hendrik and Klein-Anna. After her father's death, Magda befriends Hendrik and Klein-Anna, albeit temporarily and they do the house chores together. From that moment onwards, she attempts to get closer with them emotionally and physically. However, when they run out of money, Hendrik and Klein-Anna leave the farm and Magda is left alone without money or food. Wrecked by loneliness, she sees some planes hovering above her head. She tries to communicate with them in broken Spanish and by drawing an image of a female body on the ground with stones. At the end of the novel, Magda and her father are sitting on the veranda together; Magda is taking care of her father who does not have the physical strength even to feed himself.

3.1. Between Identification and Rejection

This part investigates the dissolution of the self/other opposition in Magda's relationship with her father and mother in the light of Kristevan *abjection* and signification. It demonstrates that Coetzee generates a grey area between subject and object without falling in the trap of the dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized and challenges the color bar as the determiner of the power balance and alterity in the context of South African apartheid.

Firstly, Magda's difficulty of identification with and rejection of her father will be explained by focusing on how her understanding of body is shaped and reshaped in this relationship. Then, the same predicament will be explained by focusing on the burial scene and her obsession with cleanliness. Thirdly, her childhood memories and the difficulty of articulating her exposure to violence will be scrutinized to demonstrate how the chasm between Magda and her father aggrandizes the self-schism of Magda. Next, the artistic sublimation of violence and parricide in writing will be explained as a sort of individual revolution of Magda in contrast to the failure of love and the real violence in South Africa. Lastly, Magda's vascillation between self and maternal other will be explained by focusing on the memory of her dead mother.

Magda's relationship with her father is the first example in the novel which presents the subject/object dichotomy from an intermediary position, lending support to the view that Coetzee's ethical and political outlook is not shaped by the binaries. Coetzee refuses to solidify the crisis between characters and even makes the reader question who the Other is. While showing the lack of affection and communication between Magda and her father, Coetzee explores the human psyche rather than projecting a general investigation of colonialism. In this novel, like in many of his novels, "his characters act as a mirror of South Africa, his discussion of colonial practices can be read as a magnification of a particular character's experience" (Canepari-Labib 106). Magda's father who is a white farm owner and colonizer appears as the first Other (Although Coetzee does not explicitly show who the Other is, this study positions Magda's father as the Other) that Magda encounters; but while she is trying to be recognized by this Other, she goes through a journey of finding who the "self" is. Her ongoing process of identification with and rejection of her father refutes the Western belief that the self and Other are real and stable identities. Coetzee suggests that the Other, just like the "self" is an empty signifier and its position is determined by the language of authority dictated by patriarchy. Magda attempts to rebel against this system and the patriarchal language by her struggle with language. She both wants to position her own identity as a white farm owner's daughter and adopt the language of authority, and disengage herself from the position of being a colonizer by murdering her father metaphorically.

Before delving into the novel, it should be noted at this point that the *semiotic* is explained as a metaphor by Kristeva; although she uses the "maternal other" and mostly refers to the body of the mother as the source of drives and affections, she uses the father and mother figures as metaphors. She states that

[b]y emphasizing the *metaphoricity* of the identifying idealization movement, we can attempt to restore the analytic bond located there (transference and countertransference) its complex dynamic, which includes the narcissistic, drive animated, pre-object-orientation and allows it to be tied down to signifying ideals. (Kristeva *Tales* 38)

Likewise, Oliver notes that “the maternal function is not necessarily the domain of females and the paternal function is not necessarily the domain of males” (*Kristeva* 129). Correspondingly, I have read the Symbolic father figure in this novel as a metaphor for the *abject* who disrupts the borders of Magda’s body. As for the question why a *symbolic* father figure can be analyzed as an *abject* other, it can be explained in two ways. Firstly, the *symbolic* embodiment of the *abject* can be a father figure as well as a maternal figure because in the novel, Magda complains about how the filth of the corpse of her father disturbs her. Her obsession with getting rid of her father’s body and the filth she tries to clean suggest that Magda wants to expel what she cannot get rid of through *symbolic* language. Secondly, besides her father, the black people represent the *abject* as she is brought up by the black servants in the house. She learns the language of the black people but when she grows up, she is forced to position herself as the colonizer in the house and she learns the language of her father (both literally Boer language and metaphorically the father’s *symbolic* language). Therefore, if there is a *semiotic* language to be groped for, and if there is a *semiotic* connection that belongs to the pre-Oedipal phase, this archaic connection does not lie in Magda’s pre-*symbolic* connection with her mother, but the metaphorical black “mother” figures who taught their language to Magda in her childhood and her father who has had the sole parental role in her life. This is the reason why Magda calls herself a “black virgin” (*Heart* 5) and depicts her excrement as “black” (*Heart* 35) in the novel.

Therefore, Magda’s father, who is a white frontier owning a farm, is the first character to be seen as the *abject* “that continuously violates one’s [Magda’s] own borders” (McAfee 47). Magda’s oscillation between getting rid of her father’s presence and embracing him as a part of her own body and psyche demonstrates that their relationship is based on a very tenuous border between self and other. Magda’s relationship with her father shows us that most ideas surrounding identity are historically constructed in the colonial framework. Although “alterity” is the determiner of identity, it is not determined by skin color but by the manifestations of power among the characters in this novel. Not the “black body” but the body of the Other is foregrounded as the determinant power of one’s place in the South African

apartheid context of the novel as will be seen in the analysis of the colored characters. Coetzee displays that alterity is not constructed only by skin color; either black or white, one can be exposed to subjugation by manifestations of power. The borders between self and Other are displayed to be fragile and penetrable.

Although her father's skin color and name are never given in the novel, it is assumed that he is a Dutch settler farm owner in South Africa given that Hendrik and Klein-Anna work under his command. He is depicted as a patriarchal figure in Magda's diary; the reader catches the glimpses of his characterization only from Magda's perspective. The dialogues between them are limited and they do not seem to have a proper conversation about anything. He is known to have brought a new wife to the farm. The reader learns not to trust Magda's narration at the very beginning of the novel when she describes the arrival of the new bride to the farm. After a detailed physical description of her father and the new bride, she says that "[m]ore detail I cannot give unless I begin to embroider, for I was not watching" (*Heart* 1). So, whether her father really brings a new bride or he is really killed by his own daughter is open to question. Despite appearing in the novel as the figment of Magda's imagination, her father prevails over the novel as one of the main figures in her life. The well-off and ostentatious father "with an ostrich-plume waving on its forehead" (*Heart* 1) appears as an old needy man in the end whose "eyes are sightless, two glassy blue walls rimmed with pink" (*Heart* 151). Yet, despite his haggard appearance and old age, Magda believes that "somewhere inside him juices still dribble, muscles still execute their faint peristalses" (*Heart* 151). Her father, as the embodiment of the *abject*, who happens to signify everything Magda hates about herself seems to be weakened physically but he is still present in the novel even in the end. Although Magda complains about being stuck in the language she learned from her father, she can never totally get rid of his presence. Considering that the expelled other always haunts the subject "emanat[ing] from an exorbitant outside or inside" (Kristeva *Powers* 1), Magda's inability to get rid of him by patricide unveils the nature of the *abject*, "the threat of unassimilable non-unity; that is ambiguity" (Lechte *Kristeva* 160) because she cannot expel her father whose language and discourse shaped her life.

The liminal space between Magda and her father is given in the novel in Magda's description of him as a *symbolic*/patriarchal figure whom she hates and her inevitable physical similarity to him. Magda cannot position herself in the *symbolic* realm by adopting her father's discourse because she cannot internalize the Law of the Symbolic father through her body. Yet, no matter how hard she attempts to disengage herself from her father, she notes that "[s]he has the same "black eyes inherited from him" (*Heart* 3). History and language connect them and "Magda has a dual function as both the victim and perpetrator of the colonial structure" (Head *J.M.Coetzee* 51). Their physical similarity annihilates differences; therefore, her inevitable fate to distinguish herself from her father is futile as *abjection* is "a ceaseless defence against nondifferentiation" (Keltner *Thresholds* 46). There is an ample support in the novel for the claim that his father represents the *symbolic* base of language and Magda's self-disintegrated suffering results mostly from the lack of understanding and love between them. She is repelled by the fact that there is no way to get rid of her father because they are connected to each other by the same language. She regards her position in the house as a replica of her father. In the first paragraph of the novel, she describes herself as the antagonists in her life besides her father and the new wife:

I am the one who stays in her room reading or writing or fighting migraines. The colonies are full of girls like that, but none, I think, so extreme as I. My father is the one who paces the floorboards back and forth, back and forth in his slow black boots. And then, for a third, there is the new wife, who lies late abed. Those are the antagonists. (*Heart* 1)

The way that the father walks "back and forth" repeatedly suggests that he exerts his authority in the house through his body movements. He acts like a guardian observing and controlling the other people sharing the house with him. A reader who is acquainted with Freudian psychoanalysis would at this point expect an Oedipus triangle where the daughter is stuck in the Electra complex. However, Magda's inclusion of herself as one of the antagonists- "Those are the antagonists"- of the triangle pre-empts such a reading. She is cognizant that she belongs to the same group with her father and the new wife as the colonizers. There is no protagonist in her life because she is born into a social fact she cannot escape; "[c]olonial relations do not

stem from individual good will or actions; they exist before his [her] arrival or birth, and whether he [she] accepts or rejects them matters little” (Memmi 38). The arrival of a stranger woman as the surrogate mother in the triangle exacerbates the already tense relationship between Magda and her father. She sees herself as one of the “melancholy spinsters [...] wooed when we [they] were little by our [their] masterful fathers, we [they] are bitter vestals, spoiled for life. The childhood rape: someone should study the kernel of truth in this fancy” (*Heart* 4). Coetzee alters the essence of the Electra Complex and renders it a psychological violence on the female child.

The father figure is given priority in the word order, which suggests that Magda feels a deep seated alienation from him emotionally and she considers him a paternal authority. Her father’s *symbolic* power is embedded in the narrative both in the way that she addresses the people she mentions in her diary by underlining their relationship with her father and his corporeal presence. For instance, rather than calling her dead mother as “my mother” directly, she refers to her as “my father’s first wife, my mother” (*Heart* 2). She is firstly described as a stranger who happens to be her mother after being wed to her father. Her mother, whose name is also never articulated in the novel, is a woman “whose husband never forgave her for failing to bear him a son” (*Heart* 2). Her father is the agent who decides on the fate of every individual on the farm.

Magda’s depiction of her father and the new bride as lascivious and physically strong people is in contrast to her depiction of herself and her mother as fragile and infertile figures. Such an opposition suggests that the association of power and body leads Magda to be estranged from her own body and evaluate the power structure in the house in terms of body. Her father is a lascivious and self-centred person whose “relentless sexual demands led to her [mother’s] death in childbirth” (*Heart* 2). While her father is a dominant figure, her mother “was too frail and gentle to give birth to the rough rude boy-heir my [her] father wanted, therefore she died” (*Heart* 4) In opposition to the frailty of her mother, the new bride is “a big woman with fine wrists and long plump tapering fingers [...] She sticks out her long red tongue and licks the sweet mutton-fat from her lips” (*Heart* 2). These very preliminary depictions of the

characters suggest that the new bride with her fecundity and physical strength is a compensation for her dead mother who could not bear the burden of giving birth to a baby boy. The death of her mother also implies that she was another victim of the patriarchy of her father. She could not propagate new male heirs for the farm, who were supposed to take over the control of it and perpetuate the dominance of male patriarchy. So, his father exerts his power on the farm through his physical power and sexual potency. The chance to live on the farm depends on the survival of the physically fittest and the most fertile. Such a fact increases Magda's obsession with her body. She suffers from self-effacement and blames herself for not being a motherly figure in the house:

My father pays no attention to my absence. To my father I have been an absence all my life. Therefore, instead of being the womanly warmth at the heart of the house I have been a zero, null, a vacuum towards which all collapses inward, a turbulence, muffled, grey, like a chill draft eddying through the corridors, neglected, vengeful. (*Heart 2*)

The reiteration of the negative nouns such as “zero, null, a vacuum” and the adjectives such as “muffled, grey [...] neglected, vengeful” (*Heart 2*) imply an extraordinary rich vocabulary and high literacy of the narrator. Not being able to welcome her body, Magda seems to compensate for her physical absence through too much speaking. It might be argued that the rigorous control over language is a mask deployed by her to keep the uncontrollable urges like anger and self-effacement at bay. Her excessive talking/ writing may also be a paradoxical defense mechanism against silence. The extraordinary hyperconscious awareness of Magda is in stark contrast to her deranging mental health. Until the rape scene, she has a superior control over syntax and strives to keep the *abject* in control through using and mastering language effectively. As Kristeva notes, “[a]n unshakeable adherence to Prohibition and Law is necessary” for the abject to be thrust[ed] aside” (Kristeva *Powers* 16). The diary ensures her existence in the world. She tries to stabilize her place in the *symbolic* by writing neatly and orderly. Her utterances gradually become more fragmented after she gives up connecting existence with physical presence. She considers love as entirely possessive, sexual and physical. She will learn giving up this kind of love in the end.

The first paragraphs of Magda's diary suggest that she is bound up with the Law of the Father no matter how much she tries to forsake the role of the colonizer. She craves the attention of her father by being a "womanly warmth" in the house. Her speech is devoid of poeticism; she tends to give a structure to her life by well-organized and uniform articulations. She is also aware of the fact that she is a victim of the patriarchy. She confesses that "in a house shaped by destiny like an H I [she] have [has] lived all my [her] life, in a theatre of stone and sun fenced in with miles of wire" (*Heart* 3). The shape of the house "like an H" is a visual game employed by Coetzee. While the shape of "H" gives a sense of being stranded in a place, it may also refer to history. He equates history with the dominance of phallogentrism. History which is written by capital H can be interpreted both as Lacan's Symbolic order and Kristeva's *symbolic* base of language. Pippin states that history is an indispensable part of Coetzee's especially first three novels. Although he does not refer to historical actions directly, the effect of history casts a shadow on the characters. His novels "take place in a recognizable historical world charged with explicitly political tension, profound dissension, and violent exercises of power justified by the transparently self-serving and or self-deceived appeals to reason or fact" (23). Regardless of the fact that history is shaped by the dominant discourses of the time and it is partly fiction, it has a very pronounced place in Magda's life. Its ineluctable effect is accentuated with the capital H letter. She is entrapped in the *symbolic* order and the H shaped destiny prevents her disengagement from her father. She tries to write her own history "spinning my [her] trail from room to room" (*Heart* 3). Despite the limited space she takes up in the world, her own individual history is forged by the major power structures in the historical process of South Africa.

Magda's role in the house as a white colonizer widens the gap between her body and language, leading her to self-estrangement. The domestic duties that she should carry out in the house retain other kinds of impositions on her. She gives orders to black servants and pretends to be the master of the house like her father after murdering him. Yet, her own voice is estranged from her. When she needs to give orders to Hendrik

and Klein- Anna, she expresses the friction between her body and her words as follows:

words come reluctantly to me, they clatter in my mouth and tumble out heavily I am exhausted by obedience to this law [...] The law has gripped my throat. I say and I do not say, it invades my [her] larynx, its one hand on my tongue, its other hand on my lips. How can I say, that these are not the eyes of the law that stare from behind my eyes, or the mind of the law does not occupy my skull, leaving me only enough intellection to utter these doubting words, if it is I uttering them, and see their fallaciousness. How can I say that the law does not stand fullgrown inside my[her] shell, its feet in my feet, its hands drooping through my hole. (*Heart* 93)

The internalization and execution of the law is excruciating. She is unable to welcome the role as the daughter of a white man; she knows that she needs to give commands to the servants and take over her father's role but her body rejects the law. She cannot internalize her position as a master. Unable to maintain the power relations in the house, she directs all her energy to intellectualization although she is doubtful about the accuracy of her words. She still tries to rationalize her predicament. The chasm between her body and the law shows that she is in need of another means to utter her pain; another way of speech that harmonizes her body and her words. In order that she can alleviate this physical pain, she needs to terminate the law. The *abject* still haunts Magda because it is a part of herself and it is not possible to efface it entirely.

The fact that Magda meditates on her predicament over welcoming the assigned role of being a colonizer and she expresses her body's refusal of the law have significant outcomes. Firstly, while trying to get to know her father, she goes through an inner voyage where she tries to recognize who she is. She is still unfamiliar to herself because "otherness is the production of what two thousand years of continuously evolving discourse has excluded [...] as an opposite, [it] is still part of its system; but heterogeneous, inassimilable, and unacknowledged unless it imposes itself upon the prevailing discourse" (Attridge 30). Magda writhes in the agony of being a stranger to herself; she is the victim of the discourse which does not allow her to create "a fissure" (30) in her life and the language she was born into. She is the one who is "inassimilable" and "unacknowledged" as she has not found the way to reconcile her body and the law yet. Secondly, the intense and overwhelming focus on her own body

and psyche in her diary suggests that she is on the verge of an engulfing world of narcissistic self. She is so much engrossed in her internal vision that her meditations “appear as a regression to a position set back from the other, a return to a self-contemplative, conservative, self-sufficient haven” (Kristeva *Powers* 14). However, her precarious narcissism does not originate from “the passive, pre-objectal stage” (Lechte *Kristeva* 172) but her powerlessness to stand against the subject-Object divide in the *symbolic* realm.

Knowing that she looks like her father and she cannot unleash herself from his presence and language, she cannot create a concrete subject/object fissure in her mind. So, in contrast to a narcissist who is totally immersed in the archaic and symbiotic sameness and for whom there is “nothing (no object) to fill the psychic space” (Lechte *Kristeva* 228), Magda is a narcissist who is looking for a mirror image to *abject* her father and symbolize and signify her impasse through the *symbolic* base of signification. The absence of a mirror image that can help her stabilize the boundary between the *abject* body (her father) and the *symbolic* leads her to “become a textual artifice, a product of her text [...] Magda the writer is reflecting on what the story needs, while Magda the character reflects on her past” (Glenn 124). In other words, writing becomes her mirror image through which she will try to symbolize her place through signification and expel the rule of her father over her psyche and body. Until she reaches the ultimate fusion of her body and language as seen in the end, she oscillates between differentiation and nondifferentiation between her body and her father’s body when she kills and buries him. That moment is the zenith of the nexus between identification and rejection.

Magda’s murder of her father is an example of the *abject* and it demonstrates how the borders between self and other, life and death are very tiny. The corpse or the bad smell emanating from the corpse is another form of *abjection*. It threatens the border between the self and the other; “[i]f dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything” (Kristeva *Powers* 4). The presence of a cadaver shatters the borders between the subject and the object. It is both

human and non-human. It is evocative of the delicate border between life and death. It disturbs one's unified identity. The cadaver with all its fluids, smell and defilement unsettles the subject's harmony with life. The subject is very close to death because the dead body's presence signals his/her likelihood to fall into the same place. It seems to be "the other side of the border" (*Powers* 4), but that border is broken because death always haunts life.

The murder enforces the idea that the dead body is placed in between life and death, the subject cannot disregard its presence, generating an ambiguous space between subject and object. The first time Magda affirms to have killed her father and the new bride, she carries out the murder by an axe. Firstly, she kills her father and watches "a liquid rattle coming from the throat, the tired blind fish, cause of all my woe, lolling in his groin (would that it had been dragged out long ago with all its roots and bulbs!" (*Heart* 12), then she kills the new bride and "delivers much the better chop deep into the crown of her head" (*Heart* 12). She kills them while they are sleeping peacefully after they make love.

The act of killing is important in two ways. In the first reading, "a liquid rattle coming from the throat" (*Heart* 12) gives the impression that Magda thrust the axe into her father's throat and the liquid is the blood. Yet, "the tired blind fish [...] lolling in his groin" (*Heart* 12) belongs to the same phrase. There is a comma between "the throat" and the "tired fish" (*Heart* 12) so it leads the reader into confusion over what organ she describes. She juxtaposes the throat and the penis. The liquid is both blood and the semen, which means that she associates the voice (coming from the throat) with the semen (or the penis). She symbolically silences her father while taking away his masculinity. In other words, the voice and the genitalia are interchangeable in this context. Coetzee invites us to consider the relation between power and voice. "The tired blind fish" (*Heart* 12) implies a just completed copulation. Then, she lavishes more detailed descriptions about the dead bodies. Now, she uses the determiner "the" to refer to her father and the bride: "I ask myself: What am I going to do with the bodies? [...] The woman lies on her side with her knees drawn up to her chin [...] But the man, tenacious of life, has moved" (*Heart* 14-16). The use of the determiner "the"

solidifies the dead bodies' presence and makes them more visible, specific and tangible. The bodies take up a more definite place in Magda's life after they are bashed by the axe. On the other hand, the transformation of her father into "the man" (*Heart* 12) refers to Magda's estrangement from him. Without his voice and body to wield power, he is only a stranger who has been identified as "the man" (*Heart* 12). Magda can position her father as a stranger who is different from her in her imagination after she silences and emasculates him. Yet, the *abject* body turns to life again as "the man" is "tenacious of life" (*Heart* 12). A few paragraphs later, Magda admits that "he does not die so easily after all [...] He has not brought home a new wife, I am still his daughter" (*Heart* 18). Her father cannot easily be killed. His presence still looms over the house. As long as she exists, her father will be in the house.

The father's death chimes in with the attempt to eradicate the *symbolic*; it "constitutes the murder of the old order and that Coetzee does not project the establishment of a new egalitarian order based on libertarian individualism" (Penner 68). The *symbolic* cannot be eradicated but one can tamper with it by the *semiotic* pulverization. The *abject* father is a part of her body and he cannot be expelled; therefore, Coetzee does not put forward the death and emasculation of the father as the ultimate solution for the *symbolic* and patriarchal structure. He hints that the existing structure cannot be overturned yet it can be penetrated on an individual level.

Magda's obsession with cleanliness and her fascination with the filth emanating from her father's body imply the impossibility of a differentiation between the subject and the object. All through the novel, she cleanses the house. After killing her father and being raped by Hendrik, she gets more obsessed with cleaning. Firstly, she imagines filth in the form of her and her father's feces as the only thing that connects them together. They defecate in the same bowl which Hendrik carries and throws away somewhere Magda does not know:

Every sixth day, when our cycles coincide, his cycle of two days, my cycle of three, we are driven to the intimacy of relieving our bowels in the bucket-latrine behind the fig-trees in the malodour of the other's fresh faeces, either he in my stench or I in his. Sliding aside the wooden lid I straddle his hellish gust, bloody, feral, the kind that flies love best, flecked, I am sure, with undigested flesh barely mulled over before pushed

through. Whereas my own (here I think of him with his trousers about his knees, screwing his nose as high as he can while the blowflies buzz furiously in the black space below him) is dark, olive with bile, hard-packed, kept in too long, old, tired [...] Where exactly the bucket is emptied I do not know; not somewhere on the farm there is a pit where, looped in each other's coils, his father's red snake and the daughter's black embrace and sleep and dissolve. (*Heart* 35)

Unable to connect with her father emotionally, Magda imagines that their bodies “embrace and sleep and dissolve” (*Heart* 35) together in the same bowl. The only corporeal connection she can manage to have with her father is in the filth, which is a reminiscent of the *abject* in Kristevan terms. She wants to draw a boundary between her father's and her own body, but she cannot resist the fascination of their bodies coming together in filth. Kristeva states, “loathing an item of food, a piece of filth, waste or dung” (*Powers* 2) are some sorts of *abjected* materials which the individual tries to expel from her body because they both belong to the body and they are expelled from the body. They remind the individuals what they “permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death” (*Powers* 3). The filth is what disturbs one's identity because it is “based merely on the inaugural *loss* that laid the foundations of its own being” (*Powers* 5). The filth shatters Magda's permanent quest for constructing her own body separate from that of her father.

While language fails as a means to communicate because she cannot escape the ideological matrix of language, she compensates for this lack through her body and creates an area where language falls short of creating the medium between herself and her father. She struggles to create her own discourse in the form of body language and this union is only possible where language does not set a bar between bodies. Body functions a sign of the *abject* which brings her to the pre-symbolic realm, yet this *semiotic* realm is both dreary and fascinating. The quote above also suggests that she feels her own body dead inside even when the expelled material of her father's body is alive; it is “flecked [...] undigested” around which “blowflies buzz furiously” (*Heart* 35). On the other hand, her own expelled/*abjected* faecal matter is “dark, olive with bile, hard-packed, kept in too long, old, tired” (*Heart* 35). She is disgusted with her

own body and she feels like a corpse to such an extent that she believes that her body cannot even digest the food.

As for her father's dead body, she wants to get rid of the filth produced by the dead body of her father so that she can still have a hold on the *symbolic*. The struggle to get rid of the filth as the representation of the *abject* demonstrates that Magda still tries to construct a stable identity whose boundaries are clearly defined. She can only be purified by locating herself in the *symbolic*. However, her father's dead body acts as the *abject* which "remains on the periphery of consciousness, a looming presence" (McAfee 48). Filth and death disrupt her sense of unified subjectivity and shows that the real stranger/other is not her father but her own fears to be cast as the Other in the farm where nobody recognizes her individuality. Upon murdering her father and the new bride in her fantasy, she complains about the filth:

How fortunate at times like these that there is only one problem of cleanliness. Until this bloody afterbirth is gone there can be no new life for me. The bedclothes are soaked and will have to be burned. The mattress too will have to be burned, though not today [...] But if buried in the riverbed they will be washed out in the next spate, or in the one after that, and return to the world lolling in each other's rotten arms [...] If weighted and sunk against the dam, they will contaminate the water and reappear as chained skeletons grinning to the sky in the next drought. (*Heart* 16-17)

Magda regards death as "afterbirth"; she wants to rejuvenate herself by devitalizing her father. Yet, "the presence of the decaying body, juxtaposed against her own, affirms the fact that he is still alive" (Nashef 63). On a number of occasions, she expresses her wish to clean the place, burn the clothes, the house and the bodies. Her obsession with cleaning and order is in tune with the way that she numbers the paragraphs in her diary. She attempts to locate herself in the *symbolic* realm of language where logos, grammar and structure prevail: "Purification is something only the Logos is capable of" (Kristeva *Powers* 27). However, the structure of the paragraphs does not provide a unified and stable ground for her gradually impoverished psyche and sentences. Likewise, burning the bodies or cleaning the remnants of the dead bodies does not cleanse the dirt. The bodies tend to reappear like

the haunting *abjected* images; they “disturb identity, system, order”. (Kristeva *Powers* 4)

Magda kills her father twice as mentioned before. In her second attempt, she shoots him by a rifle through the open window. The same scene is repeated. Blood drops everywhere and the same filth and stain contaminate the room. This time her father is half conscious and asks for help from Hendrik:

There are flies in my father’s room. The air is heavy with their buzzing. They crawl on his face and he does not brush them away, he who has always been a fastidious man. They cluster on his hands, which are red with blood [...] “Fetch Hendrik,” he says. “Tell Hendrik to come, please.” [...] In his belly there is a hole big enough to slide my thumb into. The flesh around it is scorched. (*Heart* 172)

While life is associated with cleanliness, filth and disgust accompany death. The father’s fastidiousness is related to protecting the neatness and the clearly demarcated borders between the master and the oppressed. He pays attention to being clean and tidy as it solidifies his place as the master. On the brink of his death, however, he pleads for help in an unusual way. He begs Magda to fetch Hendrik very kindly. Death erases the borders between individuals; the hierarchy is disrupted through language. What draws Magda’s attention, on the other hand, is that the flies gather around the dead body and her father is unable to repel them. Being so close to death deprives him of his physical power.

Her obsession with cleanliness is the same as her father’s. Besides, the hole inside her father’s belly which is “big enough to slide my [her] thumb into” (*Heart* 172) is threatening because it can devour Magda. So, the expelled body of her father jeopardizes her life, too. She is likely to be absorbed by the dying body. She associates the *abject* with the maternal body metaphorically. Jettisoning the maternal body is necessary for the *symbolic* realm. Separation from the maternal body (a mother or a maternal figure) is necessary for the subject to construct a separate identity; this is the positive side between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. On the other side, fear of or to be disgusted by death is one of the projections of the fear of the maternal body, which can metaphorically devour the subject as it gave birth to it. So, the subject lives all her/his

life between an attraction to what is expelled from his body (nail, excretion, hair etc) and loathing of what is expelled.

In Magda's case, the flies around her father's body and the big hole on his belly evoke her fear to be devoured by the maternal other. She fears to fall into the maternal hole gain. She wants to expel both her father, the representative of the *symbolic*, and the black servants in the house as she sees each pair as the Other. However, she also wants to expel her own body while trying to cast them off. This is the reason why she is so much engrossed in her body and the bodies of the others. She cultivates her being by merely attaching importance to the body. The smell of her father's decaying body which "strikes my [her] nostrils, feverish, foul" (*Heart* 74) unsettles the border between life and death, subject and object; it is the smell of putrefaction and it evokes the weakening position of the *symbolic*. Yet again, she consistently correlates the power with masculinity. Only the emasculated father can convince her of the end of her anguish. Upon seeing her father naked and shooting him, she is relieved to see that:

[t]he sex is smaller than I [she] thought it would be, almost lost in a bush of black hair straggling up to the navel: a pale boy, a midget, a dwarf, an idiot son who, having survived for years shut away in the cellar, tasting bread and water, talking to the spiders, singing to himself, is one night dressed in new clothes, set free, made much of, pampered, feasted, and then executed. Poor little thing. It is not possible to believe I [she] came from there or whatever that puffy mass is below. (*Heart* 76)

Just as seeing and being surprised by the "tired blind fish" (*Heart* 12) metaphor she used to describe her father's voice/penis in the first imagination of murdering him, she is now personifying the penis as a boy. She delineates the boy, or in other words, her father's masculinity, as an imprisoned being that was shut down in a cellar and set free to be used and killed. Given that Magda spends her whole life like a prisoner on the farm, going nowhere and ruminating about her loneliness and misery, she is the one who actually fits the description of the "pale boy" (*Heart* 76). Her deadly solitude in the cellar is analogous to her autoerotic and narcissistic imprisonment which results from "the absence of object" (Kristeva *Tales* 115) that can act as an imago. She believes that this self-enclosed realm where she only talks to the spiders is eradicated

as she manages to thrust aside the *abject* and establish the divide between herself and her father.

Her second attempt to dispose of her father's body is the other example of *abjection*. The burial scene epitomizes the very presence of the haunting *abject* image. Every time she tries to put the body in the hole, it bursts out:

Again the body slides in as far as the hips and sticks. I kneel and push at it with all my force. It turns slightly and the hips slip through. I heave at the torso, rotating it further till the shoulders lie flat. Now shoulders and head will pass through, but feet and knees refuse to slide further [...] The fault is not in the knees, I see, but in the spine, which will not flex. I struggle on and on in the crimson glory of the declining sun, kicking at the shoulders first from the right, then from the left, achieving nothing [...] I should have burned the body with the mattress and the bed and gone for a long walk in the veld to escape the smell [...] I cannot find in me to open the graveclothes and confront again the darkening cheesy flesh that sired me. (*Heart* 101)

The body of her father resists being buried. The grotesque images of the dead body not fitting in the grave metaphorically stand for the indelibility of the *abject*. It does not respect boundaries and continues to threaten the subject. The utter adherence to the *symbolic* disconcerts Magda to the extent that the Symbolic law of the Father does not vanish at all; the boundaries between life and death are shuttered. She exerts violence on the body so as to fit it in the grave, but "the spine does not flex" (*Heart* 101). The smell of the rotten body is a threat to life; therefore, Magda wants to escape it. The flesh stands out in the grave reminding her again that she was begotten from it. She is closer to death than life as she thinks that "I[*she*] could make this my second home. I [she] could get Hendrik to bring me [her] food. I [she] would not need much. At night I [she] could crawl out to stretch my [her] legs [...] I[*she*] can find no reason to open my [her] eyes again" (*Heart* 98). When she finally manages to bury the body, she creeps over it (*Heart* 102).

Magda's impulse to bury her body with her father's starts the *abjection* process as inseparable from the self. The grave is the bridge between life and death; she does not want to lose her grip on the world, either. She wants Hendrik to serve her food and get out of the hole to stretch her body. As she cannot internalize the law, she associates the law with her body. Notwithstanding her overtalking to herself in the form of

monologue, she is not able to talk to the other people because “the language that should pass between myself[herself] and these [Hendrik and Klein Anna] people was subverted by my [her] father and cannot be recovered” (*Heart* 107). What she cannot subvert is the language that is made of hierarchy; this is the reason why she still expects Hendrik to serve her food even when she gives up on life. Her mindset is forged by the hierarchy; she still plans to capitalize on Hendrik although she thinks of lying side by side with her father in the grave. Her wish to bury herself in the grave by her father’s side and to be served food by Hendrik hint at her oscillation between the desire to annihilate all the boundaries between life/death herself/her father and continue being in the *symbolic*. She is enthralled by the death instinct which obliterates the subject/object divide and brings *semiotic* oneness; nevertheless, she continues to abide by the *symbolic* and sees Hendrik as an anchoring point that will stabilize her *symbolic* position. In Kristevan terms, she dwells on the threshold between death and life/*semiotic* and the *symbolic* (*Revolution* 48).

Magda cannot locate her father in her psyche anywhere. On the one hand, he is the one who can provide her with the *semiotic* oneness and sameness; on the other hand he is a total stranger whose law cannot penetrate into her body. She wants to be engulfed in her father’s body, which is also obvious when she lies on her father’s body after killing him. In the quote below, she begs her father to give her one more chance to adapt herself to a “civilized setting”:

Oh father, father. If I could only learn your secrets, creep through the honeycomb of your bones, listen to the turmoil of your marrow, the singing of your nerves, float on the tide of your blood, and come at last to the quiet sea where my countless brothers and sisters swim, flicking their tails, smiling, whispering to me of a life to come! I want a second chance! Let me annihilate myself in you and come forth a second time clean and new [...] Crush me, devour me, annihilate me before it is too late! Wipe me clean, wipe out too these whispering watchers and this house in the middle of nowhere, and let me try again in a civilized setting!. (*Heart* 78)

This quote is a testimony to the fact that Magda’s emotional tumult results from the feeling of emptiness “in the middle of nowhere”; she desires the vitality and the life drive her father has. She uses positive connotations for her father’s body (honeycomb of your bones) which is suggestive of the dual nature of the *abject* as both repulsive

and fascinating. On the other hand, she repeatedly states that language fails as a means to convey her own thoughts: “Words are coin. Words alienate. Language is no medium for desire. Desire is rupture, not exchange” (*Heart* 29). As she cannot adopt the *symbolic* language she learned from her father, she believes that if she can be devoured by her father’s body again, she will be able to internalize the *symbolic* language. Her voice in this diary form of the novel, nevertheless, rejects the language of her father. Through her meditations on language, the alienating words, and through the law “that has gripped my [her] throat [...], that stare from behind my eyes, or that the mind of the law does not occupy my skull, leaving me[her] only enough intellection to utter these doubting words” (*Heart* 93), she expresses that her body cannot accommodate the law. Her body and her words negate each other. She forces her body to welcome the role and the language assigned to her by her father as the colonizer yet her alienation from her own body directs her to invent her own discourse in a different way. Therefore, the father can be read as the *abject* figure whose body must be expelled and who erases the boundaries between two bodies (Magda’s and her father’s) although he has no connection with Magda’s pre-*symbolic* or pre-Oedipal attachment. Her father’s existence as the embodiment of the *symbolic* leads Magda to preserve the boundaries of her body. This is the reason why she commits patricide and cleanses the dirt of her father’s corpse.

The white man’s body spurting out of the land also requires attention. There is a common motif in South African literature; the black man comes back to life in spite of being buried by the white man. It is suggestive of the black man as the real owner of the land. This romanticized pattern was used by Gordimer, as well. Coetzee reverses this pattern and “distinct from Gordimer’s utopianism, concentrates on the immutability of the colonizer” (Head *J.M.Coetzee* 62). Nevertheless, it must not be considered that Coetzee thinks that the right to own the land belongs to the white; on the contrary, the point is to suggest that the romanticized ideas about the black turning back from death to repossess what is taken from them defies the belief that the land belongs to someone. The land needs to be returned to itself not to the blacks or the whites. Also, the colonizer will always exist in different forms because even in the

contemporary world, although there is no colonialism, people are expelled from their lands or they are hegemonized in the form of neo-colonialism and capitalism. As long as language serves as the means of the patriarchal discourse, there seems to be no way to cast the *symbolic* off. The solution lies in tampering with the structure of language that gives way to the emergence of this hierarchy.

Magda's oscillation between the rejection of and identification with her father creates a psychic schism between her adult self and her childish self. Coetzee creates another gray area between the mind/body opposition when Magda writes about her childhood memories of her father's violence. Unable to convey her childhood trauma through her adult voice, Magda gravitates toward semiotizing her language because the pain of the body is infiltrated through the *semiotic* base of signification. One of the principles of entering the *symbolic* is to be recognized by the other people. Such recognition is propelled by the construction of the self and the other. The subject needs another person to acknowledge his existence through a mutual interaction. Magda firstly and mostly expects this recognition from her father but she cannot muster enough affection from him in any time of her life. He "turns me [her] into a child again" (*Heart* 56). As there is no sequence of time in her diaries, Magda narrates a childhood memory by conflating it with the present time. She goes to her father's room while he is sleeping with the new bride. She turns back to her childhood vulnerability: "I am a child again, an infant, a grub, a white shapeless life with no arms, no legs, nothing even to grip the earth with, a sucker, a claw" (*Heart* 56). Scared of loneliness, she begs him to be taken into the room:

I tap on the door and speak.
"Daddy...Can you hear me?"
They are silent, listening to the enormity of their breathing.
"Daddy, I can't sleep"
They look into each other's eyes, his look saying, What must I do?, her look saying,
She is not mine
"Daddy, I'm feeling strange. What shall I do? (*Heart* 59)

This conversation climaxes the idea that the feeling of being the Other is caused by her father, which changes the power dynamics between the colonizer and the colonized

in South African apartheid context. The real identity problem resides in not being welcomed as a subject, a separate individual by him. As Magda cannot form her own selfhood by being acknowledged by the other people, she cannot link the “I” with another “you”. An improper subject formation is curtailed as there is no person in the object position to acknowledge that the subject exists. Therefore, her own predicament over recognizing herself as a subject causes her to feel “strange” (*Heart* 59). What requires attention here is also the focus on the body. As Magda is denied recognition and affection, she correlates her emotional devastation with dismemberment of her body. She gives the reader another glimpse at the composite portrait of body and power association. A dissected body with “no arms” and “no legs” (*Heart* 56) overlaps with the weakening of the body vis-à-vis the imposition of power by the Other. This notion is intensified in the following lines when he “has my [her] wrist in his grasp and crushes it with all the strength of that great hand [...] The great hand slides up my [her] arm till it finds and grips my [her] elbow. I [she] am [is] forced down and down; my [her] head is against the door-jamb” (*Heart* 60). Her father wields power through physical violence in spite of her childish voice for help. A few lines later, the whole story changes and she is carried by her father to her bed softly. In the second version, there is no mention of violence. These alterations in the story have strong resemblance with the rape scene of Magda by Hendrik. After being raped and beaten up violently, Magda alters the story and softens the narration gradually. The inconsistencies in the narration and the similarity between the events suggest that Magda equates her father with Hendrik. They both stand as the representations of the *symbolic* father figures.

The childish voice of Magda when she narrates how she is exposed to physical violence by her father is significant in terms of the difficulty of the articulation of trauma and how Magda is going through a psychic schism. The body and its pertinence to the corporeal signification suggest that Magda’s childish voice can be read in connection with Kristeva’s *semiotic* base of language that transgresses “the threshold of language” (Kristeva *Revolution* 45). The body makes it possible to challenge the *symbolic* through the drive-based *semiotic* punctuation, which demonstrates that “Coetzee himself confronts the difficulty of bringing meaningfully into linguistic

range that which is not immediately recognizable or sayable in any *given* language” (Clarkson 155). Rejected by her father, she writes this story by using a childish voice, which suggests that the other inside her needs to be protected by a father figure and an adult Magda cannot cope with the trauma of rejection. She needs another form of language to express what she feels. Therefore, in her childish voice, she has a reflexive distance to herself; the voices of the child and adult Magda fuse into each other. She leaves her extreme rationality and philosophizing attitude when it comes to articulating violence: “The damaged body, without premeditation, roars its truth in a way that cannot be recapitulated with integrity in the organizing patterns and structures of language” (Clarkson 174). The density of individual phrases in the former pages is alleviated and this reflective distance to her own voice opens her up to the other that is inherent in herself. So, Coetzee explores an alternative to rationalism; the polyvalence in the voices offer another realm of signification. The self-disintegration in the voice hints at the refusal of a controlling narrative position and distances Magda from the *symbolic* language.

The childish voice can be explained as her proximity to the *semiotic* base of language. She slowly recognizes that what she considers as the Other is a part of herself and this childishness can be interpreted as her attempt to reunite with the *semiotic*. Now that she leaves her social responsibilities aside as the daughter of a colonizer, which has been assigned to her by the *symbolic* structure, she takes refuge in the pre-*Symbolic* realm. She is unable to protect her borders and she unleashes the *semiotic* affect in her speech; she is like a child “in a double-bind: a longing for narcissistic union with its first love and a need to renounce this union in order to become a subject” (McAfee 48). Because of the fear of violence, the *abject* haunts Magda; the disorder between self and other (she and her father) is threatened; “[d]enied signification from the father, Magda remains stunted unable to secure her identification with the *I* of language” (Nashef 50).

Referring to Coetzee’s other novels *Boyhood* and *Youth*, Wilm argues that Coetzee’s “focalizers share a childish appreciation of the world, which always allows for asking of questions, even if they are considered naïve. These childish views allow Coetzee’s

texts to express a sense of sheer incredulity in the face of human and non-human suffering, for example” (88). In the mentioned novels, Coetzee writes about his semi-autobiographical experiences in retrospection and he uses a boyish voice. The same pattern is revisited in *In The Heart of the Country*. Magda insistently reminds the reader that she is turned into a child by her father. While inserting those memories with a childish voice into her narration, she does not pay attention to time lapses. For instance, the woman in her father’s room is the new wife and as she tells the reader that woman arrived on the farm quite recently. Therefore, she might be narrating the events from her childish perspective because no word related to physical pain can express the reality as it is. In this respect, Wilm’s opinions can be accorded to this novel, as well. He also adds that Coetzee does not give a moral lesson or pays attention to ethical writing explicitly, but the way his characters project reality is analogous to “Keats’s negative capability, Keats’s potentiality of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason” (88). This elusiveness forces the reader to read the text carefully (88). This is the way he manages to lead the reader to read “attentively, responsively and responsibly without giving way to the itch for generating final answers” (88).

Wilm’s idea can be substantiated with Kristevan terminology. Coetzee’s evasion of certainty and leaving the reader with doubt as to which narration of Magda bears certitude in a Keatsian fashion corresponds to the *semiotic* modality of language. As the demarcations between the subject and the object are not clear, there is no point in looking for verisimilitude to reality. The chasm between the subject and the object is eliminated in the *semiotic* modality of language. Accordingly, Magda feels “strange” since she cannot differentiate herself from her father. The *abject* father cannot be expelled entirely, so she expresses her feelings towards her father by foregrounding the bodily sensations and affect-laden *semiotic*. The fissure between the signifier and the signified along with the subject and the object is laid bare. The inexpressible violence as a signifier is delayed because Magda turns back to her pre-*Symbolic* position especially in the parts when she is physically harassed by the others. Although, on the face of it, it seems like she steers away from her body, she actually

incorporates the body in the *symbolic* more. She verbalizes the effect of violence on her body childishly and she gets more preoccupied with the fragmentation of her body parts.

In terms of the ambiguous place between the colonizer and the colonized, which Coetzee adopts as a writing strategy, the difference between Magda's anecdotes (in the first her father beats Magda up and in the second he carries Magda to bed softly) can be interpreted as Coetzee's avoidance of certainties. The trust in a transcendental self is nullified by Magda's double narrative because "the self cannot tell the truth of itself to itself and come to rest without the possibility of self-deception" (Head *J.M. Coetzee* 150). Besides Coetzee does not present Magda's father as an entirely tyrannical figure and "ensures that the oppressor is not demonized in such a way as to mythologize his power. Rather, the writing strategies Coetzee employs serve to demythologize Empire" (Head *Introduction* 51). Magda is colonized by her father but this truth is accessible to the reader only by her narrative.

The childish fantasies of being exposed to violence by her father can also be aligned with Magda's incestuous desires for her father and the parricide. When these events are read in conjunction with each other, the way that they are transposed into writing rather than their real actualization leads to a revitalized understanding of the novel. The sublimation of violence, incest and murder brings Magda in close proximity with her body and transmutes her father into a softer figure than he really is. Therefore, she can break loose from the cumbersome colonizing mindset of her father, enabling her to achieve intimate revolution and freedom on an individual base. Furthermore, the transformation of these fantasies in writing alter Magda's perception of her body and desire throughout the novel. While she is immersed in the *symbolic* more deeply at the beginning of the novel when compared to her more semioticized language during the course of events (murder, violence, Hendrik's rape and so on), she oscillates between these two realms perpetually through the novel. As she is beset by her body and the dead body of her father, the dualism between mind and body is erased gradually in her mind.

Having incestuous desires for her father and killing her father in her imagination, Magda gets in touch with her body and stands against the prohibition of the father by verbalizing her incestuous desires for her father. When she remembers her childhood days, she misses how she used to prepare the bathroom for him and wait for him in “the dark side of the floral screen” (*Heart* 9) to give his clean cloths. Recollecting these memories, she confesses that “when I[*she*] think[s] of male flesh, white, heavy, dumb, whose flesh can it be but his?” (*Heart* 10). There are many other clues of her incestuous desires for her father. For instance, when her father sleeps with Klein- Anna, Magda eavesdrops on them through the key hole and imagines what they are doing: “All is silent. Are they lying with bated breath, with two breaths bated, waiting for me to make my move? Are they asleep already? Or are they lying in each other’s arms?” (*Heart* 62). She eroticizes their love making in her imagination. When her father beats her up in her childhood, she interprets the violence as loss of virginity: “[t]he blow does not hurt but it insults. I am insulted and outraged. A moment ago I was a virgin and now I am not, with respect to blows (*Heart* 63). When she kills her father a second time, it is because she cannot bear her father’s making love with Klein-Anna and she is curious about how Klein-Anna can be so sexually attractive and attract both her father and Hendrik. She sees her father in her dreams where her father rejects her desire although she craves for his attention:

But I have dreams. I do not sleep but I have dreams [...] One of my dreams is about a bush [...] I stand before the bush watching it, the bush watches me back through the depths of profoundest night [...] Such is a dream about the burning bush. There is a scheme of interpretation, I am sure, according to which my dream about the bush is a dream about my father. But who is to say what a dream about my father is? [...] I should dream with yearning of a bush that resists my metaphysical conquest? (*Heart* 80-82)

Along with the dream, her preoccupation with her father’s body, her wish that their feces be dissolved together in the bowl, her keen interest in her father’s penis and lying on her father’s body in the grave all suggest that her father’s body arouses a sort of erotic, anal and masochistic tension in Magda. Besides her yearning to be recognized and loved as an individual by her father, her hankering after a corporeal union with her father implies that she discharges her incestuous desires by writing.

Referring to Freud's story of killing the father in *Totem and Taboo*, Kristeva argues that incest and murder taboos are not only the actions that inaugurated civil society but also they make signification possible. In *Sense and Nonsense of Revolt*, she reads the taboo and murder stories as positive alternative ways to free the individuals from prohibition and guilt and the inauguration of subjectivity (20). These taboos help the individual to construct a "psychological space because the incest taboo results in the deferral of the sensory satisfactions and immediate desires aroused by the maternal body as well as the introduction, beyond that primordial grief, of the autonomous speaking being, with its ability to imagine, project, produce" (Kristeva *Revolt* 20). Turning back to Magda's incestuous fantasies about her father, killing him in her imagination and the father's appearance at the end of the novel as a less powerful figure⁸, it could be argued that Coetzee's depicting Magda's father as an *abject* figure, between subject and object, has two functions. Firstly, the whole novel, which is woven by the hallucinatory and imaginary narrative of Magda, stands for the unrealized, transfigured and sublimated masochistic drives of her which are not actualized in real life (Coetzee never makes the reader be sure that these events are real or written like a historical documentary). As the children who killed their father in Freud's anecdote and then sublimated their "somasochistic violence" (Oliver "Sublimation of Violence" 14) by submitting themselves to an imaginary and ideal father figure as a substitute for the real father, Magda creates another father figure in her psyche via the "process by which representation sublimates bodily drives, particularly primal urges for cannibalism, incest and murder" (Oliver "Sublimation of Violence" 19). The transfiguration of violence, incestuous desire and parricide into artistic sublimation through writing is the manifestation of Magda's power of psychic

⁸ My father sits if you can call it sitting, in his old leather armchair with the cool breeze on his skin. His eyes are sightless, two glassy blue walls rimmed with pink. He hears nothing but what goes on inside him, unless I am mistaken all this time and he hears all my chatter but chooses to ignore it [...] I lay my father out on his bed, unbutton his nightshirt, and unpin his napkin. Sometimes it is so spotless; but today there is the faintest of stains, proving that somewhere inside him juices still dribble, muscles still execute their faint peristalses [...] Then I press my lips to his forehead and fold him away for the night. (*Heart* 151)

space which transmutes the image of a *symbolic*/patriarchal/tyrannical/colonizer father figure to a humanized, feminized, imaginary father figure in the end. The murder of the father and idealization of him as an invisible supreme power is the initiation of signification. The idealization of the father is a defense mechanism of the subject “against contamination by its disowned and abjected otherness, which it must exclude to define itself as clean and proper” (Oliver “Sublimation of Violence” 1917). Magda’s imaginary fantasies of incest and parricide connect her with her bodily drives; “rather than just repeating the crime as a reminder of lack and debt on the one hand, and of the mobility of power on the other, repeating the timelessness of animal experience become bodily drive also free us from prohibition and guilt” (Oliver “Sublimation of Violence” 16)

Magda aligns herself with her father unconsciously as the similarity between them is not only due to color or the position as a colonizer. They are both tortured subjects; her father can be interpreted as the archetypal paternal figure who was tortured by his own sons in Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* and Magda can be analyzed as the epitome of the daughter who fantasizes being tortured by her father. Especially when she speaks in her childish voice and explains how traumatic it was for her to be beaten up by her father, the female child’s desire to be beaten up by her father gets very explicit. As “beating the father” and “being beaten up fantasy by the father” are interpreted as desire for the father by Freud and Kristeva, it could be suggested that Magda does not repress but projects her affection for her father by writing. Imagining the prohibiting and *symbolic* father as a suffering body alleviates the authority of the father because they are both sufferers. This is the way how the tyrannical father⁹ is transmuted into a

⁹ The superman father is humanized, even feminized by the suffering he undergoes; and because of this he is at once my ideal love object and my double, an ideal ego. A complicit “us” is formed by and in the father’s passion. From here on we shall share love, guilt and punishment together. For my unconscious, such a father is not only positioned as an agent of the prohibition and the punishment it entails, but he is the forbidden love object suffering from prohibition and punishment *like me* [...] Thus, because of our osmosis in paternal passion, this love expresses itself differently: “We are both in love, and guilty, we both deserve to be beaten to death. Only death will bring us together again” (Kristeva *The Severed Head* 118)

loving and imaginary father as Kristeva also mentions in *Tales of Love*. Therefore, the primal urges for incest, murder and cannibalism, in other words, the violent urges in our psyche, are sublimated through bodily drives. If the individual can create a psychic space and transform her aggressive drives into words, she not only sublimates violence rather than practice it, but also softens the image of a tyrant father who punishes. It is not only to represent violent drives but “rather discharge them, and more importantly transform them” (Oliver “Sublimation of Violence” 19).

Remembering that Coetzee problematizes the problem in South Africa as “the failure of love” (*Doubling* 58), in this novel he might be claimed to foreground love as a discursive solution for the colonial cul-de-sac. By writing through her body and using her body as a signifier, Magda both thwarts the authority of her father and distances herself from the traumas of being alienated from her own body and being forced to adopt the assigned identity as a colonizer. The discharge and transformation of violence and trauma as sublimatory practices and the emasculated father figure at the end of the novel act as antidotes to the real violence and trauma happening in South Africa. Magda manages to attain a revolution which is not collective or national but individual. As the novel shows that her identity formation is never endless and she is a subject “in process/ on trial” (*Revolution* 22), her survival in the end provides the reader with a new understanding of politics. Rather than deconstructing the binaries and nullifying the reality of colonialism or historical facts, Coetzee brings forward a novel discourse to South African literature, which must be read as a very forceful ethical and political stance. This novel enables us to read ethical and political as a form of intimate revolution, progress, continuation, “alchemy, transubstantiation, transformation, transfiguration, passage, modulation, osmosis, metabolization, compensation, and at the extreme, resurrection, salvation and rebirth” (Oliver “Sublimation of Violence” 19) instead of a dogmatic and fundamentalist political reading. Dick Penner identifies the moral questions of Coetzee on an individual base. He states that “although the reader is unable to change the ‘external scheme of things’ by his/her ethical choices after reading the novels, such choices make life more

bearable moment by moment for the individual in the face of untr tranquil certainties” (87).

Besides the metaphorical *abject* father figure whose presence threatens Magda “with the constant risk of falling back under the sway of a power as secure as it is stifling” (Kristeva *Powers* 13), Magda’s mother, despite her absence, eradicates the breach between self and other. Although she is rarely mentioned by Magda in her diaries, her mother’s presence has a determinate role in her relationships with other people. Rather than lamenting over the death of her mother, she fears to end up in the same desperate position as her. She cannot locate her mother anywhere in her psyche:

The mirror, inherited from my long-lost mother, whose portrait it must be that hangs on the wall of the dining-room over the heads of my silent self, though why it is that when I conjure up that wall I find below the picture-rail only a grey blur, a strip of grey blur, if such a thing is imaginable, traced out by my eye along the wall...Inherited from my long-lost mother, whom one day I shall find, the mirror fills the door of the wardrobe opposite my bed. It gives me no pleasure to pore over reflections of my body (*Heart* 24)

She associates her mother with the mirror left by her. Given that Lacan explains the mirror stage as the time when the child has the illusion that she is a separate being, it is not far-fetched to assume that the mirror image is a Lacanian metaphor in the novel. Magda encounters the maternal body when she looks in the mirror inherited from the mother. The reflection she sees in the mirror reminds her of her own silence and ugliness with her “hair grow [ing] between my [her] eyes” (*Heart* 24). The picture does not help her to locate herself on a stable position as it only projects a grey and blurred reflection. The imaginary identification with her mother is far from giving her pleasure because she

have [has] no cause to love this face which might not be cosmetically tempered if I plucked out some of that hair with tweezers [...] And might I not be less ugly if I did something about my teeth, of which I have too many, by sacrificing some to give the others space to grow in, if I am not too old for growth? (*Heart* 24)

Her own reflection perpetuates her self-hatred. The mirror makes her ugliness more conspicuous and intolerable. With the hair between her eyes and too many teeth, she

sees her body like an animal. The bestial imagery of her body evokes a sense of dense disgust and loathing. As looking in the mirror leads her to identify with her mother, her mother is merely an *abject* figure for her and reminds Magda of her own *abject* ugliness. She has already expelled the maternal body as she is “too old for growth” (*Heart* 24). She has already taken her place in the *symbolic*; she can only reach that maternal body when she dies because she believes that she can find her mother one day (*Heart* 24).

The infant does not constitute the (m)other as a separate subject but presumes that the image in the mirror is real. The speaking subject in the Imaginary stage has not formed a unified ego yet. In the same vein, Magda does not want to be stuck in the mirror image. She likens herself to her mother in that her mother died without a proper communication with people. As the fate of the women is to be isolated and mistreated in South Africa, her mother experienced the same loneliness Magda is tormented by. Magda fears not to be able to convey her ideas to another subject by the *symbolic* language. She highlights the similarity with her mother as the following:

The woman in the nightcap watching me from the mirror, the woman who in a certain sense is me, will dwindle and expire here in the heart of the country unless she has at least a thin porridge of events to live on. I am not interested in becoming one of those people who look into mirrors and see nothing, or walk in the sun and cast no shadow. It is up to me. (*Heart* 26)

Without another person to talk to, the subject cannot properly construct communication. The self learns to own a separate identity and see the other people as the addressees; there is supposed to be an “I” and “you” dialectic in a conversation. The *symbolic* base of language requires the self to speak to the others because “it is not speech that makes man man, but the speech of others” (Penner 69). The lack of this mutual connection paralyzes and immobilizes the subject; self-annihilation is triggered by the dismissal of the individual by the other people. So, Magda’s fear is based on her fear of being annihilated as a subject as she will be stuck in the pre-*symbolic* language if she turns out to be a replica of her mother. She will be turned into an absence, “two absences, three absences, four absences” [because] my [her] father creates absences. Wherever he goes he leaves an absence behind him” (*Heart* 41). The

absence of her mother stems from not merely her death but fundamentally because of her father who has negated the presence of her mother. Magda does not want to be stuck in the pre-*symbolic* (which is an absence) nor hegemonized by the *symbolic*. Even though she is in pursuit of another way of expression to be considered as an individual by the others, she knows that turning back to the *semiotic chora* is impossible:

The past. I grope around inside my head for the mouth of the tunnel that will lead me back in time and memory past images of myself younger and younger, fresher and fresher, through youth and childhood back to my mother's knee and my origins, but the tunnel is not there. Inside my skull the walls are glassy. I see only reflections of myself drab and surly staring back at myself. How can I believe this creature was ever a child, how can I believe she was born of humankind? Easier to imagine her crawling from under a stone in her bottlegreen sheath, licking the egg-slime off herself before taking her bearings and crawling off to this farmhouse to take up residence behind the wainscot. (*Heart* 41,42)

Magda needs signification from another person but all the other characters in her life deny her signification. If she is able to find the “tunnel” which will take her back to the *semiotic chora*, she will be able to collect “fresher” and “younger” memories of herself. Yet, the tunnel is blocked as she is already embedded in the *symbolic* base of language. Bereft of signification or the approval of others, she merely “stares back at herself” and associates herself with crawling insects. Her mother as the *abject* unsettles her selfhood because the distorted image of the insect licking the egg-slime of herself blurs the boundary between human and beast; she is on “the frontier between animality and symbol formation” (Kristeva *Black* 22). The insect which crawls and hides itself behind the waistcoat is analogous to the waste dejected and exiled from the *symbolic*. Her mother “draws [her] to the limits of her own defining boundaries” (Becker-Leckrone 32).

When all these clues about her mother are considered together, the mother is represented in the novel as an absence whose shadow in the mirror boosts Magda's self-hatred. Her reflection in the mirror, which used to belong to her mother, reflects her ugliness. With too many teeth (*Heart* 24) and bestial reflection of herself, Magda faces her own uncanny appearance. Her fear of ending up like her mother, whose life

was wasted because of the tyranny of her father, and her very hyper consciousness about the impossibility of going back to the tunnel (which can be interpreted as the umbilical cord connecting the child with the womb), and turning back from there fresher and younger hint that the maternal body is far from providing her with the *semiotic* base of language. Rather than a romanticized yearning to go back to the *chora*, Magda attempts to fill the emptiness of her mother with signification. Although she calls herself a melancholic in the novel many times, her awareness of the absence of her mother's body withholds her from being engulfed by melancholy. She evades death instinct and welcomes life instinct through her over verbalization of how melancholic she is. In other words, Magda identifies herself with her mother because she shares the same destiny as hers and she depicts her mother through positive adjectives; however, she takes her life energy from her father's alive body instead of her mother's dead body.

Keeping in mind that the female child fills the absence of her mother by words and hallucinates her by profusion of her images her "representation [of her mother in writing] transforms drives into something else (words, painting, sculpture) through which they are discharged without resorting to violence. [...] representation takes the place of the missing maternal face" (Oliver "Sublimation of Violence" 20). Magda protects herself against regressing into a pre-linguistic stage and her attempt to understand and verbalize her resemblance to her mother in terms of being subordinated by Coetzee creates an in between space again between Magda and her mother.

There is a void between Magda and every character in the novel, and Magda tries to fill in this void by writing incessantly. Her mother can be regarded as both the "same" and "the other" for Magda because she comes face to face with her own ugliness and animality when she looks in the mirror. Although Magda calls herself a melancholic, I contend that she does not fit into any of these categories because all her writing endeavor puts her in a perpetual process. She refers to the *semiotic* tenderness and delicacy while referring to her mother, the chasm that divides subject and object (Magda and her mother) in the *symbolic* realm are burst open but she does not let the self and other be undifferentiated. She does not derail from the *thetic* phase which

refers to the “break, which produces the positing of signification” (Kristeva *Revolution* 43) but as the bar between *chora* and the *thetic* phase is very fragile, she nourishes her words by the *semiotic* potentiality of her body; her body is inscribed in language. She does not completely relapse into the *semiotic chora* where she comes in contact with the maternal body but her obsession with the ugliness of her body hints at the permeability of the *symbolic* diction. As the inscription of the attachment to the maternal body allows one to explore the uncharted territories of human psyche and shatter a fixed identity, Magda’s self-reflexive interrogation of her mind and body through philosophizing can be read as a challenge to the *symbolic* structure of a rigid and limited identity. She is quite aware of the fact that if she lets the *abject* mother haunt her completely, she will end up in delirium. In contrast, she wants to move forward, challenge her stasis; so her praise of her mother as a soft figure as opposed to her father is not a wish to be immersed in the prelapsarian state of *semiotic chora*, but an attempt to understand her place in the *symbolic*, give meaning to her solitariness via her self-consciousness.

Her mother is both an identificatory maternal figure and already expelled other whose absence sparks Magda’s interrogation of her own alterity as a white woman who is another colonized like her mother. In *The Severed Head*, Kristeva states that the mother’s face is absent but the absence of the mother is filled by words or through art: “I have lost Mama? No, I hallucinate her: I see her image, then I name her. From my babbling, which was its semiotic equivalent, I now fabricate word-signs” (5). Different forms of art, especially literature enable the child to struggle with the trauma caused by the absence of the mother; representing and opening this wound, “appears to be a reversal of the experience of suffering; a kind of cathartic elaboration, not through erotic displacement, but through detailed observation of the logic and economy of the violence itself” (118). Through art and literature, the wounds and traumas are articulated or represented. The loss of her mother and the possibility of ending up like her threatens the boundaries Magda tries to keep stabilized. Her writing experience is the displacement and transformation of her wound into words.

3.2. The Eradication of the Color Bars: The Colored as the *Abject*

Magda's relationship with Hendrik also instantiates the existence of the third space that cannot be limited to the self /other or white/black separation. Hendrik is the reflection of Magda's other *abject* self. As a black servant, he represents what Magda fears to be. Magda's biggest dilemma is to locate herself in the power structures of the farm. On the one hand, there is her father whose white supremacy reigns over the whole farm; on the other hand, there are Hendrik and his wife Klein- Anna who serve as the black servants. Yet, Magda fits no category. She strives to be a master like her father yet the law that shapes her life prevents her from internalizing the superior position she is born with. She is another servant in the house considering her father's ignorance of her. After murdering her father twice, Hendrik turns out to be another *symbolic* father figure in the house. His role in the novel is double-edged. Firstly, he makes the reader be aware of the slipperiness of power relations. Secondly, the rape scene which is repeated in various forms by Magda in the diary bears significance in that she acquires a new perception about her body. As she is brought up by the black servants of the house in her childhood and as the first language she learned belongs to the colonized, Hendrik and Klein Anna shatter her own boundaries of self, both her psyche and her body. In this respect, the colored servants cannot be categorized as the Others in the novel but as the *abject* figures who both fascinate and repulse Magda. During her attempts to have a more intimate relationship with them, she realizes that the only Other or the "stranger" of the farm is her. It should not be forgotten that all the characters in the novel are projected through Magda's perspective. Even though there are some limited dialogues between her and the others, they might stem from Magda's imagination. Coetzee highlights Magda's unreliability as a narrator from the very beginning; "for each thought and each opinion there seems to be a counter-thought, another (an other) opinion, a different way of seeing a phenomenon [...] these often conflicting ways of reading are not hierarchized" (Wilm 14). So, whether Magda was really raped by Hendrik must be regarded as cautiously as her father's death. Everything that the reader learns about the other characters comes from Magda's inconsistent narration. Therefore, Coetzee, as a writer who adopts a "reflexive distance

to the conventional understanding of everything” (Leist&Singer 6) pre-empts any racist labelling of Hendrik as a rapist.

The rape scene must not be considered as a damnation of the black or colored people but as a form of invasion of one’s body in the form of colonization. Magda is always apprehensive about being a servant in the house like Hendrik and Klein Anna. At very early ages, she learned that she was not one of them:

I grew up with the servants’ children. I spoke like one of them before I learned to speak like this. I played their stick and stone games before I knew I could have a doll’s house with Father and Mother and Peter and Jane asleep in their own beds and clean clothes ready in the chest whose drawers slid in and out while Nan the dog and Felix the cat snoozed before the kitchen coals. With the servants’ children I searched the veld for khamma-roots, fed cowsmilk to the orphaned lambs, hung over the gate to watch the sheep dipped and the Christmas pig shot. I smelled the sour recesses where they slept pell-mell like rabbits. (*Heart 7*)

Magda’s retrospection about her childhood rests on the Cartesian binaries. Her language acquisition is firstly inaugurated by the servants in the house. She adopted the servants’ life style initially. Yet, then she learned a new language which brought along another life style in which a nuclear family can live in a beautiful house with the pets around. While the servant’s language and life style are aligned with nature, animal life, violence, barbarism (the Christmas pig is shot) and disorder, her second language is associated with unity, harmony and cleanliness. So, being or speaking like one of the servants means defilement in her psyche. The servants look like “rabbits” and they “smell” (*Heart 7*). So, anything related to the body, animal life, filth or violence are encoded in Magda’s mind as belonging to the servants. Therefore, she is taught to discard what belongs to the servants. On the other hand, she remembers her childhood days in agony. The stories of the old and blind grandfather of the servants about the past “when beast and men and master lived a common life as innocent as the stars in the sky” give her a sense of “melancholy, and a myth of expulsion to interpret my [her] ache to me [her]” (*Heart 7*). In order that she can envision a world where everybody is equal, she needs to unlearn the language of her father. So, the other for Magda is both what she misses and what she loathes. What is more, she could never have a life where the nuclear family lives happily with the pets. The oppression of the black

people in history finds its repercussions in Magda's psyche but in the form of a personal history. She shares the guilt of the white population and makes an analogy between herself and Hitler. She believes that the servants see her as

[a] mind mad enough for parricide and pseudo- matricide and who knows that other atrocities can surely encompass an epileptic Führer and the march of a band of overweening serfs on a country town from whose silver roofs the sunfire winks and from whose windows they are idly shot to pieces. They lie in the dust, sons and daughters of the Hottentots, flies crawl in their wounds; they are carted off and buried in a heap. Labouring under my father's weight I struggle to give life to a world but seem to engender only death. (*Heart* 11-12)

Magda believes that she is seen as a mad woman who can act like a Nazi by the black population. If she was to give birth, she would beget only death because the macrocosmic effect of the political atmosphere results in microcosmic reflections in her life. All throughout her diaries, she agonizes over being infertile. Infertility has political associations; she thinks that her fertility is vitiated due to her very masculine, Führer-like and violent stance in the world. She gives birth "under her father's weight" (*Heart* 12) but she only begets death in the world where her body is masculinized. So, Magda's relation with Hendrik must be analyzed by keeping all of her self-hatred in mind. Hendrik is more than a servant to Magda. As she admits that there is an inviolable connection between the master and the servant, Hendrik occupies a more unbreakable distance to her: "[...] while it is true that the essence of servanthood is the servant's intimacy with his master's dirt, and while it is also true that there is a perspective in which corpses are dirt, Hendrik is not only essence but substance, not only servant but stranger" (*Heart* 15). The difference between "essence" and "substance" refers to the idea that Hendrik's alterity does not result from his occupation or the assumption that he is inferior to the master because of cleaning his dirt; his alterity is more solid and tactile; he is a stranger to Magda and this alterity is not shaped merely by his color or occupation. So, Coetzee goes beyond the master/slave relationship because neither occupation nor the color can be the sole determiner of this hierarchy. Magda confesses that

I know nothing of Hendrik. The reason for this is that in all our years together on the farm he has kept his station while I have kept my distance and the combination of the

two, the station and the distance, has ensured that my gaze falling on him, his gaze falling on me, have remained kindly, incurious, remote [...] We have our places, Hendrik and I, in an old code. With fluid ease we move through the paces of our dance. (*Heart* 27)

The distance between Magda and Hendrik has been shaped by the code that is prescribed by the law between the master and the slave. No intimacy is allowed between the pairs in order that the hierarchy can be ensured. Nevertheless, the distance does not prevent them from grasping each other's existence through looking. One establishes his/her own position and the other's position by gaze. Bhabha's opinions about the "fetish object" might serve useful insights at this point. He states that what is despised as the other is at the same time the thing that is desired. He alludes to Freudian castration complex to explicate upon the notion of the fetish. The boy's anxiety of castration starts with looking at the mother's absence of the penis. The mother is a threat to him because she lacks the penis. Therefore, he disavows the mother because of his anxiety of castration. If he continues to be attached to the mother emotionally, he will have to face losing his penis. So, Bhabha associates the visibility of the penis with the visibility of the black skin. As the white subject cannot ignore the visibility of the black skin, he feels the same fear and anxiety he felt in the face of his mother's absence of penis. The black is different from him/ her because his color enables him/her to differentiate himself/herself from the black. But, the subject also knows that the mother had the penis before but she was castrated by the father. Then, Bhabha explains it in Lacanian terms. The child in the mirror stage is closer to the mother figure, but this image is false and unsatisfactory, and it has to be forsaken to be enveloped in the Symbolic base. But the penis fetish (in Freudian terms) or the imaginary space that had to be left behind emerges when the white person encounters the black subject. The skin color, with its visibility, is reminiscent of the imaginary space. It becomes a substitution for the fetish object, be it the penis or the mirror stage imago:

In the objectification of the scopical drive there is always the threatened return of the look; in the identification of the Imaginary relation there is always the alienating other (or mirror) which crucially returns its image to the subject; in that form of substitution

and fixation that is fetishism there is always the trace of loss, absence. (Bhabha *Location* 81)

Given that Magda both hates and desires Hendrik through her gaze “falling on him [Hendrik]” (*Heart* 27), it is not far-fetched to think that Hendrik is her substitute fetish object. In Kristevan terms, he is both a threat to the *symbolic* and a reminiscent of the *semiotic*. Remembering that Magda was initially brought up by the servants and learned to speak like them and remembers those days melancholically, it can be argued that she never loses her connection with the imaginary realm entirely. Bhabha also suggests that:

The disturbance of your voyeuristic look enacts the complexity and contradictions of your desire to see, to fix cultural difference in a containable, *visible* object. The Desire for the Other is doubled by the desire in language, which *splits the difference* between Self and Other so that both positions are partial; neither is sufficient unto itself [...] The very question of identification only emerges in-between disavowal and designation. It is performed in the agonistic struggle between the epistemological, visual demand for a knowledge of the Other, and its representation in the act of articulation and enunciation. (*Location* 50)

To put in other words, to see another person as the Other always is a play of differentiation and identification. When the subject expels the Other, s/he enforces the position of the Other by gazing at her/him. The other’s visibility ensures the subject’s assumption that s/he is different from the one whom s/he watches. Yet, this separation between the self and the other derives its force from a “partial” (*Location* 50) reciprocity; the expelled other is partly me. Likewise, language is based on the difference between the sign and the referent; the signifier and the signified are connected to each other because the difference of the word is generated by language. The visibility of the difference between letters or words guarantees the place of the signified as a fixed point. Yet, as Bhabha suggests, this assumption is lacking because “designation” always is concomitant to “disavowal” (*Location* 50). The Self and the Other, in the same vein, are never entirely differentiated from each other. They do not exist independently. Desire for the Other is expressed in the language by the same pattern. The Other’s gaze shapes the way that Magda sees herself. She has a mixture of feelings such as embarrassment and fear toward Hendrik:

They sleep together as man and wife [...] Hendrik says amusing things and Anna giggles. He tells her about my lonely life, my solitary walks, the things that I do when I think no one is looking, the way I talk to myself, the way my arms jerk. He parodies my cross gable. Then he tells her of my fear of him, the harsh words I speak to keep him at a distance, the odor of the fright he can smell floating off me. (*Heart* 95)

Magda is preoccupied with how she is seen by the others. She feels her body more dismembered as she feels more under the burden of being watched. So, the voyeuristic look does not only belong to the Other, but also to Magda. She scrutinizes her own body as if she was being watched all the time, which means that the real fetish object is her own body. Therefore, although Hendrik and Klein-Anna are her fetish objects as she continually watches them, they are not totally expelled parts of her because the fetish is “in-between disavowal and designation” (Bhabha *Location* 50).

The colored people are more aligned with the *semiotic* realm in her psyche and therefore she sees their bodies as outer forces that threaten her boundaries of a *symbolic* self. However, the *abject* other increases the fascination with the body of the other. Magda has an uncanny fascination with the subaltern body but Coetzee does not construct the body of the subaltern as a fascinating, erotic, igniting sexual attachment because of its alterity. The black body is never eroticized and turned into fetish because of its desirability. Such an approach would strengthen the traditional binarism between black and white. However, the fetish as the Other is narrated by Coetzee by the demand of the subject to know the Other “by voyeuristic look [which] is never possible because the Other always lies beyond the grasp of the self” (Bhabha *Location* 50).

After murdering her father, the roles in the house start changing. Magda focuses on this detail many times referring to Hendrik’s clothes which belong to her father. Hendrik turns out to be another dominant figure in her father’s clothes symbolically. The hatred and the enmity between Magda and Hendrik rises when Magda cannot pay them regularly toward the end of the novel. She senses the hatred in Hendrik’s voice when she asks him to take off the new clothes of her father:

“Miss! Is that finally hatred in his voice?” “Miss, come on, tell old Hendrik: does miss want him to take off the baas’s clothes?” [...] Hendrik begins to unbuckle his trousers

[...] What I hear in his voice is certainly hatred [...] They are making an enemy of me, but why? Simply because I have no money for them? (*Heart* 108)

The Other always rests on similar principles for Magda. She considers Hendrik as another threatening embodiment of the power figure. Every threat coming from the other person is always connected to a likely violence to her body. She had grieved over being a victim of “childhood rape” (*Heart* 4) before while talking about her father. Now, Hendrik is another rapist figure and in the clothes of her father, he wields power on Magda.

The rape scene is significant in the novel because it leads Magda to conceive her body as more of a signifier than before. She starts gaining more insight into corporeal desire. Coetzee diminishes the gap between the white/black, the colonizer/colonized and mind/body via foregrounding the introspective vision of Magda as to how her body and mind react mutually to the fact that she is raped. Her alternative versions of the rape shift from a harsh attack to mutual consent. These alternatives can be analyzed in two ways. Initially, she may be fabricating these versions in order to cope with the actual trauma of a rape, and secondly, she may be imagining the whole rape story as an imaginary enactment of her desire for Hendrik. Whether the rape scene is real or imaginary, it is an implication that Magda thwarts the temptation of the real or possible actions by transmuting another tyrannical and *symbolic* father figure into a loving one by softening the violence of rape in every account. So, her perverted and masochistic desires (to be beaten up by the father or to be raped by the father) are transfigured by the sublimation of the primal urges. If we consider rape as a kind of masochism, writing the act of rape demonstrates the power of signification in sublimating the violent drives. Furthermore, Magda’s detailed depiction of rape breaches the *symbolic* because she breaks the law by sexual intimacy with a colored person and she pushes the limits of a rigid system.

Given that her rape narration is twisted, rewritten many times, it is apparent that the violation of her body is the result of her lack of communication with the other people. The more she is drifted apart from the *symbolic* base of language, the more she lets her

speech be molded by the *semiotic* base of language. If the body is regarded as a separate entity which has nothing to do with the mind, the person is doomed to articulate his/her thoughts via the linguistic structure given by the dominant discourse. So, Coetzee focuses on the painful process of being exiled in the body. The third space he manages to write from is in tandem with the inclusion of the body in writing. Figuring out to speak from a third space where the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* are interconnected becomes the driving concern in this novel.

As identifying the other as a fetish object “emerges in-between disavowal and designation” and “doubled by the desire in language” (Bhabha *Location* 50), the chasm between the signifier and the signified punctuates the selfness of the Other and “splits the difference between self and Other” (*Location* 50). Accordingly, the narration of the rape scene four times not corresponding to each other suggests that Magda widens the gap between the signifier and the signified and makes the difference between the self and the Other open.

The first is the most violent one and they barely talk to each other. Against the resistance of Magda, Hendrik repeats “yes”. She accentuates the heaviness of his body:

Hendrik still rants behind me, throwing his heavy black words [...] At my second step, he is upon me, catching my arm and yanking me round. I struggle against him. I pick up the first thing I see, a fork, and I lunge with it, scraping his shoulder. The skin is not even pierced, but he sucks in his breath with surprise and hurls me against the wall, his whole weight upon me [...] “No!” I say. “Yes!” he grunts an inch from my ear, “Yes!...Yes!...[...] He slides down my body, dragging at the elastic of my pants, scratching me. “No!...No!...No!... (*Heart* 115-116)

Before analyzing the first rape scene, it may be helpful to know how Magda associates the word “No” with her father. The quotes below show that her father has always displayed his authority by not allowing Magda what she wishes to do or have. The “no” word has always been a barrier between the father and the daughter. His rejection of love and exertion of authority have always been uttered by the “no” word. Before he dies, Magda wishes to hear “yes” word from her father. This word represents impermeability, intemperance and the strictness of the word of the *symbolic* father as the examples below instantiate:

...and leave me grinding my knuckles in my eyes in the grim little room at the end of the passage, waiting for my father's eyebrows to coalesce, then the black pools beneath them, then the cavern of the mouth from which echoes and echoes his eternal NO? (*Heart* 18)

He is turning me into a child again! The boots, the thud of the boots, the black brow, the lack of eyeholes, the black hole of the mouth from which roars the great NO, iron, cold, thunderous, that blasts me and buries me and locks me up. (*Heart* 56)

Do you think you can die before you have said Yes to me? (*Heart* 79)

So, when compared with Hendrik's insistent and violent "yes" and Magda's begging "no" in the first rape scene, these words seem to resonate with a totally opposite meaning. Hendrik uses the affirmative word to launch sexual assault on Magda. The negative reaction with "no" on the other hand is transmuted into pleading for mercy. So, the transposition of these words bears a lexical and semantic alteration. The fixed meaning of a single word is shattered although violence remains the same. Besides, Magda replicates her father's words not to allow Hendrik to harm her. However, this time, the "no" word is devoid of its former meaning and it does not provide Magda with any dominance. It is a breaking point in her recognition of the slipperiness of the words as referents. There is an analogy between her father's strictness (no word is "eternal", "locks her up"; it is "iron, cold, thunderous") (*Heart* 18-56) and Hendrik's physical rigor. His skin is too hard to be hurt by fork. Hendrik's body's resistance to be hurt is analogous to the father's defiance against burial. Besides, the disgust aroused by the smell reappears in the rape scene. Magda feels disgusted by the smell emanating from Hendrik's body. The way that she wants to cleanse herself from the dirt of her father's stinking body is the same as the way she washes every place and everything after the rape. So, the *abject* is not only limited to her father. Hendrik arouses fear and disgust as much as her father. The master and the slave are not oppositional forces at work. Magda is downgraded to servitude which equals her position with the servants at home. Her obsession with cleanliness is pronounced again. She does not know how to cleanse the semen "beginning to seep out of me[her], this acrid flow that must be his seed, down my[her] thighs, on my[her] clothes, on the floor". (*Heart* 116)

The second narration of the rape is still violent but Magda and Hendrik exchange a few words. They utter “yes” and “no” words once. Magda tries to persuade him not to hurt her by talking. She mentions the fork again but this time she does not focus on the hardness of the body. She asks Hendrik “why do you hate me [her] so? [...] It is not my [her] fault that everything is going so badly, it is your [his] wife’s fault, it is her fault and my [her] father’s. And it’s also your [Hendrik’s] fault. You people don’t know where to stop” (*Heart* 117). This version is much shorter although Magda shows her reaction by trying to talk to him.

The third version of the rape is more softened than the first two scenes. Hendrik orders her to take off her clothes (*Heart* 117). She does not show any reaction and yields to his orders. In this version, what is foregrounded is the feeling of shame and self-absorption. Magda feels to have lost her dignity and integrity and she does not utter “no” even once. She submits to her fate because she knows that “this is a woman’s fate” (*Heart* 117). Similar to the prior scenes, she is obsessed with cleanliness as she feels sorry for not taking her shoes off. She tends to be more introspective and persuades herself to endure it “until finally I[she] am [is] left alone and can begin to rediscover who I [she] am [is], putting together, in the time of which there is blessedly so much here, the pieces that this unusual afternoon in my [her] life is disarranging” (*Heart* 117). As can be seen, the descriptions of the rape scene evolve from callous violence into self-contemplation. Resistance turns into hopeless concession. The focus on the body leads its way to focus on the mind. There is a gradual softening in Magda’s voice as she pays more attention to the violence wielded on her psyche. With this in mind, it can be suggested that the binaries in her mind start to dissolve. Her exaggerated attention to her body is transmuted into an attempt to figure out what happens to her psyche along with her body. Wilm states that in Coetzee’s novels, “the characters’ extreme rationality as a status quo is challenged through an event, an opening in their lives when their calculative thinking cracks and becomes meditative” (31). He maintains that the Empire capitalizes on the colonized subjects by foregrounding its masters’ faculty of mind. Being rational is opposed to the supposedly animalistic nature of the colonized people as a pretext for

subjugation. Coetzee shatters the acknowledged rationality of the colonizer; he foregrounds the role of physical contact in the formation of subject/object relationship.

The narration of the rape scene is rather slow and detailed when compared to the other parts. Coetzee's attachment to non-referentiality intersects with the detailed description of the scene. Magda articulates it by spilling word over word but the reader is led away from the reality of the event paradoxically. She lavishes the paragraphs with multifarious descriptions. So, her rationality is transmuted into meditation when it comes to bodily pain. Her status quo as the master is disrupted because of "the slowness against and in sharp contrast to the fastness and industriousness of the Empire". (Wilm 33)

In the last version of the rape, the interaction between them increases as Hendrik half-mockingly tries to sooth Magda. The violence is still present as "the bed cracks at every joint" (Heart 118). Hendrik tells her that "everyone likes it" (*Heart* 118), which heightens Magda's self-questionings about herself. The act is so novel for Magda that she cannot even decide on the climax of the act. She notes that she had seen animals doing it before and "it is the same everywhere" (*Heart* 118). Alienated from her body, Magda can only compare it with the animals. The interaction with another person's body, albeit without her consent, inaugurates a new approach to her body. She wonders if she is a woman now. (*Heart* 118).

Hendrik was a stranger to her before and ironically to become a "woman" does not ease her questions about her existence. The hierarchy is disrupted again by Hendrik; the code that she is used to does not avail her of superiority. Therefore, she gradually starts to derail from thinking within the binaries. She cannot name the feeling when Hendrik continues to visit her at nights: "It hurts, I am still raw, but I try to relax, to understand the sensation, though yet it has no form" (*Heart* 121). Due to lack of affection, Magda cannot conceive what she goes through. She wishes to sleep "in his arms, to see whether it is possible to sleep in someone else's arms, but that is not what he wants" (*Heart* 121). The more she is devoid of affection, the more she gets obsessed with cleaning everything: "I must rub salt into the bloody sheets and lock them away, or else quietly

burn them” (*Heart* 121). She tries to expel the filth of the other as the *abject* because it reminds Magda of her own *abject* nature.

Magda’s rape by Hendrik invites us to consider the relation between Coetzee’s unconventional textual form and the use of body as a signifier. Considering herself as a hole to be filled with the presence of another person, Magda’s ponderings over the situations “are never solipsistic rejections of but rather direct engagements with the world and with others” (Wilms 34). Magda defers the meaning when she articulates the pain of the harm on her body. The density of the individual phrases and the meditative writing style create “a reflexive distance to the self [...] opening up to the other and the outside” (Wilms 105). Exploring the body and getting to know the other have been one of the major concerns of Coetzee¹⁰. In *In the Heart of the Country*, Magda tries to know about Hendrik through getting to know what his body conveys to her. She watches his genitalia carefully and follows every movement of his body curiously. She tries to decipher Hendrik’s body so that the other’s mystery can be solved. Yet, Hendrik does not allow Magda to have a more affectionate intimacy. So, Magda directs all her interest to her own body. Her body used to be the sign of emptiness before. She regarded her own body as an absence. After the rape, she exerts herself to understand if her body signifies anything. After the rape, her writing turns out to be more visibly shattered; the *semiotic* is more foregrounded as there is no clear syntax and linearity. Parry states that “the ascription of value to the disarticulated body springs from a failure of the dialectic between the ‘imaginary’ and the ‘Symbolic’ in Kristeva’s vocabulary, between the ‘semiotic’ and the ‘thetic’” (46). My opposition to this statement is that Magda starts

¹⁰ In *Waiting for the Barbarians*, for instance, the Magistrate tries to communicate with the tortured and blind girl whose body “is a script to be decoded in the same way as the characters on the wooden slips he has excavated” (Huggan & Watson 48). When the Empire officials ask him to tell the meaning of the signs on the woods, he makes them up because they were written in a script by the natives. So, the signs are inexplicable. The Magistrate reaches this state of awakening only after he tries to heal the wounds of the barbarian girl. Physical contact with the other’s body enables him to understand that the sign and the object are unified. Likewise, the emotional attachment between Vercueil (the black boy) and Elizabeth Curren (the white professor) in *Age of Iron* increases after they explore one another’s body affectionately. Body becomes a sign and a mediator between two people.

articulation through her body and she reaches the full climax of *semiotic* penetrating into the *symbolic* modality of language at the end of the novel. Therefore, her dialectic between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* should not be seen as a failure but a process that activates the corporeal side of language and makes her language poetic.

The repetition of the rape scene and the fact that Magda's speech becomes more distorted and *semiotic* can also be explained by the violence enacted on the body, trauma and the *abject*. The trauma of the bodily violence pushes the individual experiencing it to the realm of the *semiotic* as some sort of defense mechanism and the change in Magda's writing in different versions. Whether the rape is real or the production of Magda's imagination can be explained by the essence of trauma. Kirmayer, Lemelson and Barad state that

in addition to symptoms related to fear and anxiety, the psychological consequences of trauma may include disturbances of memory, identity, and perception termed *dissociation*. The claim that individuals can forget, repress, or dissociate experiences of trauma, only to have them cause distress later in time or to reemerge in the form of symptoms, fantasies, or recovered memories. (8)

As there is no linear time in Magda's diary, the reader has no clue about the exact time of the rape scene. It might have been narrated just after it happened or written after a long time. Considering that Magda narrates the rape scene in different versions, it might be claimed that the alterations in the narrative may be the cause of the traumatic consequences of the rape. Additionally, the gaps between the signifiers and the signifieds may refer to the disassociative effect of the pain and the symptomatic effects of the distorted memory. Likewise, Cathy Caruth, related to trauma and the psyche states that

a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and language. (64)

Caruth's definition of the wounded psyche is somehow related to the *semiotic* base of language. Magda's language which becomes more obscure and *semiotic* in every

narration of the rape hides what is unknown to her, as well. Since she cannot articulate the pain and the agony inflicted on her body through *symbolic* language and since the trauma is inconceivable to the *symbolic* frame of language, she violates the standard categories of rational judgement by a semiotized language. The inexplicable pain as the signifier slides over a chain of signifieds; the pain of the unscribable body is disassociated from the signifieds. Besides, the defense mechanism of Magda shows itself in the repetitious nature of trauma. Caruth, by referring to Freud's pleasure principle, states that "repetition [...] is not simply the attempt to grasp that one has almost died but, more fundamentally and enigmatically, the very attempt to claim one's own survival" (64). Therefore, Magda's repetitive narration is both an attempt of articulating what inflicts pain and trying to survive by experiencing the same wound again in words. The articulation of the same event in different forms hints that speaking/writing is a life force through which she will heal herself. While she is coming closer with her own body, she responds to the *abject* both emotionally and physically. The *abject* body creates a paradox: "that the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness" (Caruth, 92). The belatedness emerges in Magda's writing both as a form of repetition and the utterance of trivial details. For instance, in the third version, she states that "I [she] have [has] forgotten to take my [her] shoes off! (*Heart* 117). She delays the narration of the event and also the immediacy of the trauma by focusing on her shoes. It should also be noted that Coetzee avoids narrating this traumatic experience very explicitly. The reason why he does not embed the rape scene as a very traumatic event in the novel can be explained by two reasons. Firstly, as a male writer, he may not want to express what a woman can go through in such an experience. He eschews speaking about a woman's body and her unique corporeal experiences. Secondly, it is likely that he does not want the reader to take sides with any character because his aim is to present the events neutrally. As Wilm suggests, "since conflicting ways of reading are not hierarchized, the reader has to think on her own" (14). Nevertheless, Magda's thoughts about trivial details such as her shoes and the way she delays the narration of the rape scene suggest that the rape is more traumatic for her than what she tells the reader.

The patriarchal figures wield their phallogentric violence to enforce their ontological assurance of superiority regardless of their skin color. Magda's desire to have a physical contact with the others is repelled by the male figures' phallogentric concerns. Both the colonizer and the colonized "manifest the same desire for self-expression through bodily invasion" (Head *J.M.Coetzee* 59). The physical self-affirmation of the others leads Magda to realize that "to decipher one according to one's own schema" (Head 59) is impossible. Attridge argues that:

The alterity which Hendrik, as colored, as servant, represents for Magda, could have been compellingly conveyed without the distortions, but these distortions produce a fuller sense of an unknowable other, unknowable to such a degree that the conventions of narrative accounting break down. (26)

The unknowability of Hendrik leads Magda to write in a more disordered syntax as the chasm between the signifier and the signified is rendered wider after the body is more fragmented. So, the distorted syntax and the density of the repeated words to describe the rape result from the difficulty of expressing the unrecognized and unexpected situation in the given layout of language.

Magda defines Hendrik's rape attempts as "invasion and possession" (*Heart* 118). These two words are noteworthy for their evocation of land. Coetzee makes an analogy between body and land. In contrast to the expectations of the reader who is used to the rape of a black woman by a white land owner, Coetzee changes the roles. However, the change of the roles is not a deconstructive attempt of the writer. Rather, he demonstrates that independent of the color, the wish to possess is what bars love in South Africa. Remembering that the entire history of South Africa is founded on the "invasion" and "possession" of lands by the Afrikaners, the rape is associated with the land retention and the body is homologous to the land. It might be helpful to give ear to Coetzee's own words about South Africa at this point:

At the heart of the unfreedom of the hereditary masters of South Africa is a failure of love. To be blunt: their love is not enough today and has not been enough since they arrived on the continent; furthermore, their talk, their excessive talk about how they love South Africa has consistently been directed toward *the land* [...] The veiled unfreedom of the white man in South Africa has always made itself felt most keenly, when, stepping down for a moment from his lonely throne, giving in to a wholly

human and understandable yearning for fraternity with the people among whom he lives, he has discovered with a shock that fraternity by itself is not to be had, no matter how compellingly felt the impulse on both sides. Fraternity ineluctably comes in a package with liberty and equality. (*Doubling* 96)

What requires attention here is that human interference with nature is downgraded to a possessive attitude by the white man. Rather than loving the people on the land, they preferred to cherish what the land gives them. Such a propensity to undervalue the human interaction led them to overvalue the land. However, devoid of interaction, the white man could never accomplish the fraternity they wished to create because lack of freedom broadened the distance between the black and the white. Therefore, both groups tended to define themselves by the attachment they have to the land. However, Coetzee's novels do not suggest that the land belongs to the black or the white. He particularly highlights that the land must be free of an owner. He neither justifies the usurpation of the white population nor creates sympathy for the black who were dispossessed of the land they lived on. This is the reason why Magda stresses that "this is not Hendrik's home. No one is ancestral to the stone desert, no one but the insects, among whom myself, a thin black beetle with dummy wings who lay no eggs and blinks in the sun, a real puzzle to etymology" (*Heart* 20). The land belongs to the animals which naturally possess the land. Magda regards herself as an insect that is infertile. The infertility leads her to think that she can never belong anywhere as there will be no offspring of her to leave the land to. Both her father and Hendrik are on a paternal quest for possession of something. Unable to take back the land, Hendrik tends to bolster up his connection with the world. Magda stresses that, now that he has a wife, he can leave his name in the world "because he does not wish his blood to die from the earth forever" (*Heart* 27). Being a paternal figure is of utmost importance because man needs to perpetuate his name. In this respect, Magda's father, who has always wished to have a son and Hendrik who desires to perpetuate his name in the world are similar to each other.

Coetzee shows the reader that as long as love is considered as possession, the oppressor and the oppressed will continue to live without fraternity. Magda is in a tremendous quandary over where she belongs to. If she were fertile, it would be easier for her to

maintain the system she learned from her father. She would give birth and somehow establish a connection with the world. She fabricates stories about the sisters and brothers who died before her. She imagines having a brother called Arthur: "If Arthur had trashed me I would have squirmed with pleasure. If Arthur had thrown a stone I would have run to fetch it" (*Heart* 52-53). Lacking any siblings and friends, she approaches Hendrik and Klein-Anna. She is in pursuit of fraternity but she does not know how to befriend anybody. The way that she connects herself with the land is not possessive, either. To become a woman and to give birth are to substantiate her existence.

As for Magda's relationship with Klein-Anna, her emotional and sexual attachment to her demonstrate that she comes closer to making a pact with her own otherness. Although Klein-Anna's body is still the *abject* body, "the ambiguous, the in-between, what defies boundaries, a composite resistant to unity" (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 160), in her identification/differentiation process with Klein-Anna, the *abject* becomes manifest through the sensuousness of Magda's language. Firstly, she delineates Klein-Anna's body as beastly; her intimidating wilderness is the manifestation of the *abject* as her attractive and beastly body stirs up fear, disorder but at the same time fascination. As Magda finds herself beastly as well, she identifies herself with Klein-Anna. As the *abjection* "is a ceaseless defense against non-differentiation" (Keltner *Thresholds* 46), Magda tries to protect herself against the threat of the erasure of the rupture between the subject and the object (she and Klein-Anna); her feelings towards Klein-Anna oscillate between love/hatred and jealousy/disdain, identification/differentiation.

The beast metaphor is repeated in her diaries many times and for every person it adapts a meaning differently. She sees herself as a beast because of not having a proper life and not being able to find a place among the people who abide by the hierarchy on the farm. Her father is beastly as he bursts out of its grave. Hendrik is beastly owing to his huge body, violence and stinking smell. The beast metaphor used for Klein-Anna, on the other hand, is different from the others because Magda finds her sexual attraction beastly, "with her sharp little teeth, her hot armpits-is she the beast, the woman, subtle,

lascivious, insatiable?” (*Heart* 54). Magda has ambiguous feelings towards Klein-Anna and the pre-Oedipal narcissistic desire is the most conspicuous one. Her attempts to get closer with Klein-Anna foreground the repressed desires of Magda for the same sex. Although the majority of her diary is made up of her ideas about her father and Hendrik, Klein-Anna is the one with whom she tries to have a connection mostly. She is the most invisible and silent character in the novel. Yet, notwithstanding her barely visible existence, she has one of the key roles in the novel. At face value, Magda’s problem seems to be more with the men around her. Magda seems to struggle to define herself as a result of being respected and loved by them. Nevertheless, the real problem she cannot overcome is with the most silent figure in the novel. Klein-Anna is like a role model for her. She possesses the love and interest of her father and Hendrik. She is also like an obstacle in Magda’s life as she can somehow communicate with both men. Although her father abuses Klein-Anna sexually and Hendrik occasionally beats his wife, Magda is jealous of her position and sexual attraction. As she cannot bear any children and does not fulfil her father’s expectations, she fears that Klein-Anna will replace her place: “I’ll be bringing my father and my maid breakfast in bed while Hendrik lounges in the kitchen eating biscuits, flicking his claspknife into the tabletop, pinching my bottom as I pass. My father will buy new dresses for her while I wash out her soiled underwear” (*Heart* 54). So, Klein-Anna is the one whom she aspires and fears to be paradoxically.

The most prevailing repressed fear of Magda is to be reduced to the position of a servant like Klein-Anna. Being a servant means being exposed to the sexual harassments of Hendrik. Her fears rest on the possible changes of power in the house. She attaches great importance to whom her father chooses as a wife or mistress. She does not meditate upon bigger issues like the colonialism the country goes through. Her fears are contingent upon the deteriorating relationship with her father. So, the “Other” is not shaped in accordance with the racial or financial issues but the power dynamics in the house. Therefore, she decides to consolidate her position in the house lest Klein-Anna should take her place. She assumes her master role and names her:

“So, you are another Anna. Now we have two Annas”. She nods, still averting her face.

“Talk to the miss!” whispers Hendrik. His voice is harsh, but that means nothing, we all know, such are the games we play for each other.

“Anna, miss” whispers Anna. She clears her throat softly.

“Then you will have to be Klein-Anna-we can’t have two Annas in the same kitchen, can we?”

[...]

Come on child, speak, I won’t eat you up!”

“Come, Anna, there is nothing to be afraid of. Do you know who I am?”

[...]

“Well, who am I?”

“Miss is the miss.”

[...]

“Anna, this is our Klein-Anna. You are so nice and big: what if we make you Our Anna, then she can be Klein-Anna. How does that sound?”

[...]

All of this in our own language, a language of nuances, of supple word-order and delicate particles, opaque to the outsider, dense to its children with moments of solidarity, moments of distance. (*Heart* 33)

Naming is an old process of colonization. When the first Western colonizers arrived in Africa, they were surprised to see the fauna and flora they were not used to in the West. In order to familiarize with this unknown world, they changed the name of everything they saw around. Naming is an act that guarantees the superiority of the name giver. As there are two Annas in the house, Magda gives the younger Anna the nick name Klein. She tries to stabilize the power positions in the house. There is a tone of motherly affection in her voice; she addresses Anna as “child” and demands recognition of her position. She is just a “miss” for her, which means that Klein-Anna

does not recognize Magda as an individual but just the master of the house. “Miss is the miss” (*Heart* 33) does not provide for her the answer she needs because this is not a role Magda willingly adopts. She needs another person to know her full name and acknowledge that she lives in the house as a valuable and separate individual. She knows that all the naming processes and giving and taking orders are parts of the games they play. Each side takes a cautious approach toward each other. They obey the rules of the game since it is the only way to live together in the same place. While it provides the colonizer class with “solidarity”, it “distances” the colonized people from them as these are the productions of language. It is only through language that this hierarchy is stabilized. Magda is torn between playing the game according to the rules and being aware of the fact that each part just does what is necessary.

Magda puts the blame on Klein-Anna and her father first while trying to figure out why this tragedy befell on her. They are the ones who initiated to break the symbolic law¹¹. They are the first couple who broke the law that prevents two different colored people from being sexually intimate. Her father is the first person to have exchanged “forbidden words with Klein-Anna” (*Heart* 39). He bestows Klein-Anna with gifts and tries to ingratiate himself with her. Magda cannot fathom why her father gets closer to Klein-Anna:

We, he is saying to her, *we two*; and the word reverberates in the air between them. *Now; come with me now*, he is saying to her. There are a few enough words true, rock-hard enough to build a life on, and these he is destroying. He believes that he and she can choose their words and make a private language, with an *I* and *you* and *you* and *here* and *now* of their own. But there can be no private language. Their intimate *you* is my *you* too. (*Heart* 39)

The quote above suggests that Magda is accustomed to a system where the bar between one group of people is severely detached from the other. This very system she internalized due to her father’s strict adherence to the apartheid rules is abused by her

¹¹ “Immediately after coming to power in 1948, the National Party Government promulgated the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949) and the Immortality Act (1950), which made “ sexual relations illegal across the color line” (in Canepari-Labib 128)

father again. A face to face dialogue that is comprised of an “I” and “you” happening “here and now” (*Heart* 39) fails to comply with the hierarchy that has been the base structure of the farm. The hierarchy between these people was historically determined and it normally requires the one who speaks from an economically and racially superior position to keep the other at bay. So the historically determined “rock hard enough” (*Heart* 39) code clashes with the disrupted equality and present occurrence of the intimacy between Klein-Anna and Magda’s father. Magda is uneasy about the “private language” (*Heart* 39) they share. She thinks that a private language was supposed to be between the same group members. She comes to recognize that the law can easily be broken. Therefore, she puts the blame on her father and Klein- Anna firstly. “You people don’t know where to stop” (*Heart* 117) connotes the idea that Magda’s mind still operates within the dualistic structure. Yet, she does not know where to situate herself anymore.

The colored couple working in the house pattern is perpetuated by Klein-Anna and Hendik. The other older couple in the house is the older Anna and Jacob. Coetzee might be suggesting the pattern of the colonized people does not alter at all; and it is carried from generation to generation. He implicitly suggests that the historical and political situations in South Africa are not likely to change. Magda seems to have a closer connection with the older one and she is uneasy about her father’s intimacy with Klein- Anna. When she asks him where Anna is, her father rebukes her for asking the questions about the servants. The servants are her responsibility. Then he asks “which Anna are[is] you[she] talking about?” (*Heart* 40). Magda emphasizes that the only Anna they can get close to is the older one: “I’m talking about our Anna. Our Anna, not the other one” (*Heart* 40). Her emphasis on the word “our” shows that Magda is not bothered that much about having a close relationship with the servants. If she has any class consciousness, the older Anna has already been accepted in that group. However, the older Anna does not pose a threat in the house. She is not abused by her father sexually and therefore; she cannot break the law. Half, jealous and half heart broken, Magda is disturbed by the fact that her father chooses another woman as the womanly warmth in the house rather than her. If Klein- Anna is bestowed the superior

position, she will not be able to continue the master role in the house. Besides, she cannot come to terms with her easy acceptance of male power:

Behind her she has a week of knowledge of this strange man, mountainous, hairy, flaccid, decaying, powerful, who tonight comes into the open full of bravado to announce her as his concubine, his property [...] Does she ask herself how long he will protect her from her husband's anger?. Does she think at all about the future, or did she learn at her mother's breast to live and be damned in the luxury of the present? Does he merely part her thighs, stolid, dull-nerved, because he is the master, or are there refinements of pleasure in subjection which wedded love can never give? [...] Why have those relics never come to me? Why is everything secret from me? (*Heart* 57,58)

As Magda always questions her own destiny as a woman, her target enemies have been the men around her. With the arrival of Klein- Anna and her nonchalant acceptance of the male dominance, she realizes that another woman, despite the color bar which gives her a double disadvantage in South African context, can easily submit to the tyranny of the males. It is not only men who speak the same language in the house. Klein- Anna is their accomplice, as well. All the members of the house but her share the same language. Even the colored Klein- Anna is one of them because she possesses the secrets Magda could never learn. Such being the case, Magda considers Klein- Anna as another enemy that belongs to the Other group. Yet, Klein-Anna unveils her homo-erotic desires. The clues of such desire are given in her diary. When she kills her father while he is sleeping with the new wife (or Klein- Anna), she questions herself as to why "I[*she*] have[*has*] said nothing of the girl's nakedness" (*Heart* 69). Her repressed desire gets more apparent when she sees Klein- Anna naked. She gives one of her "sad noble clothes of bygone times" from her wardrobe and watches Anna silently: "The light glows on her bronze flanks and breasts for which I find again no words. My heart quickens as I settle the dress over her head and fasten the buttons against her spine. She wears no underclothes" (*Heart* 94).

The reason why she gives Klein- Anna one of her dresses is that after her father's death, she works with Hendrik and her in collaboration to pull off one of the walls and redecorate the house to get rid of the stinking smell. While working, they have equal position. They work and prepare the meals together. The ironic point is that Magda

confronts her biggest fear after she murders her father. Getting rid of the *Symbolic* Father makes all the members of the house work together. Magda turns out to be another servant in the house. Yet, she does not complain about being reduced to the position of the servant. She regards it as an opportunity to get familiar with Hendrik and Klein-Anna. Working together for the same target enables her to forget about the power structure in the house. She might have given her clothes to Klein-Anna in order that the class distinction would be erased between them. Her erotic desires are mixed with sisterhood:

I would like to stroll arm in arm with her of a Saturday night dressed in my gayest clothes, whispering and giggling like a girl, showing myself off to the country beaux. I would like to hear from her, in a quiet corner, the great secret of life, how to be beautiful, how to win a husband, how to please a man. I would like to be her little sister [...] I would like to share a bed with her, and when she tiptoes in at midnight peep with one eye at her undressing, and sleep at night cuddled against her back. (Heart 96)

According to Kristeva, one of the ways to reject the *symbolic* that enables the subject to sublimate the *semiotic* is “homosexual phratry, which “breaks up the unity of a single rationality, punctures the homogeneity of a system- pluralizes the law [...] It introduces the *other* into the symbolic” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 137). In this case, Magda’s desire for Klein-Anna cannot be differentiated from that of her father. Both of them approach her as an object of desire. Both of their approaches are against the law. Her father trespasses the law that does not allow two races to mix in marriage. So, he resorts to abuse his power and uses Klein-Anna as her mistress. Magda breaks the same law because homosexual desire is against the *symbolic* man/woman pair. It is another binary opposition set by the Cartesian mind-set. Yet, there is a difference between Magda and her father considering their desire for Klein-Anna. Whereas her father is still within the *symbolic* system and merely benefits from his power and abuses the Law, Magda shatters the unity of the Law. She goes out of the boundaries of the *symbolic* and pulverizes it with the sublimation of the *semiotic*. She embraces what she *abjects*. She comes to terms with her own veiled desires although she knows that what she is doing is totally banned by the Law. She tries to break the Law again

and encourages Klein- Anna to recognize her as an individual by saying her name. When Kleian-Anna calls her as “Miss Magda”, Magda states:

“Yes; or just plain Magda. After all, Magda is the name I was baptized with, not Miss Magda. Wouldn’t it sound too strange if the minister baptized the children like that Miss Magda, Baas Johannes, and so forth?”

[...]

“I was once also little Magda. But now I am just Magda, and you are just Anna. Can you say Magda? Come, say Magda for me.” (*Heart* 112,113)

Magda underlines that her identity has been given to her by being baptized at the very beginning of life. The titles such as Miss and Baas are taken during life as people locate themselves in society within a certain occupation or they are entitled in accordance with their marital status. That is to say, Magda had been provided with a social identity even before she was born. In this *symbolic* realm, where symbols stand for people, Magda is in pursuit of just being called by her own name stripped off any assigned role. Additionally, what Magda embarks on doing is that she is annihilating the class or race difference between herself and the black servant Anna. Attridge in *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading* brings up the self-other dichotomy in a postcolonial context:

For the otherness which makes demands on us as we read Coetzee’s novels is not an otherness that exists *outside* language or discourse; it is an otherness brought into being by language, it is what two thousand years of continuously evolving discourse has excluded-and thus constituted-as other. Not simply *its* other, which would, as an opposite, still be part of its system; but heterogeneous, inassimilable, and unacknowledged unless it imposes itself upon the prevailing discourse, or unless a fissure is created. (29-30)

Magda endeavors to create the “fissure” Attridge mentions in language. Provided that the titles are withdrawn, she thinks that she will be able to create equality and genuine love with Klein- Anna. She calls her just “Anna” without Klein; in return, she expects to be called Magda without the “Miss” title. Anna, on the other hand, maintains her distance and continues to call her “Miss”. On the other hand, her insistence on Klein-Anna calling her by her real name is another means of wielding power because her

condescending attitude hints that she is the one who decides how people are going to be named. Aware of the fact that Klein Anna is the one whom her father is sexually interested in, Magda is in need of stabilizing her position as the colonizer. Therefore, it might be suggested that on the pretext of getting more friendly with her, Magda acts like an authoritative figure in the conversation, which is another implication of her wish to expel the other who reminds her of her own fears and alterity. On the other and, her ambivalent feelings for Klein-Anna are evident in her attempts to get closer with her body. Upon the murder of her father, the three people, Magda, Hendrik and Klein- Anna, work under the same conditions in the house. “I [Magda] wash [es] the dishes and Anna dries” (*Heart* 121). Magda expects such equality to bring them together physically. She gropes for new ways to have an interaction with her. She does not enforce her to have a conversation. She decides to ask “fewer questions and to chatter more, so that she will grow accustomed to the declarative mode. At the moments when our bodies brush I am careful not to pull back” (*Heart* 121). When compared with her efforts to communicate with her father and Hendrik, her approach to Klein- Anna is soft and cautious. For the first time, she does not correlate human connection with violence. As she knows from her experiences that violence subjects people to submission and bars any chance of communication, she approaches Klein-Anna softly without frightening her. Her fantasies about making love with her are quite mellow:

I want a home somewhere else, if it has to be in this body then on different terms in this body, if there is no other body, though there is one I would far prefer, I cannot stop these words unless I cut my throat. I would like to climb into Klein-Anna’s body, I would like to climb down her throat while she sleeps and spread myself gently inside her, my hands in her hands, my feet in her feet, my skull in the benign quiet of her skull where images of soap and flour and milk revolve, the holes of my body sliding into place over the holes of them, there to wait mindlessly for whatever enters them, the song of birds, the smell of dung, the parts of a man, not angry now but gentle, rocking in my bloodwarmth, leaving me with soapy seed, sleeping in my cave. (*Heart* 119,120)

The words in this quote bear quite an opposition to the narration of Hendrik’s rape of her. The positive connotations of “gently, benign, soap, flour, milk, birds, gentle, soapy” (*Heart* 119,120) and so on serve as perfect examples as to how Magda

reconciles body and language. For the first time in her diary, she imagines her body to be a whole with that of another person. Her words do not contain self-pity or hatred. She seems to have found a medium in language whereof a new discourse based on love can be adapted. Body does not signify possession of the other's body or something to be expelled for the first time. Body is welcomed by Magda as a conduit for the union of two separate beings. There is no boundary between the bodies in the sexual union; all the color bars or social inequalities are erased. Magda's language is tinged with the *semiotic* as the positive connotation of the words suggest. When two bodies penetrate into each other in harmony; there is no bar between one's body and the other's body. Self and other dissolve into each other, which refers to the annihilation of the binary oppositions. Furthermore, there is a pact between body and mind. Magda embellishes the *symbolic* with the *semiotic* while poeticizing the erotic act. The priority is not given either to the body or the mind. She does not lose her mind or these words are not products of a delirious mind. She finds the "home" she looks for in the body of the Other. As two bodies permeate into each other, the self and other nexus is forsaken. The sublimation of the *abject* is marked by the fertility of the body. Magda releases "soapy seed" and therefore succeeds in sprouting. She manages to generate a form of life out of her body. Contrary to the smell and the filth she is disgusted with when faced with Hendrik's rape and the body of her father, she is at ease with the images of her and Klein Anna's body.

Related to Magda's desire for Klein-Anna, the pre-Oedipal narcissistic attachment to Klein-Anna is a step forward to get closer to the *semiotic* connection with the maternal other but she knows that it is not going to fulfill her desire to be the whole. As she has internalized the fact that being a woman means being an emptiness in patriarchy, she thinks that there is no likelihood that love between two women will be able to fulfill her desire to be wanted by the other: "I know that nothing will fill me, because it is the first condition of life forever to desire, otherwise life would cease. It is a principle of life forever to be unfulfilled. Fulfillment does not fulfill" (*Heart* 126).

Magda rivets attention to the unfulfilled desire to be the desire of the other; the real fulfillment is arrived at only when one forgoes her/ his connection with the other and

embeds herself in the *semiotic*. There is a certain tension between who is desired and to be the desire of that person. Magda is “a hole trying to be a whole” (*Heart* 45) but she cannot manage to reach that wholeness with any of the characters in the novel. She attempts to fulfil her desires with Klein-Anna to no avail and she cannot have a mutual relationship with her father and Hedrik. Supposing that Magda could have a mutual relationship with any of the characters, the “I” could have reached “you” in a linear axis. But the completion of this axis would be to write in a dualistic perspective. The self-splitting of Magda by calling herself as a void or hole can be accorded with Kristeva’s subject in process/ on trial” (Kristeva *Revolution* 22). The subject is never a full-fledged whole because that wholeness is barred by the disconnection from the mother figure in one’s life. The subject is in pursuit of reaching that lost connection with the maternal other and s/he can never reach the ultimate happiness because the substitutions fail to provide her with that lost *semiotic chora*. As the subject is in process of *abjection* all through his/her life, s/he both *abjects* herself and the ones who will partly enable her to reach that lost status. The connection between “I” and “you” is lost forever. Coetzee never lets Magda reach that full satisfaction because according to him, the unified subject is a myth. From postcolonial literature perspective, the split off subject who is always in process is homologous to Bhabha’s third position. The Cartesian binaries, the white/ the colored are never unified by Coetzee.

3.3. Magda’s *Abjection* of Herself: The Real Other is Me

Lastly, it must be restated that Magda grapples with her own identity formation while rejecting/ *abjecting* her father, mother, Hendrik and Klein- Anna. All through her interactions with the other characters, she realizes that the real other is inside her: “uncanny, foreignness is within us” (*Strangers* 181). Her experiences lead her to realize that the real *abject* figure is herself and the whole novel is her own dilemma to adopt her own *abject* nature. The uncanny feeling of being a stranger does not come from the outside but she is her own other. Magda’s narration in her diary evinces that she starts writing under the domain of the *symbolic* and ends up embracing the *semiotic* modality although the *symbolic* can never be eradicated entirely. The literary writing techniques of Coetzee add weight to my argument that there is a transition from the

symbolic to the *semiotic* in the novel. As *In the Heart of the Country* is written in the first person narration and the other characters are glimpsed through the perspective of Magda, the reader expects the “I” of the narration to be reliable and stable. But she says “what I say does not come from me [...] I create myself in the words that create me” (*Heart* 8). So, the reader is prepared from the beginning to the idea that the “I” of the diary is not trustworthy. By doing so, Coetzee robs Magda of authorial voice. As the author of the novel, Coetzee not only distances himself from the narration by not interfering in the narration but also leaves the reader alone without the authority of the narrator. According to Wright, “it is this voice from which Coetzee questions all concepts of ownership, including ownership of the narrative” and adds that “as beings that are both owned and owning, Magda, Susan, and Elizabeth as who owns who? Who owns the land? And who, if anyone, owns the story?” (54). So, the alterity problem that is a leitmotif in postcolonial literature is questioned on the basis of the speaking subject. Coetzee propels the reader to question if it is possible to talk about the subject and the object if the subject is already an empty signifier.

Magda is the production of the words; she is a textual palette on which words create the image of her. There is a fissure between the narrating and the narrated subject and “the play between I-as-narrator and the I-as-subject is of the novel’s many stylistic games” (Glenn 123). If she is both the narrator at face value and claims to be narrated by words, she is also a character who is narrated by another invisible agency. This agency, however, is not Coetzee because the whole novel denies the authorial power of the novelist. If the subject is both the acting and acted one, she writes from an in-between position; she is neither the subject nor the object, neither the signifier nor the signified. She is a character who “stands in the text as teller and tale [...] a textual artifice, a product of her text” (Glenn 124). She compares her incompleteness with the complete form of nature: “I am incomplete, I am a being with a hole inside me, I signify something, I do not know what, I am dumb, I stare out through a sheet of glass into darkness that is complete...” (*Heart* 10). Her anguish stems from her inevitable acceptance that she is not different from the “bats, bushes, predators and all, that does not regard me[her], that is blind, that does not signify but merely is” (*Heart* 10).

Magda's connection with nature is noteworthy because Coetzee parodies the farm novel lyricism; in this genre, nature is depicted as a paradisiac place and people live in harmony with nature and their surroundings. Oliver Schreiner with her novel *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) diverted from this traditional pastoral narrative and depicted "a lasting symbol of South Africa, the lonely farm, hauntingly beautiful by moonlight, harsh and demanding in reality, where everyday life becomes a drama played out in a tense multi-racial society" (Parker 45). While Schreiner's novel does not touch upon the racial conflicts much and concentrates on the inner lives of three sisters, Coetzee unveils the harshness of the farm life in *In the Heart of the Country* purposely. So, he carries Schreiner's depiction of the farm one step further. The farm life generates hatred in Magda because this is the place where she comes from and she cannot leave the farm behind. Similar to her father, the farm is an inseparable part of her. It reminds her of her loneliness and absence as "where this house stands in the desert there is a turbulence, a vortex, a black hole that I live in but abhor" (*Heart* 43). The animals and the stones which live independently of each other just by "being", do not act as the object for Magda. They are deaf to her existence although Magda thinks that the silence and immotility of the farm shapes her own existence.

The immotility of the farm can be likened to the *semiotic chora*. The Greek philosopher Plato uses the term *chora* as a receptacle which has maternal overtones (*Timaeus* 42). Kristeva explains that "Plato's *Timaeus* speaks of a *chora*, receptacle, unnameable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to naming, to the One, to the father, and consequently, maternally connoted to such an extent that it merits 'not even the rank of syllable'" (*Desire* 133). Nature "that does not signify but merely is" (*Heart* 10) is free from the necessary *symbolic* connection between the subject and the object. When viewed from this aspect, nature is not vulnerable to the "One [...] the father" (*Desire* 133). It is analogous to the baby who lives in the "unnameable, improbable" (*Desire* 133) womb of the mother.

There is no sense of linear time on the farm; Magda "lie [s] here involved in cycles of time, outside the true time of the world, while my [her] father and Hendrik's wife travel their arrow-straight paths from lust to capture" (*Heart* 39). Space is the determiner of

time; time is a vicious circle where nothing happens, no movement takes place. In accordance with its circular movement, the linearity is disrupted. While for her father and the other people, time and space have value as they attach meaning to it going through “straight- paths” (*Heart* 39), Magda lapses into absence. As the other people have established a subject and object position by recognizing and desiring each other, time flows from one point to the other; from an A point to a B point. Without recognition of the other people, Magda is stuck in the house which resembles the *semiotic chora* in that she cannot conceive herself as separate from her surroundings. The *semiotic chora* can only be felt by “contradictions, meaninglessness, disruption, silences, and absences” (Moi “Introduction” 13); the *semiotic chora* is the place where body and soul are entwined and resist disjunction. On the other hand, she strives to create her own discourse in the *symbolic* and revitalize the deadly silence and emptiness of the farm. She wishes to create a motility in her life tracing “incident after incident whose little explosions keep me [her] going” (*Heart* 47).

Her predicament stems from being too much aware of her situation: “Clenched beneath a pillow in a dim room, focused on the kernel of pain, I am lost in the being of my being: This is what I was meant to be: a poetess of interiority, an explorer of the inwardness of stones, the emotions of ants, the consciousness of thinking parts of the brain” (*Heart* 39). She resists being reduced to the immobility of the stones; as she is positioned in the *symbolic*, she wants to get rid of her endless cycle of self-consciousness:

...I am among other things a farmgirl living in the midst of the hurly-burly of nature, or such paltry hurly-burly as we have in the desert, not unaware that there is a hole between my legs that has never been filled, leading to another hole never filled either. If I am an O, I am sometimes persuaded, it must be because I am a woman (*Heart* 45)

Her desire to be loved and recognized as an individual is so intensive that finding a partner and begetting babies become her main concerns in life. Being aware of having “a hole between her legs” evokes the Freudian understanding of sexual difference. Related to the visibility of sexual difference for Freud, the male has a visible sex organ, the penis, and the female does not. As Moi criticizes, “when he[Freud] looks at the

woman, Freud apparently sees nothing”; the female difference is understood to be “an absence or negation of the male norm” (*Sexual/Textual* 131). According to a Freudian analysis, Magda imagines compensating for this absence by possessing the penis of a male partner or babies. The connection between the signifier and the signified is broken eternally; every absence begets another absence, “leading to another hole never filled either” (*Heart* 45). According to Parry, Coetzee’s main characters’ silence is “associated with sexual passivity or impotence [...] signaling their location on the fringes of the phallogentric order, whose dominance through their speechlessness and asexuality they evade” (45). Magda can be accepted as a silent character as well despite her endless speaking in her monologues. Yet, the silence or asexuality must not be regarded as a deficiency. The silence empowers the characters; their silence is a reaction against the situation that cannot be uttered with words; it is a “metaphor for that portentous silence signifying what cannot be spoken” (Parry 45). In addition to that, Magda’s hyperconscious understanding of having a hole between her legs as a woman is not a misogynist affirmation of Coetzee. On the contrary, “voicing in the female a desire for connection to people, to nature, to life itself, Coetzee’s text uses feminism to challenge the limits of postmodern” (Head *J.M. Coetzee* 67).

Magda does not want to be imprisoned in her interiority; she is in pursuit of interconnection with people. The only problem is that she tries to insert herself in the *symbolic* order assuming that it will fill her absence with presence. When her attempts to incorporate herself with the others in the *symbolic* are spurned by her father, Hendrik and Klein- Anna, her feeling of absence is exacerbated. So, she vacillates between the *chora* as the embodiment of the farmhouse and the *symbolic* realm. The immobility and inertness of the farmhouse, along with the animal life and nature, is embraced as a part of her own self. She does not expel the *symbolic* entirely because the *abject* father comes back to life again. One question that crops up in the reader’s mind might be why Magda does not leave the farmhouse and her father in order to have a fresh start anywhere else away from the farm. She asks these questions to herself, as well:

Am I unfitted by my upbringing for a life of more complex feelings? Is that why I have never left the farm, foreign to townslife, preferring to immerse myself in a landscape of symbols where simple passions can spin and fume around their own

centers, in limitless space, in endless time, working out their own forms of damnation?
(*Heart* 14)

The reason why Coetzee does not let his character leave everything behind might be due to the impossibility of creating a separate life independent of history. Coetzee does not promise his readers a blissful resolution to the turmoil in her characters' lives. Magda's fate is on a par with the nation's isolation. He believes that "desiring to escape the history that Empire has imposed [...] must involve living 'outside history'" (Head *Introduction* 54). Remembering that Magda both constructs fictional histories and is constructed by the historical forces she cannot change, moving away from the farmhouse would be just the change of place. As the *symbolic* base of language can never be cast off entirely, she will be constructed by the *symbolic* again in another place. So, the resolution for this dilemma is not to believe that there is a place free from the *symbolic* (language and history), but to activate the *semiotic* within the *symbolic* as far as possible.

Striving for "becoming" and trying to be embraced by the *symbolic* is repeated many times in the novel. Magda wishes to connect herself with her past because the present is vacant. She needs a family history that will enable her to stabilize her place in the *symbolic*:

But perhaps if I spend a day in the loft emptying old trunks I will find evidence of a credible past: ornamental fans, locketts and cameos, dancing slippers, favours and souvenirs, a baptismal frock, and photographs, if there were photographs in those days, daguerreotypes perhaps (*Heart* 42)

The farm is a sterile place similar to her past. She is marooned in the present time. Her mental and psychological torment is so overwhelming that she wants to reverie in the past. Yet, there is no blissful memory she can derive pleasure from. Therefore, fantasy emerges as her preferred form of mediation between her present and past. Therefore, "what I[*she*] lack[s] in experience I[*she*] plainly make[s] up for in vision" (*Heart* 46). Fantasy allows her an alternate vision; it is not a pastime for her but a means of survival. Coetzee presents fantasy and imagination as social images that do not offer a singular meta-discourse. Fantasy is not a way of escapism, either. The self-consciously

dense and imagistic narrative style challenges the idea of language as purely transparent.

As she cannot escape history altogether, she wants to create her own personal history: “Living in a condition of exile within the body” is the leitmotif (*Doubling* 198) of Coetzee’s novels. Magda gets rid of her exile by pushing the boundaries of her own body and language. As Watson puts forward, “realism cannot survive a world in which characters are more the powerless objects of the historical process than its active subjects” (30). Watson also sees the character’s dilemma between being and becoming as the reflection of Coetzee’s “ambivalent position of the colonizer who refuses to colonize (30). He argues that the colonizer who is against colonization lives “half in the world of being and half in the world of becoming. As a consequence, he or she cannot fail to feel the wrench of history pulling in one direction and, simultaneously, the opposing pull of a world of contemplation where time is cyclical” (31). This might be true to some extent because Magda complains about being a victim of history when Hendrik and Klein-Anna refuse to sleep in the same room with her: “I am not simply one of the whites, I am *I*! I am I, not a people. Why have *I* to pay for other people’s sins?” (*Heart* 129). Whether Coetzee has a guilty conscience because he has frontier ancestors has been the concern of many critics. Irele states that “literature has always been an outstanding vehicle for dominated people to give voice to their group feelings” (50). The key problem with this explanation is that Coetzee does not write by assuming a group consciousness. On every occasion, he maintains that he does not feel close to either South African nation or Europe. If so, he would have a more specific attitude toward the racial problem in his novels.

Rowland Smith criticizes Coetzee arguing that “Coetzee adopted an interior monologue narrative in *In the Heart of the Country* in order to comment on the unrelieved gloom of racial confrontation, yet to be disassociated from the moral jungle” (in Penner 23). One question needs to be asked, however, if Coetzee really has an ethical drive behind his novels. Instead of laying bare his moral judgement, he arouses the suspicions of the reader about moral questions by dismantling their supposed prejudices in reading. The reader is left alone to construe a critical

perspective as to whether the characters are right or wrong. In this case, Magda's cry for not bearing the guilt of her ancestors and color must be analyzed on a personal level. What is marked is not a nationalistic defense but quite a personal yearning to be understood. Coetzee highlights that even though one assumes to be living away from society, s/he is bound to be affected by historical facts. Similar to Coetzee, Magda writes from an in-between position. She does not expect the pity or understanding of the reader. Moreover, she is not quite a likeable character.

Independent of the color, she yearns for human connection as "the monologue of the self is a maze of words out of which I shall not find a way until someone else gives me[her] a lead" (*Heart* 18). Rather than the failure of fraternity between the white and the black, "fraternal intercourse would not have left its mark upon me[her] [...] the mark that has been left upon me[her] instead is the mark of intercourse with the wilds, with solitude and vacancy" (*Heart* 52). The space has a more adverse effect on her than people as it is the fundamental reason for loneliness. Therefore, she tends to philosophize about the effect of time and place. Being surprised about her father's intimacy with Klein-Anna, she philosophizes about the whys and hows of this relationship. In the end, she cannot bring a resolution to her self-questionings and admits that "but this, like so much else about me, is only theory" (*Heart* 48).

If we turn back to the being/becoming discussion, there seems to be a parallelism between being and philosophizing and becoming/practicing of the thoughts respectively. Although there seems to be a binary opposition between them, Coetzee conflates these notions so aptly that the reader cannot see Magda's never ending monologues as a reflection of inertia. Wilm suggests that "the slowness and meditations of Coetzee's characters are never solipsistic rejections of but rather direct engagements with the world and with others" (34). So, the solipsism does not reduce Magda to "being". The monologues further her to "becoming". The self-absorbed ponderings of Magda "with their contradictions, fluid quality, and feminine imaginary-embodiment embody a counter-myth, an alternative story to the patriarchal history of Afrikaner nationalism, in which the notion of woman as maternal fount is central" (Head *J.M. Coetzee* 52). She is a character who eludes final meanings and totalizations, and her

own history that she creates by writing and meditating challenges the power of interpretation and binaries. Likewise, Clarkson states that Coetzee's characters are Beckettian characters not due to their inactiveness but owing to the way they enable the reader to question the "rational-self":

Magda disrupts complacent assumptions on the part of the reader about an either/or structure in the pair, real world/ fictional world: the " I" of her utterance seems to straddle both[...] Magda's reflections are certainly an extension of The Unnamable's words, ' you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on, I'll go on' (Beckett *The Unnamable* 382)[...] Self-reflexive questions about names and modes of reference in fiction are *part* of sustained interrogation throughout Coetzee's oeuvre of the supposed sovereignty of a rational self, and of the apartheid legacy of colonialism. (140-142)

In her influential analysis, Clarkson shows that the chasm between reality and fiction is broken by Coetzee. Her self-assertive striving for "going on" is a forward movement. Her solipsistic meditations and the unreliable narration of events does not refute the credibility of her stories. Quite the opposite, Coetzee locates Magda in between the "either/or" situation just as he directs the reader to question the reality of the novel from a *negotiating* point of view. She presents the inactivity of "waiting for something" and the active nature of "waiting with somebody" as two conflicting powers:

But what do I know about exploring these deeps, I, a drudgemaideen who has spent her days over a cooking-pot in a sooty corner [...] waiting for visions? Like killing, dying is probably a story drearier than the one I tell myself. Deprived of human intercourse, I inevitably overvalue the imagination and expect it to make the mundane glow with an aura of self-transcendence. (*Heart* 15)

She states that she has wasted all her life "waiting for visions" (*Heart* 15), but waiting for something is meaningful as long as the subject knows what s/he is waiting for. The immobility of her existence will lead her to death as she underlines. Death is "drearier" (*Heart* 15) than killing; so without the stories she fabricates, she would already die. The self-invented stories out of her imagination engender a signifier/signified system even though the signified is always deferred. Attridge states that "if one *knows* what one is waiting for, it can only be the familiar. But even if one knows one is waiting for

the *unfamiliar*, one has already constrained the unfamiliar by conceiving of it on the basis of the familiar” (122). He adds that:

...otherness is always *perspectival* and that is always *produced*. In other words, there is no transcendent other (except in certain kinds of religious discourse), there is only an other that presents itself to a specific subject in a particular place and time; otherness is always otherness to someone (who, inevitably, and by virtue of the existence of the other, is put in the position of the self and the same). And the other does not come from some totally other place, but it is a product of the identical constituting act that has produced the self/ same which perceives it as other. (98, 99)

Remembering that *unhemlich* generates from *hemlich* and the *abject* both partakes in the subject and the object, Attridge’s comments on otherness fit Magda’s situation. If it is assumed that she waits for the other and knows who this other is, she is a self-transcending person. The core of the problem lies here because a subject can never reach a self-transcendent position as s/he is always enveloped in the language system. As Magda *abjects* herself and every other person that reminds her of her own *abject* state, her self-transcendence can never be complete. This is the reason why she is cautious about losing her connection with her own self and the others: “If for one moment I were to lose my grip on the world, it would fall apart [...] I make it all up in order that it shall make me up” (*Heart* 80). The idea that there is a stable and mature ego is mythical because there is not such a thing as a stable human subjectivity. Therefore, the deferral of desire results in recognizing that one’s desire for a certain kind of other can never be fulfilled. Magda defers the desire to encounter with the other that is supposed to provide her with fulfillment by making up imaginary stories. Keeping in mind that she describes both the other characters and herself by images of beasts, she asks herself:

Who is the beast among us? My stories are stories, they do not frighten me, they only postpone the moment when I ask: is it my own snarl I hear in the undergrowth? [...] Here in the middle of nowhere I can expand to infinity just as I can shrivel to the size of an ant. Many things I lack, but freedom is not one of them. (*Heart* 55)

So, the freedom of Magda does not result from being the daughter of a white farmer but inventing stories through which she will be able to create herself. Coetzee states that:

I am someone who has intimations of freedom (as every chained prisoner has) and constructs representations- which are shadows themselves-of people slipping their chains and turning their faces to the light. I do not imagine freedom, freedom *an sich*; I do not represent it. Freedom is another name for the unimaginable, says Kant, and he is right. (*Doubling* 341)

Coetzee endows Magda with freedom to imagine what is unimaginable; her self-reflexive interrogations about who she really is unsettles the “sovereignty of a rational self, and of the apartheid legacy of colonialism” (Clarkson 142).

3.4. From the *Symbolic* to the *Semiotic*

Moving on now to analyze how Coetzee writes from the third space and brings a new perspective to the problem of Other, this part of the study analyzes the linguistic manifestations of the novel with respect to going beyond the borders of self/other dichotomy. Coetzee’s writing style must be placed in a different position from South African literature in that there is no obsession with the binaries. Besides, it cannot fit into the neat categorization of European discourse as it reshapes the postmodernist writing from a postcolonial perspective. Therefore, Coetzee’s novels probe the textual, historical and contextual interstices of the encounter between South African and European modes of writing from a critical and subversive perspective. In the course of this discussion, I will be discussing how the *third space/ abject* position of Magda can be explained via the textual structure of the novel. This analysis intersects with Kristevan theories about the *symbolic* and the *semiotic* base of language. The narration has a fluid shift from the *symbolic* to the *semiotic*, which solidifies the contextual references to the *abject* position of Magda.

Firstly, the *abjection* is grafted into the arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified. As the text becomes more infused by the *semiotic*, the signified becomes more deferred. Diary as the preferred mode of narration provides the means to approach the narrator as an unreliable one. As a writer angling toward textual revision, Coetzee is highly concerned with the style of writing as it is an inseparable part of content. Coetzee’s preference to use “the diary, the journal and the letter-where the disingenuous transparency of the earliest forms of novel writing is problematized-making an apparently uncontested arena available to a speaking subject” (Parry 40).

Coetzee criticizes the reliability of the diary narrator claiming that a person can never write about himself/ herself without distorting the truths. As Atwell states in an interview, “the question of self’s presence to the self has engaged you [Coetzee] for a long time. The choice from the beginning, in *Dusklands*, of first person narration, present tense narration, implicitly dramatizes the problem of the self-knowledge” (243). As Coetzee is animated by the challenge to verbal determinism, his position on the relationship between language and truth is critical. This critical approach can explicitly be observed in the novel. The diary is organized in two hundred sixty segments and there seems to be a structural unity in the whole text. Despite the seemingly structural arrangement of the diary, there is a lack of linearity; the gaps between the events force the reader to reread the paragraphs by turning back to the beginning.

The incongruity between structure and content, according to Head, is an intentional political resistance “to colonial organization, a place where family relations, labor relations and sexual relations become disastrously confused” (*Introduction* 43,44). Wilm has a comprehensive analysis as to the gaps between the segments. He questions why the paragraphs do not end with more particular number such as 270: “Even if 266 constitutes a mere coincidence, the concrete signifying attraction inherent in a number gets the reader to reflect on the number’s meaning” (135). There is not a determinate meaning related to the number of the segments so it can be stated that Magda’s attempt to organize the disorganized content by numbers fails. The segments are also connected vaguely in that the time lapse is not indicated clearly. For example, Wilms gives the example in the following segments which convey to the reader the idea that some time must have passed between the events:

190. This is no way to live.

191. Unable to sleep, I drift about the house at siesta time. I finger the strange clothes in the locked room. I look at myself in the mirror and try to smile. The face in the mirror smiles a haggard smile. Nothing has changed. I still do not like myself. Anna can wear these clothes but I cannot. From wearing black too long I have grown into a black person.

192.Hendrik is slaughtering a sheep a week. That is the way of claiming his due.
(*Heart* 106)

He argues that the way that Magda splits the segments is connected to “staging a complex and dense formal structure that conveys the slowness on the farm by presenting disconnected snippets far apart in narrated time” (135). There is also a visual gap between these segments in the novel, which requires the reader to read them slowly to grasp the ethical meaning. The visual gaps embody both a stylistic and semantic function. Yet, the visual gaps cannot be reduced to a single and final meaning. Especially the time lapses and the visual gap between segments 191 and 192 bear political implications. Two ensuing notions are linked to each other. In segment 191, Magda claims to have turned into a black person and the following segment about the slaughtering of the sheep is complementary to the former explanation. When these two ideas are connected within a metaphorical reading, the reader is let to jump on the conclusion that the black are victimized and slaughtered. On the other hand, as there is no further textual support for this connection, Coetzee leads the reader to question why s/he came up with such a conclusion. This questioning leaves the reader alone to decide on what ethical basis s/he turned the literal meaning into metaphorical (Wilm 137). So, this stylistic technique must not be read solely as stream of consciousness. While reading about Magda’s loneliness and reflections upon the Other, the reader also finds him/herself as the subject who considers the text or the narrator as the Other. The otherness problem is not only analyzed in the framework of Magda’s relationship with the others, but also reading as an interpretative process is presented as encountering with the other/stranger. Therefore, “the reader who feels comfortable *filling* semantic gaps, for example, and who thereby acknowledges that absences stand for something else, might here be made to question her methods, not only because Magda draws explicit attention to gaps, but also because once again her distinct reference to them is tainted by a deplorable ideology” (Wilm 137). He also adds that:

My proposed reading of gaps as present absences simply posits that during slow reading the gaps are not seen to represent something that is concealed and which may contain meaning, but that these absences are a presence in the text and that they need to be incorporated into the reading rather than being seen as something that needs to

be an argued way by being filled. These gaps do not indicate anything in a veiled way, they simply indicate themselves. (139)

Furthermore, in the diary form of Magda's narration, present tense is more privileged when compared to the past tense. Magda shields herself against being forgotten in the historical process through writing. She reminds herself that she exists: "I live, I suffer, I am here" (*Heart* 4). The segments from 27 to 30 start with the same sentence: "I ask myself" (*Heart* 13-14). She also defines herself by many sentences like "Of course the truth is that I am equal to anything, I am nothing if not embarrassed by my freedom" (*Heart* 17)/ "I am a black widow in mourning for the uses I was never put to" (*Heart* 45) In some segments, she begins the sentence by describing what she does: "I stand in my slippers in the empty kitchen" [...] I stand behind my chair, gripping the back, and speak to my father" (*Heart* 40). Even the memories of the past are relayed in present tense starting with the subject I: "I stand outside the door of their own room: three bland panels and a china knob over which my hand hovers" (*Heart* 59). The examples can be multiplied as the whole novel brims with such examples. Besides, there are numerous new beginnings at the beginning of many segments. As mentioned before, she either jumps from topic to topic without necessary transitions or gives a different version of the same story. It can be stated that these frequent new beginnings, present tense usage and self-definitions compensate for her present absence. She tries to establish her role in the house every time she loses it. As she cannot have a reciprocal connection with the other characters, she has to nourish herself by foregrounding her own identity. The self-disintegrating exercise of power and extreme loneliness push her to embrace her own selfhood. As Leist and Singer emphasize:

...a human subject can continue to exist in some form but only as failed, not what a self or state truly is [...]. To be a self, I must take myself to be who I am in some determinate way or other. And I *am* who I take myself to be who I am in some determinate way or other. And I am who I take myself to be. A self is thus self-constituting. But this also means, in the most obvious sense, that I can take myself to be some subject in a way that is not acknowledged, affirmed, or perhaps even noticed in my social world, and in that sense would have to be counted a failed self, living a mere fantasy of self-identity. Without such reciprocal gestures as acknowledgement, love, esteem, solidarity and respect, I cannot distinguish between who I really am and who I merely imagine myself to be. (31)

The accentuation of the present time and the frequent use of first person narration underline the attention given to another person's being. The political hamper of colonial history in which reciprocity could not be reached is challenged by the present necessity to attach the self to another person. The present moment is privileged because it offers a postmodern understanding of floating time. The present provides Magda with the chance to step beyond the political failures in history. Instead of waiting for the unknown or the unexpected thing to happen, she is in pursuit of waiting with somebody. Bereft of this company, she turns to her body as a means of survival: "I welcome death as a version of life in which I will not be myself [...] Drowning, I drown into myself. A phantom, I am no phantom, I stoop, I touch this skin and it is warm, I pinch this flesh and it hurts. What more proof could I want? I am I. (*Heart* 59)

After Hendrik and Klein-Anna leave the cottage, Magda tries not to lose her grasp on reality. She starts hallucinating and hearing voices, which is the nadir of her loneliness. She strives to exert her existence by speaking and writing as "it is my commerce with the voices that has kept me from becoming a beast. For I am sure that if the voices did not speak to me I would long ago have given up this articulated chip-chop and begun to howl or bellow or squawk" (*Heart* 125). Hearing voices and the effort to speak to the void open up a new realm in the novel. Up to that moment, Magda has associated being loved with someone with being able to speak to someone. Now that she is lonely, her expectations of people to communicate with her are bound to end. Coetzee's text acts out *abjection's* threat to the *symbolic*; the reader's fragile subjectivity is played with because Magda collapses the border between reliability and unreliability. Magda's, in other words, Coetzee's writing produces *abjection* by tampering with the delicacy between the subject and the object.

In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva defines the poetic text where the writer can make use of the *semiotic* as "a writing that disrupts normative structures of signification and thereby demands non-normative strategies for analyzing it" (Becker-Leckrone, 51). Accordingly, Coetzee uses narrative deformation while he is delving into Magda's psyche. Magda's diary does not only give utterance to the *abject* but the anguish she creates within the reader throws the reader into the field of *abjection*. The first pages

of the novel frustrate the reader's expectations. It starts with a deserted girl's story and her lonely life with an ignorant father and dead mother. However, he shatters all the expectations of a postcolonial novel and postpones the theme of the novel. With every postponement in the theme, the reader is left alone to sort out the puzzle via reading Magda's vacillations. Kristeva explains it as the rhyme/theme logic in her analysis of Celine. Namely, "the affective charge of the statement overflows the words themselves" (Becker-Leckrone, 61) as Magda tells the reader:

The lips are tired, I explain to him, they want to rest, they are tired of all the articulating they have had to do since they were babies, since it was revealed to them that there was a law, that they could no longer simply part themselves to make way for the long *aaa* which has, if truth be told, always been enough of an expression of whatever this is that needs to be expressed[...] in the articulation that set up the war of sounds, the *b* against *p*, the *m* against the *n*, *and so forth*, as well as in other places which I would be too weary to set out for you even if I felt that you understood, which I doubt, since you do not so much as know the alphabet. The law has gripped my throat. (*Heart* 84)

Magda explains the syntactical and grammatical structure of language which is given to human beings when they are born pre-determinedly and have more or less no referent to articulate her psychological turmoil. People know the alphabet and how to utter the sounds although they do not know that they speak through the law. The law is the *symbolic* that people reiterate by speaking and draining away without affects. The alphabet and grammar can convey a message as long as it can be connected with the affects, the bodily drives and the pre-*symbolic* bond with the mother. Magda never gives up her grasp on the affects in her incessant toil as "the law does not stand full-grown inside my[her] shell, its feet in my[her] feet, its hands in my[her] hands, its sex dropping through my[her] hole" (*Heart* 84). Literature is one of the ways to let the gush of the unconscious, it provides "the privileged signifier, for Kristeva, "the ultimate coding of our crises, of our most intimate and serious apocalypse [...], it is "an indefinite catharsis that unveils, discharges, elaborates abjection through "music, rhythm, rigadon, without end, for no reason" (Becker-Leckrone, 65). The music and the rhythm allow the reader to face his/her horror by listening to somebody else's incompleteness.

The law she mentions is not only the law of the father, but also the opposition between the colonizer and the colonized. Magda evades death instinct by writing, the discontinuities and disarrayed style of her diary help us see the horror and violence inflicted upon the words. The word is made flesh; Logos is made vulnerable by tearing the symbolic open. Kristeva insists that “musicality is not without signification; indeed, it is deployed within it [...] Art does not relinquish the *thetic* even while pulverizing it through the negativity of transgression. Indeed, this is the only means of transgressing the *thetic*” (Oliver *Kristeva* 52, 55). Coetzee’s novel does not deny the *thetic*; conversely, it highlights the process of transgressing the *thetic* because letting the *semiotic* overwhelm the *symbolic* would mean absolute meaninglessness. This is the reason why Magda is heard underlining the difficulty of understanding people and being understood by them within a discourse created by the law. The very last sentence of the novel verifies how she has tried to transgress the *thetic* only by pulverizing it. The death drive brings along life drive and she chooses the latter:

I have uttered my life in my own voice throughout (what a consolation that is), I have chosen at every moment my own destiny, which is to die here in the petrified garden, behind locked gates, near my father’s bones, in a space echoing with hymns I could have written but did not because (I thought) it was too easy. (*Heart* 139)

Magda knows that her feminine discourse will always be in opposition to the language of the phallus and she can never get rid of it totally. She knows that the phallogocentric discourse has always tortured her despite her efforts to keep it at bay. The point Coetzee makes the reader observe is that although Magda considers her ineptness to repel being captive by the phallic language, her writing through her desires and unconscious is an actual triumph against the *symbolic*.

The flying machines at the end of the novel are significant as they unearth Magda’s last attempts to have communication with a person apart from herself and to understand how she is overwhelmed by the loss of mental capacities. Even though many critics like Nashef regard Magda’s mental deterioration as a failure of actualizing subjectivity and he asserts that “her attempt at separating herself from the imposing presence of her father’s corpse leaves her mummified and trapped, forever in the

company of paternal death” (63), this thesis argues that the end of the novel cannot be pinned down with such a certain remark. The language that Magda is entrapped in may not bring her happiness but she learns to make up her own language to speak to the flying machines in the sky. She hears some voices sent by the machines in Spanish and she responds to them although she does not know that language. She rejects dreaming and hallucinating: “I am not deluded, or if I am, my delusions are privileged. I could not make up such words as are spoken to me. They come from gods; or if not, then from another world” (*Heart* 127).

Firstly, she speaks to the machines in English but when she realizes that they do not understand it, she shouts “ES MI” and “ISALODO” (*Heart* 131). Then, she puts some stones together on the ground and writes “CINDRLA ES MI; and next day; VENE AL TERRA; and; QUIERO UN AUTR; and again: SON ISOLADO” (*Heart* 132). She likens herself to a female servant in the house whose destiny is reversed by her beauty in the ball. The story is ironical because Magda does not wait for a man to come and save her. She wants an “autr” an “other” as she is “isolated”. She likens herself to Cinderella because she is the victim and the servant of her house. Her father’s fictional death does not end her solitude but paves the way to finding other means of communication. When her words fall short of helping her, she resorts to nature to help her express herself. She carries a lot of stones in the wheelbarrow in order to write longer sentences like “MA SEMPRE HA DESIDER-LA MEDIA ENTRE” (*Heart* 133). She tries to evade the oppositions by the creation of a unique language: “She has always desired to be the medium, “The medium, the median, -that is what I wanted to be! Neither master nor slave, neither parent, nor child, but the bridge between, so that in me contraries should be reconciled” (*Heart* 133).

As a novelist who abstains from reconciling the opposites or laying the dichotomies bare, Coetzee unravels Magda’s life within all its inconsistencies. To be the medium is Coetzee’s implicit political aim in his novels. He does not clearly define Magda as a mad woman in the end because Magda continues her diaries after she is disappointed by the sky machines she calls Gods. That might be interpreted as a figment of a distorted psyche and sentimentality rather than madness. The important achievement

in the novel is that Coetzee generates a female character who can act out the inaccessible Real “which has no boundaries, borders, divisions, or oppositions; it is a continuum of ‘raw materials’” (Grosz *Jacques Lacan* 34).

Lacan calls the people who are trapped between the Symbolic and the Imaginary or the people who can grasp the Real as neurotic and psychotic (Sarup 85) and he gives the full weight to the signs to be enculturated. Nonetheless, Kristeva does not brush the Real aside as she believes that language is not the only medium that bars the emergence of the Real, the cut is already existent within the person. Henceforth, she claims that “otherness is no longer that which is opposed to me (e.g., the foreigner, the scapegoat, the other sex, another class, race or nation) but an otherness within” (Keltner *Thresholds* 99). By distorting both her native language and abusing Spanish grammar, she learns how to survive with the otherness in herself.

Magda has a different understanding of the body at the end of the novel. After trying to convey her messages by the stones to the Sky Gods, she gets no answer from them and questions if what she sees in the sky are really flying machines: “What flies across the sky is more like a machine than an insect because its drone is continuous and its flight perfectly regular. I call it a machine. It is possible that it is an insect” (*Heart* 140). The ambiguity of the objects in the sky brings into sharp focus the dynamic tension between the addresser and the addressee. There are multiple levels of realities and Magda reduces all her stories into her personal story. She continues presenting reality with gaps and slides. Considering that these ambiguous objects do not understand the Spanish letters written by stones, Magda decides to communicate with them differently. She collects all the rest of the stones “on a sketch of a woman lying on her back, her figure fuller than mine [her], her legs parted, younger than myself [herself]” (*Heart* 147) and she imagines the skymen turning into swines by pulling them down to earth through “her lure” (*Heart* 147). In her relations with the other people, Magda has gone through a tough process of getting to know what her body looks like. She has complained about being empty as her body has been abused by Hendrik. Now that she makes a figure of a woman lying on the ground by stones, it is obvious that she uses a hieroglyphic figure rather than words. She makes an image of her body

through stones; therefore, she correlates her body with the stones. She erases the distinction between nature and human body. The so far *abject* derelict nature enables her to create another means of language through which she can convey her messages. She gets closer to the *semiotic* base of language by embracing what nature gives her. Rather than words, she adopts another form of writing. Instead of words, her body becomes substantial.

Besides, the encounter with the overpowering maternal body is apparent in the way Magda thinks that she lures the skymen with her attraction like Circe. This analogy evokes the confrontation with the maternal body as tormented shapes of animals are to create disgust and fear. This time, however, Magda does not expel these grotesque figures but welcomes them. The farm has been an antispace for her notwithstanding its materiality. In the end, she heralds both the farm and her body as a way of affirming herself when language falls short of providing her with help. She senses that her body is not merely a body but it lives in the world in connection with the wilderness that surrounds her. In this respect, the postcolonial understanding of the land is transformed by Coetzee. He shows that the land might have a transformative effect on people provided that the human being becomes one with it. Throughout the novel, Magda was nothing but language yet at the end of the novel she both constructs language thanks to nature and she is constructed by the help of it. She represents herself as a thing with substance and she fills the void by the stones. She explores an extralinguistic way of communication. The body is not an agent of suffering but communication from that moment on.

What is more, Coetzee strengthens Magda's ties with the *symbolic* in the end because "I [she] sit[s] on the stoep by my[her] father's side watching the world go by" (*Heart*, 136); then she feeds and tucks her father in and "he will still lie here breathing, waiting for his nourishment" (*Heart* 137). Contrary to the resentment and hatred throughout the novel, the subsequent lines describe a mutual reunion with the father. Thus, Magda can speak through the *semiotic* by keeping the borders of the *symbolic*. What Coetzee does is to "open the possibility of an ethics of unique arts, rooted always in the here and now, yet acknowledging a deep responsibility to the otherness of elsewhere, of the

past, and of the future” (Attridge 8). He defers western metaphysics such as history, centrality or gender. He revolves the whole narration around a female character just as he does in *Foe* with Susan Barton, and the reader never hears the existence of a male author’s voice dominating the novel.

All in all, linguistic structure is a significant component of writing through the body and the body Kristeva mentions does not only belong to the female sex. Textual experiment is always in a process similar to body “which is not a unity but a plural totality with separate members that have no identity but constitute the place where drives are applied” (Kristeva *Revolution* 101). The body is rendered an inorganic mass when the transgression of the *thetic* is not actualized alongside with the *semiotic chora*. Kristeva favors Mallarme, Celine and Joyce as the disturbers of the signifying chain “only by starting from the signifier and moving toward the instinctual, material, and social process the text covers” (101). Coetzee can be added to this list as the writer who can unroll Magda’s affective charges in process. Magda’s narration provides political implications without being severed from the artistic production. *In the Heart of the Country* “includes the *semiotic* processes but also the advent of the symbolic” (86).

Coetzee blurs the line between the signifier and the signified as he disturbs the syntactical and logical features of a text. The space that the genotext organizes “is one in which the subject will be *generated* as such by a process of facilitations and marks within the constraints of the biological and social structure” (*Revolution* 86). Magda’s individuality is in a continual process like the novel itself. She creates and negates her existence and enriches signification and the reality is distorted by myriad variations of the same passages. The Other is always challenged to be annihilated but it is also confronted with love and be loved. The *semiotic chora* permeates almost every line roaming around Magda’s struggle with the *symbolic*. Besides, the non-linearity and the use of present tense may be seen as eruptions of the *semiotic* within the *symbolic*. There is only the present, only the “now”, only “being” in the *semiotic*.

In the light of all the discussion in this chapter, it can be argued that Magda's story is the sublimation of the *abject*. Besides herself, the other characters and nature, the text itself is an in-between situation. Considering that the narrator regards the text as the object as there is a flow of communication between the narrator as the addresser and the text as the addressee in the diary form, *In The Heart of the Country* is situated between the subject and the object. As the diary is a form in which the narrator talks to herself, the object of this conversation turns out to be the fictional narrator of Magda as the subject. Coetzee's fictional narrator talks to her own fabricated narrator in the diary. In this respect, both the novel and the diary in the form of novel are twice distanced from the narrator. She is both the tale and the teller. She creates herself in writing. As Attridge underlines, "the other does not come from some totally other place, but it is a product of the identical constituting act that has produced the self/same which perceives it as the other" (99). Accordingly, the text is not the "other" of the narrator. The otherness belongs to the narrator. In the same vein, all the other characters in the novel are the *abjected* selves of Magda. The text as a production of the imagination is not different from the fabrication of the characters. Since Magda makes a pact with the maternal object (abject) in the end, she embraces what she expels as a part of herself. The text is the "other" of herself and this "other" constructs her throughout the novel.

By his stylistic techniques and contextual embellishments, Coetzee "is bound up with the capacity of his work to engage with-to stage, confront, apprehend, explore-otherness, and in this engagement it broaches the most fundamental and widely significant issues involved in any consideration of ethics and politics" (Attridge 6). From a broader perspective, as Coetzee underlines in the Beckett interview with Atwell, "writing writes us. Writing shows or creates what our desire was, a moment ago" (*Doubling* 18). Writing enables the novelist to think outside of time and one's own language. As for the "third position" (although he does not mention Bhabha), Coetzee argues that he is not sure if there can be such a thing: "I do say that if I speak from a pole-position, from the negative pole, it is because I am drawn or pushed there by force, even a violence, operating over the whole of the discursive field that at this

moment we inhabit, you and I” (*Doubling* 200). So, he acknowledges that if one speaks by negating an idea, it is inevitably embedded in discourse; and discourse is operating through violence. This study is in tune with the discussion of writing in the third space which is bereft of the violence of the discursive field. Coetzee can write by thinking outside the limits of patriarchal language.

Supposing that writing is an attempt to unveil desire, it is bound to be unattainable. In the heart of the country, there is nothing; desire is not at the core of the novel but somewhere else. Writing is a process and a never ending trial to reach that desire. Instead of pushing aside what cannot be reached, Coetzee lets his narrator encounter the *abject* other; the narrator is put in a process of becoming. The otherness does not exist outside language but it is “brought into being by language, it is what two thousand years of continuously evolving discourse has excluded-and thus constituted-as other” (Attridge 13). So, Coetzee brings a new perspective to the otherness by furnishing the discourse with the *semiotic* discourse. The transformation from the *symbolic* to the *semiotic* accompanies a new understanding of the body in the novel.

In conclusion, the contextual and stylistic analysis of the novel in this thesis generates a broader question: is Coetzee really an apolitical writer or can his ethical and political perspective be interrogated from another perspective? As a consequence of the analyses of *In the Heart Of the Country*, a more comprehensive criticism can sharpen our understanding of his political approach if the traditional political approach is considered as the construction of the *symbolic*. The dialectical understanding of subject/object, self/other, native/stranger within the limitations of the *symbolic* base of language leads to a totalization and closure. This novel preempts such a dialectical thinking and challenges verbal determinism by displaying the possibility that thinking beyond language (*symbolic*) and the impossibility of the representation of the oppressed/ colonized. Kelmann describes Coetzee’s proclivity to write outside language as his “abiding aspiration as a translingual-to think beyond a given language and, beyond that, to think beyond language itself” (166). The narrative tools of the dominant discourse cannot bear witness to the experience of being an Other; even the oppressed conforms to the dominant language while speaking against oppression.

Therefore, if alterity is to be erased between the colonizer and the colonized, firstly another discourse must be adopted and language must be challenged. A new discourse enriched with the emotions and imagination beyond the threshold of the *symbolic* and language which is not cut off from the body can facilitate a new understanding of “politics that is imaginative” (Edmonds 218). *In the Heart of the Country* leads us to think that a novel can be quite revolutionary and political if the politics is not considered in its *symbolic* meaning. A political solution which does not fall prey to hierarchy and the fundamentalist view can be enacted by adopting a *negotiative* approach as Bhabha argues.

The liberal tradition and its failure to speak from an in-between positionality are also highly relevant to the arguments put forward by this chapter on Coetzee. There is ongoing debate about the role of the novelist in South Africa as to whether the liberal conscious novelist can aptly represent what apartheid and the dissolution of the apartheid regime means to the South African nation. This argument is not new in postcolonial studies. Many critics hitherto have interrogated the role of the intellectual. For instance, Boehmer stresses that there is a tendency among the post-structuralist and postcolonial theorists, who were educated in Western universities, to deal with the Third World literature “as a coherent field of knowledge, defined by unitary forces of a political history, such as nationalism, secularism, or anti-colonial struggle” (240). However, as she argues, every nation must be addressed within its unique characteristics and historical and political experiences.

More importantly, as Peter Hallward suggests, the postcolonial emphasis on “interstices, in-betweenness, border-blur, can itself become ironically all-consuming, a totalizing classification in spite of itself” (in Boehmer 252). Ashcroft also argues that “intellectuals in postcolonial societies thus reveal an urgent need to define themselves both against the identity given them by their colonial past and against international postmodernism” (162). Similarly, Kenneth Parker argues that “the liberal-concerned” writers always have an urge to play actively in the solution of the political problems. They demand the alien interruptions to be respected by the native culture. He adds that: “[c]ritically, the South African culture critics arrive at their conclusions because

they live in a society that offers them all the privileges that a white skin confers, while at the same time, insulating them against the disabilities that a black skin imposes” (8). He enumerates the common attitudes among the liberal conscious critics and writers as “ the rejection of involvement with the political because of the purported irrationality of politics” [...] “ guilt felt by the English-speaking liberal writers in terms of the South African scene aris[ing] from intense and unrealized anxieties” and “ continued enjoyment of the physical benefits of the country while trying to keep alive the remnants of European solution to the critical and creative problem” (8-11).

While Parker is right to say that the guilt ridden consciousness is one of the main traits of these writers, the assumption that they write from a comfort zone and they evade political questions is open to debate. Nadine Gordimer, for example, argues that politics is an indispensable component of South African writers, either black or white. In an interview with Alan Ross, she explains that

[...] in South Africa, society is a political situation [...] Politics is character is SA. I am not a politically minded person by nature [...] The inevitable discrepancy between, for want a better world, what one calls “the liberal attitude” and the decencies implied in a sort of liberal way of life, with an accent on decent personal relations, and I would say, the almost impossibility of making a go of it in a society that is opposed to this sort of thing. (20, 35)

Gordimer thinks that politics and South African literature have become inextricable from each other as the South African life is embedded in the politics. The liberal attitude cannot be implemented in a country where every separation is based on the color bar. Even though she is not a politically minded person as she claims, her novels naturally spring from the turmoil caused by the political agenda of the country. Literature draws its sustenance from the political conflicts and the political conflicts have always been shaped by the color problem. Whether Gordimer can “negotiate” (*Location* 25) these conflicts can be the topic of another study, but it is apparent that politics is never at the opposite end of the spectrum in South African literature. With regards to Coetzee, who has mostly been labelled as an apolitical novelist, I believe that his questioning of whether it is possible to think and write outside one’s own language is quite a political attempt. He never assumes the position of a liberal writer;

“like Gordimer, Coetzee is eager to unmask the false universals of liberal ideology” (Huggan& Watson 9). As a writer coming from South Africa, he avoids engaging in the liberal and ethical attempts of the liberals. Furthermore, his novels have quite a dense political overture although they do not always directly deal with South African realities. His writing style concurs with his belief that a novelist’s duty is not to reflect the exact political realities of his nation or analyze the events from a liberal perspective. By going beyond the borders of (*symbolic*) language, one can still have an ethical position and touch upon the realities in an indirect way.

Bhabha, a postcolonial theoretician who enlarges the discourse of the area thanks to his postmodernist approach, can be referred at this point, as well. His ideas about writing from the third space and the inadequacy of liberal tradition in postcolonial studies can shed light on Coetzee’s in-between space as a white South African writer. Bhabha states that to be a borderline intellectual requires an “in- between space” (*Location 7*). Bhabha argues that

Third Space, though unrepresentable itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew. (*Location 37*)

The borderline culture demands a new vision which will not be stuck in the past nostalgically but will reconsider the past innovatively not merely “as a social cause or aesthetic precedent [...] but refiguring it as a contingent in-between space” (*Location 7*). In other words, the responsibility of the borderline intellectual or artist is to refigure not only the past but also the present.

Bhabha underlines the inadequacy of liberal tradition in postcolonial studies. He argues that there is a tendency among the postcolonial theoreticians and writers to examine the knot between the personal and the social from a liberal point of view. The liberal thought leads them to consider the problems of the Third- World countries as an ethical responsibility. Therefore, they foreground “the ethical terms molded by liberal beliefs” (*Location 24*). The problem with the liberal attitude, he argues, is its reductionist methodology and the fallacy of foregrounding the political judgement.

The liberal attitude plunges into abyss because the convergence of the ethical and the political is of no use when language is already political. He adds that:

Its[the liberal thought's] importance goes beyond the unsettling of the essentialism or logocentrism of a received political tradition, in the name of an abstract free play of the signifier. A critical discourse does not yield a *neui* political object, or aim, or knowledge, which is simply a mimetic reflection of an a priori political principle or theoretical commitment [...] Political idealism may be the gesture of great individual fervor, but it lacks the deeper, if dangerous, sense of what is entailed by the *passage* of history in theoretical discourse [...] The challenge lies in conceiving of the time of political action and understanding as opening up a space that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonism or contradiction. (*Location 25*)

Bhabha points out that when the critique of the postcolonial is downplayed to *negation* rather than *negotiation*, the well intentions of the liberal thoughts are rendered futile because when the political agenda is foregrounded, ideology always tends to be immersed in the teleology and history. Rather than unshackling the overwhelming presence of history and binary oppositions, the liberal conscious movement takes them as priorities. The contradictory or antagonistic elements of the arguments are made more visible and ineluctable when the politically tainted perspective is regarded as a starting point. Such being the case, the logocentrism of the political discourse, which is an inherent part of the discourse itself, cannot be eradicated. What is essential is not to negate the antagonistic counter argument, but to evaluate the arguments and counter arguments by *negotiation*. What he proposes as *negotiation* is not a political action, rather, “the necessity to avoid ‘iteration’ which informs political movements that attempt to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without redemptive rationality of sublation or transcendence” (*Location 26*). Since political acts are already logocentric, the liberal approach annihilates its own aim because it presents its counter arguments from the inside; it fails to accommodate an intermediary position.

In the Heart of the Country can be viewed by Bhabha's arguments on the third space and the inadequacy of liberal tradition. Kristevan theory is quite akin to the arguments of Bhabha because both of the theoreticians have devoted unwavering commitment to the exigencies of intellectual debates about the paradox of the First World writer who speaks or writes about the Third World. Coetzee in *In the Heart of the Country* avoids

solidifying the antagonistic political approaches of the First World theoreticians. Instead of being trapped in the repetitive political discourse, he speaks from an intermediary third space that connects the oppositions. He does not embark on giving a solid political message through a liberal point of view because the liberal thoughts have already been shaped by certain political ideologies. Coetzee's political awareness is subtle and negotiative. The ethical perspective of the writer does not negate any truth or does not give any moral messages.

CHAPTER 4

NIGHT LESSONS (1986) BY LATİFE TEKİN

In this chapter, the problem of “otherness” which has been studied within the framework of racism and postcolonialism in the first chapter is going to be studied within the political atmosphere of Turkey before and during the 1980s in Latife Tekin’s *Night Lessons*. In tune with the former chapter on Coetzee, this chapter will be demonstrating that Tekin renders her social and political sensitivity quite visible by an alternative approach to the subject/Object dichotomy. Both the contextual and textual analyses in this chapter will demonstrate that the negotiation between the self and other (the maternal Thing) and writing from an intermediary space, where the *abject* is poeticized, enables Tekin to delve into the political turmoil of the 1980s in Turkey in an indirect but a forceful way and changes the reader’s understanding of the political.

The erasure of the subject/object dichotomy will firstly be analyzed in terms of the dyadic unity between the mother and the daughter. In the first section, the female narrator’s relationship with her mother and how the narrator is seen as a carnivalesque figure in the family will be scrutinized in accordance with the theories of Kristeva. Secondly, her estrangement from the political organization will be underlined in the light of the same theories. These two sections will demonstrate how Tekin creates an in-between area between the subject and the maternal other while avoiding a direct and negative criticism of the Leftist movement. Lastly, the sublimation of the *abject* mother in writing will be studied through the *semiotic* elements of signification in the novel. Before starting the analysis, some background information about Tekin, her understanding of realism and the critical studies about *Night Lessons* can help this study be understood from a broader perspective.

The novels of Latife Tekin have been studied in many interdisciplinary areas, literature and sociology being in the first place. The changes during the 1980s in Turkey, the social and cultural effects of migration from villages to cities and life conditions in shanty houses have been some of the major topics of academic studies so far. The Turkish reader was not used to the writing technique and the thematic dealings of Tekin in the 1980s and therefore she received both positive and negative reactions¹³. The variety of the criticisms shows that it was difficult to categorize her novels under any inclusive terms. Besides, the discussions revolving around Tekin's realism and her postmodern techniques have caused a lot of dissenting ideas. The abundance of negative criticisms she received due to her novels' unrealistic representation of the outside world stems from the fallacy of the critics' equation of reality with the *symbolic*. Considering that the critics in the 1980s considered verisimilitude to reality as the yardstick of the success of the novel, it can be stated that they approved an entirely *symbolic* representation of realism in Kristevan sense. Yet, there are many ways of representation of reality and a writer does not need to adopt an entirely *symbolic* language; because the *symbolic* in its nature is never free of the rush of the *semiotic*, an exact projection of reality, either social or political, is impossible. Besides, a writer does not have to proffer his/her novel as a solution to or a compensation for the ills of the society; considering that s/he embarks on fulfilling such an aim, s/he can present his/ her political sensitivity in multifarious ways. Furthermore, the success of Tekin's writing does not stem from her postmodern techniques but her profound engagement with reality which is ultimately grounded in a profound personal experience. In the interview we held in Gümüşlük Academy, upon my question if she

¹³ Atilla Birkiye stated that "many things had been written and talked about the authorship of Latife Tekin. The general view was positive and in the final analysis the common idea was that she made a successful breakthrough in literature" (13). Toktamış Ateş extolls the emergence of Tekin in Turkish literature as regards the way she "expresses the various aspects of Turkey's social life" (16) due to her exact observations. He avoided the discussion of her generic classification but focused on her skill in shedding light on social realities. Cengiz Gündoğdu argued that Tekin's novels (her first two novels *Dear Shameless Death* and *Berji Kristin*) are far from reality and he "could not encounter the creature called human-being. There are typical representations such as bad man of religion, bad mukhtar and good teacher yet there exists a schematized layout in the novel, which results from Tekin's practice of arbitrary narration. A narration far from reality" (12).

has been affected by the theoretical studies on language in the West and if she is familiar with the postmodernist studies or Kristeva, she noted that¹⁴

I try to follow the studies in the West on language. I read Kristeva and Foucault, as well. While reading them, I noticed that there are similarities between what I am trying to articulate in my novels and their theories. There are infinite studies on language; people discuss such issues in academic disciplines, I cannot follow all of them. What I do is a more individual groping for the articulation of what I feel. I do not claim that what I write is the absolute truth or can be adopted by everybody. I do not want to write about what I internalized; I wish my internalization to write itself. I do not want to program it; it just overflows. (Tekin)

In the light of her own words, it can be stated that Tekin does not start writing in the framework of a theoretical approach. Her novels must be considered as a performative event; the power of her novels lies in their potential to interrupt comfort zones that are familiar; her narratives draw the attention to the vacillations between exact references to history and a recognizable world and the novels' references to their own fictionality, which is inseparable from their reality. Thus, her novels should not be read as supplementary or rival to social realities; rather, reality is filtered through the interconnection between the *semiotic* and the symbolic.

As the core of the criticisms in the 1980s was based on realism, Tekin attracted the attention of the critics immediately after the publication of her two novels mostly in her engagement (disengagement) with reality and politics. A short glimpse at the evolution of literature in Turkey before and after the 1980s along with the political upheavals might be helpful to understand the place of Tekin in Turkish literature and why her novels have been disparaged especially at the beginning of the 1980s, as the social and political texture of society has always been effective in the literary developments in Turkey. Although realism and political sensitivity of Tekin are still the preoccupations of many studies about Tekin today, the opposing voices were more profound in the 1980s. In her deep analysis of the texture of society in the 1980s

¹⁴ All the translations from Turkish to English in this thesis belong to me.

Turkey, Nurdan Gürbilek in *Vitrinde Yaşamak* states that there was a huge cultural upheaval in society in those years because it was the time when the oppositions were experienced side by side in society:

at first glance, two colliding forces must be underlined. The 1980s was an era which was shaped on the one hand by oppression, prohibition and state violence on the other hand it was under the effect of another rulership that society was unfamiliar with, which presented itself as non-institutionalized at first glance, which was not prohibitive but constructive, provocative and inclusive. (13)

The oppression generated by the military coup which was followed by a burst of quest for freedom in society molded the writing styles of writers of the time, as well. Jale Parla in *Türk Romanında Yazar ve Başkalaşım* highlights the changes in literature as: “when the violence, torture practices and the fear it spread are considered, it is not surprising that the images of bodily fragmentation became considerably visible in literature” (217). She adds that one of the targets of the oppressive regime was culture but it could not restrain art entirely. A reversed counterattack emerged in arts because “as the oppression becomes denser, artistic reaction grows stronger; new quests are diversified, people become more creative and interrogative” (217). She emphasizes how body gains more importance in the face of violence and oppression and how violence begets the profundity of artistic expression.

One more point which needs to be explained to have a better understanding of Tekin’s critical heritage is that the changes in literature and genres before and after the 1980s in Turkey were shaped by the political changes, especially the military coups. At the end of the 1970s, the socialist writers dealt with rural life intensely¹⁵. 12 March novels, which were written after the 12 March 1971 Turkish military memorandum, tend to present the real life as it is, expose the readers to the naked truths of the time, therefore the writers’ tendency to brush aside aestheticism caused “the 12 March novels to be read enthusiastically for a while but to be categorized among sociology novels which

¹⁵ The landlords and tribal feuds in Turkey’s villages appeared in a widespread manner in the novels of Yaşar Kemal, Orhan Kemal, Kemal Bilbaşar and Fakir Baykurt, whom Moran names as “Anatolian novel writers” (*Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış* 3 16)

are read for the sake of their historical values” (Moran 17. Moran summarizes the 12 March novels before the 1980s as the “productions of social realism which was dominant in Turkey. The writers foregrounded the topics such as unjust order, right-left conflict, the police oppression and torture and they used the novel genre as a means to present these facts” (33). After the 1980s, on the other hand, the writers gravitated towards dealing with the stylistic occupations rather than social problems. He explains the differences between the effects of the 12 March and 12 September coups in Turkey as the following:

12 March coup applied a terrifying oppression regime to choke the breath of the Left but it left no permanent mark apart from intimidating the public. The aim of the intervention in the 1980s on the other hand, was not only to tie the hands of the Left and terrorize the society but also overthrow the Left ideology to the core by instilling a new world view that included new values. To be able to fulfil this aim, the universities and the press were regulated, the progressivist highbrows were silenced and the society was depoliticized. (Moran 49)

He adds that such a change in society showed its effects in literature, too. Since the 1950s, the writers had adopted a certain ideology and they tended to write progressivist and socialist novels. But the defeat of the Left in 12 March and its detachment from the public caused the public to search a safer and more peaceful life. In the 1980s, the situation got more complicated and the Left drifted into emptiness in the face of the capitalist mode and the liberal economy the government imposed. The Left was not in the position of creating alternative economic models. Moran believes that the reason why the writers drifted apart from social problems and reality might be the chaos in society. However, he accentuates that such a tendency of the writers should not be considered as depolitization. Rather, they thought that mentioning the unjust system of society was not enough and the emptiness they were dragged into with the defeat of the Leftist movement led them to come up with novel narrative styles. Apart from some exceptions, there was an overwhelming penchant for realistic representation in Turkish literature and the critics mostly extolled the realistic approach and regarded it a pillar of novelistic success before the 1980s. The dominant ideology was not “art for art’s sake but art for society’s sake” (Moran 51). The translation of Lukács after the 1960s rendered the art for society’s sake approach more dominant but the avant-garde

novelistic style in the 1980s brought a new dimension to literature. The Turkish writers were affected by the postmodernist novel that had already emerged in the 1960s and 1970s in the West and with the help of some translations from Marquez, Borges and Calvino, they tended to use devices of metafiction, fantastic fiction and magic realism (Moran 51-57) Although Moran does not gather all these writers under postmodernism as an umbrella term because the term is already problematical, he highlights the common ground where these writers meet: “avoidance of realism” (54).

As for the academic studies analyzing *Night Lessons*, the number of them is more limited when compared to her other novels. Ahmet Alver (2014) studied how the September 12 coup d'état was handled by Tekin in *Night Lessons* and Ağaoğlu's *No*. He argues that both of the novels do not let a direct political and historical analyses due to their postmodern techniques and “through their refusal to submit to narrative norms of plot, structure, and language” (2). Ece Cihan Ertem (2014) focused on how *Night Lessons* recovered the voices of the subaltern women but she underlined the fact that the women who left their houses to take part in the political organizations in the 1980s encountered the gender bias and male domination inherent in the political movements. Nilgün Bayraktar studied Tekin's *Night Lessons* within the framework of the effects of coup and trauma. Her main focus was to reveal how traumatic events destabilize representation in language. She argued that the best way to represent the trauma of the coup is to resist direct representation of realism because “massive trauma, which is in important ways inherently incomprehensible, cannot be easily integrated into consciousness, and thus also cannot be straightforwardly narrated” (144). Besides, Jale Parla's *Türk Romanında Yazar ve Başkalaşım* gives a lot of insights into the fragmented style of the novel. Although these studies have delved into the contextual and stylistic properties of the novel and they will be benefited from in this thesis, they have not touched upon the subject/object dichotomy from a psychoanalytic perspective. Therefore, this chapter will enlarge the scope of these academic studies by adding one more point to them through its focus on the body and language psychoanalytically. The connection between the mother and the daughter will be scrutinized in the light of Kristevan theories related to the *abject*, the *semiotic*

and the *symbolic*. Although the mother and daughter relationship has inevitably been the concern of former studies, this thesis will demonstrate how this relationship affects the individuation process of the daughter and how the dyadic unity between the mother and the daughter lends itself to a contextual and textual analysis in which the *semiotic* writing of the sublimated *object* mother is enacted.

Before the analysis of the novel, a brief summary of the novel can be helpful although the novel lacks linearity and there are a lot of shifts of time and narrators. The whole novel revolves around the main female character named Gülfidan who comes from a lower class family. In her very young ages she leaves home to become a Leftist activist in a political organization. The time period the novel reflects is before and after the 12th September 1980 military coup in Turkey. A new name, in other words, a new identity is given to Gülfidan in the organization. She is called Secretary Rüzgar by her activist friends. Her main duty is to visit the women who work in the factories and educate them about their rights. Although she starts working in the organization very enthusiastically, she soon realizes that her opinions about the working class people do not overlap with those of the activists. While she feels that she belongs to the same class as the people she attempts to represent, her Leftist friends assume a condescending attitude toward them. She is gradually isolated and treated as an outsider in the political movement because she marries and becomes pregnant. She is accused of foregrounding her personal life and not being interested enough in the goals of the organization. During these ten years, she reckons with her old memories of her family and her mother. She misses the emotional connection with her mother and now and then fights her in her dreams. Her inner conflict with her mother pervade the whole novel. The gender inequality in the organization leads her to question what her place is as a woman in the organization. She searches for an individual female subjectivity as she recognizes that she has lost her psychic and physical stability by forsaking her own body and her own sexuality. At the end of the novel the voices of the narrator and Tekin the writer coalesce and the narrator/writer explains to the reader how she has started to write about her activist days.

Night Lessons unravels the political atmosphere of Turkey during the 1980s tacitly but it forcefully engages with the failure of the Leftist groups due to their inability to free themselves of the Law of the Symbolic. Even though the whole novel revolves around the emotional and psychic self-interrogations of one character and its focus on an individual character's mind from a microcosmic perspective, it sheds light on how her family and the political organization she joined are embedded in the *symbolic* order. The main character's process of individuation lays bare the truth behind the Leftist groups' uncompromising stand against change and criticism. Tekin does not present the conflict between Secretary Rüzgar and the political group as two opposing forces. She does not let the hierarchy between individualism and political collectivism persistently trap her narrative in a binary opposition. She dwells on how the estrangement of Gülfidan from the political organization leads her to adopt the maternal other rather than expelling it. Tekin deals with the problem of alterity on the basis of the subject who is estranged from herself due to her ambivalent feelings towards the maternal other. Gülfidan (Secretary Rüzgar) writes from an intermediary position; she feels neither belonging to the political organization which maintains the hierarchical thinking without questioning nor to her home from where she fled to render herself free. Being torn between Gülfidan and Secretary Rüzgar, she enacts a fluid space between these two identities of herself. On the one hand, Gülfidan is a lower class girl who flees from home because she cannot bear her family's accusations that she hid her mother's secret; on the other hand, Secretary Rüzgar is a politically oriented girl, who tries to substitute her organization friends for her family. The problem is she cannot accommodate herself in this new *symbolic* order owing to her strong voice of dissidence toward the group's inability to identify themselves with the lower working class and their fallacy to speak on behalf of them. The way that Tekin presents the *abjected* other (maternal Thing) as a healing and revitalizing stimulus in the construction of the self can be elaborated on via Kristeva's arguments on *abjection* and the interrelated connection between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* bases of language in the following analyses of the novel.

4.1. The Savage of the Family and The Rupture of the Dyadic Unity Between Mother and Daughter

Firstly, Tekin's alternative approach to self/Other dichotomy is presented in terms of Gülfidan's relationship with her family and her mother. The novel unveils how Gülfidan is regarded as a foreigner/stranger "who does not belong to the group, who is not 'one of them'" (Kristeva *Strangers* 95) in her family because of her lack of faith in religion and hiding her mother's extramarital affair. Gülfidan's treatment as the misfit of the family chimes in with Kristeva's definition of the foreigner/ stranger who "is at once identified as beneficial or harmful to that social group and its power and, on that account, s/he is to be assimilated or rejected"(95-96). While demonstrating the conflict between Gülfidan and her family, Tekin foregrounds the dyadic separation of her from her mother, which will initiate Gülfidan's new assigned identity as Secretary Rüzgar. Rather than displaying the opposition between Gülfidan and her social surrounding as two binary poles, Tekin lets the reader evaluate the whole social picture of the time by highlighting the blurred/in-between space Gülfidan finds herself in. As Tekin focuses on the mother-daughter relationship intensely, the reasons why Gülfidan is seen as a "threat from the outside who shatters the boundaries of one group (either family or nation)" and why she is treated as the one who "ostensibly occup[ies] the place of difference [...], challeng[ing] the identity of the group and his own-a challenge that few of us are apt to take up" (42) form a backdrop to the mother-daughter relationship. Tekin's implicit references to Gülfidan's conservative family and her feeling of estrangement from them are not depicted as a direct criticism at the *symbolic*/patriarchal configuration of her family. However, the reader catches a glimpse of Tekin's forceful and political sensitivity because she abstains from giving the ideological background of how Gülfidan breaks away from her family¹⁶ but renders it a very dynamic backdrop.

¹⁶ At this point, what Moran states about *Dear Shameless Death* is significant. He argues that in her first novel Tekin intentionally abstains from psychoanalytic analysis of her characters and only focuses on their behaviours. He categorizes the events in the novel as the living conditions, beliefs and ideologies of the Huvat family and Dirmit's detachment from her family because of ideological reasons (80-81). In this respect, *Night Lessons* differs from *Dear Shameless Death* because the ideological perspectives of Gülfidan and her family are not narrated as explicitly as they are observed in her first novel. Therefore, Tekin's engagement

The rupture between Gülfidan and her family occurs when her mother elopes with the *kirve*¹⁷ of her brother, causing huge embarrassment in the family. Gülfidan's sister blames her for keeping their mother's secret and being her accomplice, disregarding the immorality of the action and the honor of the family. Gülfidan is treated as an outsider in the family due to her reluctance to admit having seen her mother cheating on their father. Her sister locks her in the backroom of the house for a month; she does not let Gülfidan talk to her mother, dismissing her pleading. She shows the secret love letter the *kirve* has written to her mother and beats her up on the grounds that she denies having seen them together. She is surprised to see that her sister harbors no love for her mother (*Night Lessons* 39). There is implicit information as to how Gülfidan keeps her mother's secret. She is sent by her mother to buy washing soda when the *kirve* comes home secretly. She asks: "Dear mom, what was I supposed to say if somebody asked me? - washing soda?" (*Night Lessons* 39). Gülfidan suffers from a psychic crisis in the course of her admittance of her mother's betrayal. She confesses that "I started vomiting out of curiosity and I cried hastily by getting angry with the fact that my mother fell in love [...] I would not break the wine of love and drop the roasted chickpeas of it. I cut my burned eyelashes by scissors secretly [...] and I became a militant like wind" (*Night Lessons* 38). Not to give away her mother's secret, she leaves the house and joins the political organization. She becomes a resolute militant when she recognizes that she cannot tolerate her mother's diverting her desire to a man. Although she rarely mentions her father in the novel, it is obvious that Gülfidan feels betrayed by her mother as she chooses another love object for herself. To put in other words, Gülfidan "*separates* [herself] from his [her] fusion with the mother [...] and transfers semiotic motility onto the symbolic order" (Kristeva *Revolution* 47).

Tekin arranges the time when Gülfidan leaves her house and partakes in the political movement as overlapping with her mother's relationship with a man (the *kirve*). If we

in the representation of reality and the limits of language to represent the events is more intense in *Night Lessons*.

¹⁷ *Kirve* is the name given to a person who plays a significant part in the circumcision ritual.

lend an ear to Kristevan analysis, Gülfidan is a child who “is in a double-bind: a longing for narcissistic union with its[her] first love and a need to renounce this union in order to become a subject” (McAfee 48). She breaks the union with her mother and takes part in the organization which can be associated with the *symbolic* domain because of its rigid structure of hierarchy. Leaving home is a moment of the *thetic* break in her life as a result of which she recognizes “the difference between self (subject) and other (object)” (McAfee 21). However, during the course of the novel, her unconscious desire to be one with her mother challenges her putative attachment to the *symbolic* and the *thetic* is challenged when “[t]he anger I directed at myself became so intolerable that not only its hand but also its body that got tired of making love with my mother in my dreams became the joints of violence in pieces in a very short time” (*Night Lessons* 119). Gülfidan’s mother renders herself invisible and stops hearing her voice when she falls in love with the *kirve*. Gülfidan states that she used to have a much closer relationship with her mother before she fell in love. The attachment between the mother and daughter is metaphorically shown by the rope: “She was holding the end of the rope that she fastened around my wrist tightly [...] I was lying in her lap with stalactites at fingerbreadth and ice flowers in my pupils. My head was knocking here and there in emptiness. Apparently, she did not hear so much noise”. (*Night Lessons* 41)

Kristeva’s ideas on passions and language can be helpful in exploring this point further. She states that “these passions - deeper or more archaic, repressed or censored- are unconscious passions: they change the very regime of language, because they speak the language of the primary processes and can only be understood in the link, itself passionate, between subjects: the links of transference-countertransference” (*Hatred* 82). That is, the only way for Gülfidan to be able to assume a new language on the *symbolic* base is the transference of her desire to be the desire of her mother to another person or object. The repressed desire of Gülfidan changes its shape and leads her to pour that energy in the organization. Gülfidan’s detachment from her mother and joining the organization can metaphorically be explained as a child’s passage from the pre-*symbolic* to the *symbolic*, which is quite afflicting for women in terms of “channeling desire without repressing it or denying it or destroying[...] The Law we are talking about

is a *symbolic* act that prohibits, slows, and limits while at the same time inaugurating a new psychical action” (Kristeva, *Hatred* 171). Similarly, Gülfidan as the “story writer of illegality” (*Night Lessons* 17) canalizes her new psychical action onto words. She channels her desire into the realm of illegality because she endows herself with her mother’s love even though it is mostly unreturned. Her difference is depicted as being the “story writer of illegality” because what is censored by the Symbolic Father is on the fringe of Law; it is illegal. The metaphorical rope her mother fastened around Gülfidan’s wrist may be explained as the umbilical cord between the mother and the daughter. According to Kristeva, the first separation between the mother and the child starts with giving birth before language envelops the child. The moment a child is separated from her mother’s body, she is ready to objectify herself as a separate being. The rope metaphor can be explained as the initial rupture between the mother and the child. Gülfidan thinks that the archaic affection she felt for her mother was reciprocal but her mother unleashed the rope when she fell in love with another person and chose another object of love for herself.

As for the *kirve* metaphor, it could be explained as a metaphor of the threat of castration. As the *kirve*’s duty is to console the child during the circumcision, he is the one who lets the child be castrated symbolically: “The phallus, representing the Law of the father (or the threat of castration) [...] comes to signify separation and loss to the child” (Moi *Sexual/ Textual* 97). The lack is caused by the loss of the maternal body; after the entry into the *symbolic*, the child has to repress the imaginary unity with the mother (the maternal other). In this respect, the *kirve* in this novel can be explained as the phallus or the representation of the *symbolic* who “splits up the dyadic unity between mother and child, and forbids the child further access to the mother and the mother’s body” (97).

Gülfidan’s mother’s betrayal of her husband is a turning point in Gülfidan’s life. As her mother challenged the borders of her assigned role as a mother and wife, it could be stated that she challenged the *symbolic* realm, as well. Kandiyoti states that “in societies where marriage is still defined as the alliance of families, the women are not free to choose their husbands” (80). Besides, she points out that “one of the reasons of corporate surveillance on women is the connection between the woman’s chastity and the family’s

or the extended family's honor" (81). A very heavy burden is laid on them because in case of any misbehavior, she tarnishes the honor and shame of the whole family, the extended family and the whole society. Especially in Muslim societies, the restrictive limitations on women preempt "destructive sexual desires" (81). Given that Gülfidan hides the secret of her mother and her mother thanks her for not disclosing it (*Night Lessons* 40), the sacred mother figure is shattered for her because her mother does not conform to the norms of patriarchal society. Therefore, when she falls in love, sleeps with her husband and when she is accused of being too feminine by her organization friends, she will be fighting her mother's image because she associates body, shame and immorality with her mother. Her choice to join the political organization is shaped by her wish to get away from her own sexuality because she associates corporeal love with her mother. On the other hand, she considers her mother's immorality as a chance to stand against the patriarchal/*symbolic* system, but her mother's choice of bodily desires will always remind her that culture and body are seen as two opposing forces in a male-dominated society. When she falls in love, gives birth and "dishonors" the political organization, she realizes that she and her mother are in alliance because both of them defy the patriarchal order. Therefore, she embraces the *abject* mother because of this nondifferentiation.

Gülfidan states that her mother's betrayal story became a springboard for her to leave her family behind; she left her house "by taking the advantage of her mother's falling in love" (*Night Lessons* 52). She used her mother's love for another man as a pretext and she "leapt to the reverse side of the wall by climbing her [mother's] shoulders hardened by love" (*Night Lessons* 52). She also states that she could never actually leave home and "ran back to her to say one more thing" (*Night Lessons* 52). Her mother cast a shadow on her life and she found herself turning back to her haunting image despite leaving home physically: "She was wallowing lonely with her fingers and face soaked in blood. 'Go, go, never come back again'. I couldn't go. I came back. I squandered the first political position my mother offered" (*Night Lessons* 52). Considering her mother's insistence on her leaving the house as a "political action", it can be stated that she considers her mother's defiance of the moral orthodoxy of the family as a revolutionary

action. In order that she can become a “revolutionary” person like her mother, she needs to detach herself from her physically and emotionally.

One of the reasons why Gülfidan strives to break her bonds with her family is that she cannot bear her family’s emulation of a richer life. Moving from the village to a city, her family could not adapt themselves to the class distinction between the poor and the wealthy. Their class consciousness is shaped by their position in society and the main determiner of their social position is poverty. Gülfidan resents the in-betweenness of her family because they cannot accommodate themselves in the city life. In her mother’s funeral, her hatred of poverty and the hypocrisy of her sister is quite explicit. When she does not pray with her family members in the funeral, her sister scolds her for being disrespectful:

We were in my mother’s funeral. Away from everybody, leaning on a tree on my own, I was looking ahead. Because of the fear, which swelled continually in me, I couldn’t bridle the loneliness due to being the only nonreligious child of her and I started walking ahead without looking back. My father shouted out: “Catch this savage” [...] My sister dragged me to the graveside by holding me from my neck. Did she think that I did not open my palms like lemon leaves and abstained from praying for my mother? [...] She approached me with the enthusiasm to share my grief; fell into my arm quietly and said: “My mother would be very happy if she could see how many cars arrived for her funeral”. Pain splashed out of its place from my heart and my mind went blank because of shame. (*Night Lessons* 50)

Gülfidan cannot bear her sister’s interest in the cars as her grief is too overwhelming to notice what brand of cars arrived in the funeral. Although much information is not given about the poverty of her family, her class consciousness is determined by the deprived situation of her family and their hypocrisy. Gülfidan associates everything that belongs to her mother and her family with humiliation. Poverty will always remind her to which class she belongs and shape her understanding that although poverty causes humiliation, it is an inseparable part of her.

Her reluctance to comply with the expectations of her family causes her to be seen as an outcast/a foreigner “whose loss of self in the presence of those distant mouths that do not weigh the artifice of the speech that evokes them” (Kristeva *Strangers* 22). This is the reason why her father calls her “savage”. Unable to feel belonging to her family,

she flees from the house to the place where she thought “her household and the underdog would never be able to catch her” (*Night Lessons* 51). Being a savage, who does not conform to the rules of her family and the society, Gülfidan is treated like a carnivalesque figure in her family. The boundaries between self and Other are drawn by her family before she leaves the house. She is a misfit who causes both laughter and reprobation in the family. In the following quote, Gülfidan mentions how she was regarded as a stranger. She accentuates that she has been pushed to loneliness because of her strangeness:

I made myself believe that the most effective way to fight them was to make them laugh by disguising myself in various clothes [...] They did not reject my dancing completely naked and collecting money with drops of sweat on my head after telling them the stories I made up. They started to force me to make special shows for the guests and drag me in the middle of the room by force. I was free to swear at everybody, rip up their clothes, spit on their faces, prick needles and utter the things that were not supposed to be said in public. Some opportunists whispered their secrets in my ear in the daytime [...] I enjoyed making them laugh and cheer up. One day-maybe because they laughed at me more than usual-I started pitying them. Feeling of pity plunged into my endless world like a wild mountain goat. (*Night Lessons* 53)

She is treated as a stranger who disturbs social reason and order. She expresses her isolation from others in terms of the shame stemming from the naked body. As her mother was exposed to isolation owing to her bodily desires, Gülfidan articulates her own humiliation by referring to carnivalesque elements. She has the freedom to “rip up their clothes, spit on their faces, prick needles, and utter the things that were not supposed to be said in public” (*Night Lessons* 53).

Bakhtin’s carnivalesque and Kristevan *abject* are in tune with each other at this point. Bakhtin places great emphasis on the impact of body, especially the grotesque body which “has no façade, no impenetrable surface, neither has it any expressive features. It represents either the fertile depths or the convexities of procreation and conception. It swallows and generates, gives and takes”¹⁹ (Bakhtin *Rabaleis* 339). Kristeva’s *abject*

¹⁹ Especially the bowels, the genital organs, the eyes and the mouth are depicted to be closer to the earth. Defecation, sexual acts and gluttony are related aspects of the grotesque body, which is in an indispensable part of the carnivalesque. The body parts that are open to the exterior world, such as the mouth, the eyes and the genital organs are exposed to the outside world. So, they were thought

is similar to Bakhtinian grotesque body because it is related to the lower stratum of the body and positioned between the individual and outside. Remembering that the *abject* is an essential element of identity formation and it induces disgust and nausea, it is very close to carnivalesque. The individual's reaction against the *abject*, which is a borderline between "I and non-I" is the first step for identity formation. Its position between life and death also has repercussions of the carnivalesque. Also, the *abject* is affiliated with the blood, defecation, urination, nail, corpse and vomiting. All these properties suggest that *abjection* is very similar to the carnivalesque transformation of the self. The horror and disgust result from the subject's borderline position between the maternal body and the *symbolic*. When the carnivalesque and *abjection* are considered together, it is seen that Gülfidan considers herself as a carnivalesque and *abject* figure who defies the borders and makes the other family members laugh.

It is probable that Gülfidan found herself in real predicament owing to her sister's oppression on her to reveal the secret and her denial that she saw her mother committing adultery. Her sister's mindset is shaped by the patriarchy and she forces Gülfidan to reject their mother as a promiscuous woman glossing over any emotional bond between mothers and daughters. Her mother's pleading to keep her secret and her sister's insistence on her giving it stirs her alienation from her family. From that moment on, she yokes body and her mother in her mind. When she associates herself with her mother, she utters her pain through physical descriptions. Opposed to the patriarchal culture, she equates herself with her mother in terms of foregrounding her body. Gülfidan's sister's interest in the cars at the funeral, her accusations of her not grieving sincerely for her mother's death, her father's consideration of her as a "savage" girl and her ostracization as a carnivalesque figure to be feared reveal that her mother is not the only one to be expelled from the family as the Other

to be positioned in between the interiority and exteriority. These holes are the bridges between one's body and the outside world. Especially the genital organs are made visible in the carnivals because they have various functions such as defecating, urinating, sexual act and generating babies. They represent both life and death, corruption and vitalization. Carnivalesque is represented in the material body images and especially the lower parts of the body (*Rabelias* 435)

(stranger/*abject* figure), she is also rejected as an outcast by her family, which in the end brings the mother and the daughter together again.

So, scattered bits and pieces of information about Gülfidan's family reveal how they treat the one who does not behave according to the usual standards of the moral code. As she is stuck between her family and her mother, she decides to leave her home behind. Leaving the house is a *thetic* moment for her "establishing the *identification* of the subject (Gülfidan) and its object (her mother) as preconditions of propositionality" (Kristeva *Revolution* 43). So, Tekin embeds the ideological conflicts between Gülfidan and her family but puts the mother-daughter relationship in the foreground. The subject/Object opposition is woven in between the lines without referring to them explicitly. She employs the same narrative style in Gülfidan's relation with the political organization.

4.2. Estranged in Another Language: The Political Organization

Night Lessons offers an alternative and novel discourse to the schism between self (Gülfidan) and Other (the political organization) by foregrounding Gülfidan's inner conflict with her mother as the whole novel is the poetic manifestation of the sublimation of the *abject* mother in writing. The tension between Gülfidan and the organization and the reasons behind it are filtered through the dyadic unity between the daughter and the mother because Tekin does not adhere to the parameters of realism and never uses a pejorative language while highlighting the fallacy of the Leftist movement; she does not present Gülfidan and the political organization as two polar ends. By focusing on Gülfidan and how she reckons with her mother, which holds sway on every page, Tekin shows us that reclaiming the *abject* mother and sublimating her through writing can create another discourse which is not subdued by Cartesian hierarchies inherent in the *symbolic* base of language, which in the end sets a compact social and political criticism implicitly but forcefully.

Feeling estranged in the language that the organization adopted provides the impetus for Gülfidan to wrest herself from the very domain in which she feels isolated. The whole novel drifts free in the boundary between the *abject* maternal body and the

symbolic, enabling Gülfidan to adopt and articulate the space of the *semiotic*. Her emotional quandaries about her mother and her dissidence in the political group generate an individual narrative space and bring into sharp focus the dynamic tension between self and Other. She inscribes her body poetically and discharges her psychic pain in the narrative, which in turn prevents her from disintegration. During the course of her experiences in the political movement, she does not only embrace her mother but also welcomes poverty and her female identity. These are the notions she has always associated with her mother and which can be analyzed as the manifestations of the *abject*. The hierarchical mindset and the discourse that the organization assumed leads Gülfidan to welcome her own class and poverty. The gender discrimination of her militant friends, on the other hand, causes her to make a pact with her own body and female identity. Fascinated by the *abject*, Gülfidan “imagines its logic, projects herself into it, introjects it, and as a consequence perverts language-style and content” (Kristeva *Powers* 16). The introjection of the *abject* manifests itself in the novel through the transfusion of the body into language and Gülfidan’s pre-Oedipal narcissistic union with Mukoşka who is Gülfidan’s closest friend in the organization.

The language of the militants which is heavily embedded in the *symbolic* and their mindset which is framed by gender discrimination cause Gülfidan to realize that she can never accommodate herself in the discourse of the Other. Her individual predicament emphasizes the fact that the failure of the Leftist movement in the 1980s generated from their adherence to the *symbolic*/ patriarchal system without questioning. Tekin underlines that “it was impossible for me to write about what we went through by political vocabulary, but it was supposed to be uttered, it had to be utterable” (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 99). What Tekin implies by political vocabulary is the definition of the term in terms of the *symbolic* base of signification referring to the language of political establishments, parties, a fundamentalist and discriminatory notion of politics. What she means by uttering the unutterable can be aligned with the *semiotic* component of language, which is revolutionary and which shatters the fundamentalist connotations of the word. Upon being asked by Özer why she has been attacked by the leftists to such an extent, she points out that the style of this novel

should be discussed especially by the leftists. She supposed that “people would soon realize that I [she] opened up an important and exact space in literature without a non-political language” (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 104). Although the novel could not be appreciated by the leftists as she expected and she was exposed to harsh criticism, the novel makes its political dealings quite visible despite its “non-political language” by its focus on the *abject* position of the main character. In other words, Tekin builds a politically engaged novel by rendering the in-between position between self and other (her mother)/Other (the organization), lending itself to Kristevan analysis.

What initiates Gülfidan’s detachment from the political organization is her cognizance that she does not speak the same language as them. Language, in this context, must be considered as the *symbolic* base of language in Kristevan terms. She notices that she cannot speak through the language which is laden with structure and hierarchy as it reflects the patriarchal attitude of the organization. Considering that the Leftist movement based its principles on egalitarianism, it was confounding for Gülfidan to realize that the discourse it embodied created a huge gap between what they preached and practiced. Although the Leftist organization embarked on drawing the attention to the inequalities of classes and the restrictive violence of the government, the way they approached to the working class people was divorced from the workers’ perception of life. Their language was embedded in an illusory gamut of ideas and dogmas, causing a break between them and the working class people. Gülfidan’s realization of this gap leads her to be a dissident in the group. As she feels more isolated in the organization, she takes shelter in the memories of her mother. Her internal conflicts with her mother, tinged with anger and longing, lead her to come closer to the *semiotic* base of language, which “roughly refers to the affective, corporeal elements of language that contribute to meaning, but do not intend or signify in the way that symbols do: one may think of the rhythms and tones of poetry or music, or the affective dimension of language that is part of but remains heterogeneous to the symbol” (Keltner “Introduction” 2-3). Therefore, not having a sense of belonging to the political group enables her to adopt

the “maternal other”²⁰. The image of her mother functions as the maternal other and puts her in touch with the drive-based materiality of language and “trans-syntactic inscription of emotion” (Kristeva *Powers* 191).

Upon joining the group and participating in the meetings with the working class people, Gülfidan realizes that a solid hierarchy is ingrained in the way that the political group approaches the working class. This hierarchy resides in their distance from the working class they want to enlighten and educate. Even though Gülfidan starts working willingly and ardently in the group, she assumes a different position from her military friends in the following years. Secretary Rüzgar buries Gülfidan under a black quilt and enrolls her in the women’s branch of the political organization enthusiastically: “I reached the trembling vocal chords of forty women who cried out.’ Something needs to be done.. Something needs to be done..’ and I grasped for breath when I said: ‘Add my name in the organization registry’ by coiling the ringlike fires around my neck” (*Night Lessons* 14). She decides to leave her former identity (Gülfidan) behind and help all the women have political consciousness, yet such a heroic attempt disappoints her in the end after she recognizes that there is a huge gap of understanding between the working class and the organization:

I was going to shine like a star and pour on the sky in order to lead the daughters of our citizens at the rain soaked and desolate bus tops. The people who come to see me would have asked their Gods who I was while they were trembling under their quilts [...] if a political melancholy had not penetrated into the depth of my heart. If I had not dropped a real part of my life into a hot and dark hallow in the course of this penetration. (*Night Lessons* 8)

The first dichotomy between Secretary Rüzgar and the organization stems from the organization’s insistence on her working in the factories to be in an equal position with them. However, she realizes that laboring in the factories cannot help the organization

²⁰ Although Kristeva’s maternal other does not strictly refer to the mother figure, in this novel the mother literally represents the maternal body which “radically deforms syntax, causes “semantic fuzziness” (Kristeva *Powers* 191)

to sympathize with the peculiar life style of the working class people. As she rejects their offer to work in the factories, she is chastised by the organization members for despising and trivializing their noble cause. She is accused of dreaming too much and seducing the party leader (*Night Lessons* 17). This part unveils Gülfidan's loss of faith in their political aims. The gap between the organization and the working class women is obvious when the organization goes to a factory to give a speech. The factory workers rush to the *baklavas* they brought for them. They are more interested in feeding themselves; the political dictations of the organization are not welcomed and internalized in the factories. Tekin underlines the language gap between the poor and the political group as follows:

A very few people can raise up to leadership in political movement, and after that they assume a language different from their own, they speak a language that is borrowed. It is very sad to listen to them when they speak through a language that does not belong to them; a language which they do not understand and use by compiling incomprehensible words one after another [...] As I told the reader in *Signs of Love*; you lose your innocence while trying to grasp the language that belongs to somebody else. Having left the previous situation of poverty behind, you turn into a poor imitator who tries to wield power by language. (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 99,107)

Language that is molded in the hands of people who want to exercise power on the working class is one of the core issues of this novel. Similarly, in *Swords of Ice*, Tekin had grappled with the use of language by depicting the lives of children who live in poverty. *Night Lessons* elaborates on the issue of language in the same fashion but this time with more focus on women. Gülfidan's individual conflict between her own expectations and the disillusionments she faces due to the orthodox approaches of the party which nobody questions sharpen her class consciousness.

Gülfidan broods over what she has lost during the political movement. She admits having set off as a very ardent activist whose aim was to educate the daughters of the poor people as she firstly thought she was not different from them. She was brought up in poverty and she believed that she could convey what she learned to her sisters. No matter how generous such an attitude may seem, she confesses that she was imagining to be praised highly by those dispossessed families as she dedicated herself to be their spokesperson. Upon having realized that such a looking down and isolation

led her to emptiness and she lost the real part of her life, she starts questioning herself as a person “in-process/on trial” (Kristeva *Revolution* 22) whose inner voyage is perpetual.

During the meetings where Gülfidan assumes the role of a leader for the working class women, the memory of her mother penetrates her mind. She wishes to ally herself with all suffering women and cement a group consciousness as she comes from “a house where women were lonely” (*Night Lessons* 13), as well. Despite her efforts, she cannot feel the coziness of her mother among these women. She expresses her loneliness by her bleeding finger metaphor. Upon being shown affection by the women, she recollects how her mother cut her finger hundreds of times and covered it with her chintz. This memory signals how closely she associates herself with her mother and how she feels isolated among many women although solidarity of sisterhood is supposed to soothe her. In the rest of this anecdote, she recounts how she is stuck in the basement of an apartment with a name given to her. She hears horseshoe sounds in that basement as she used to hear in her childhood and she admits that she suffers from insomnia and she is in emotional turmoil as she had difficulty in remembering “her name and who she was” (*Night Lessons* 15). She is on the verge of losing her own identity because her assigned role in the organization forces her to belong to another class and assume a superior position among the working class people.

The way that Gülfidan remembers her own mother among the factory workers and her ambiguous position between them and her own organization friends evoke Tekin’s own preoccupation with language. She states that she does not write or speak on behalf of the poor because they have already been dispossessed of the freedom of talking about themselves; yet she does not want to keep silent because she thinks that the ones who wield power turn their power into violence and aggression and there must be a way to purify themselves of this violence and power. She adds that “I did not only talk about certain events in the political movement in *Night Lessons*, I also told the story of psychic entrapment among the people who I grew up with and how I disengaged myself from them. While desiring to turn back home, all these emotions keep crashing the heroine there” (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 118). Gülfidan expresses her anger at her own

class: “I was banned from meeting the workers. Why? Is it because my heart got fragmented with the corpse of my mother? Is it because I believe that the internal anger I felt towards my own class could have opened up a valuable angle?” (*Night Lessons* 159). Gülfidan’s own anger with her own class comes from their silence and submission to being seen as inferior. The “valuable angle” she mentions refers to her acceptance of this anger and turning it into sublimation.

By meditating on poverty, Gülfidan comes closer to her mother emotionally and she realizes that what she jettisoned as the Other, in other words, her family, poverty, her mother, are indeed what belong to her. When she witnesses the impoverished living conditions of the working class, her understanding that she belongs to the same class as these people leads her to come closer with her mother. Anything that Secretary Rüzgar regards as the *abject* is somehow related to her mother because the whole novel is her inner voyage through which she can ally with the maternal image. She welcomes the image that cannot be expelled. She repeats her feeling of disgust related to poverty many times in the novel. She is talking to poverty directly “that wraps up my [her] body. I am disgusted by you. I wore my sweater whose fluffs amassed and stitches loosened on my old trousers. I attached a hooked needle on the broken zip fastener of my trousers” (*Night Lessons* 27). Likewise, she uses negative connotations for poverty again when she sees a weird man in the trade union. She feels restless near this man as he refuses to shake hands with her. She is absorbed in observing the man “as he made her fingers suspend in the air and descend on her bosom dolefully” (*Night Lessons* 46). She likens the man’s face to a red apple which she always associates with poverty. Similarly, talking to an unidentified persona in the novel, she explains to him that “their feelings do not overlap with those of the people whose doors they knock on” and “being poor is like having a broken skeleton” (*Night Lessons* 109).

Tekin approaches poverty in respect to class consciousness. The class whose rights Gülfidan advocates is the one that she belongs to. She comes from the shanty houses and embarks on giving a voice to the silent workers who are not given a chance to speak or who willingly stay silent. She cannot speak to this class as an outsider. The working class, the women working in factories and the working class man mentioned

whom she likens to a red apple are all the members of the same class to which Gülfidan belongs, as well. Yet, in contrast to their being represented as a class, Gülfidan feels closer to them as they live in poverty. It is unlikely for her to speak and write in another discourse. Gülfidan rejects the “class” word as “there is not such a word in our [their] language, maybe we[they] are struggling over talking about ourselves by another language. What I mean, Mukoşka is that if we wish to repel this humiliation, we need to tear this word into pieces, too” (*Night Lessons* 163). She is aware of the fact that her hatred of poverty stems from her hatred of the class she was born into. She became an activist in her shabby clothes and she cannot hide her feeling of inferiority because of these clothes. Like her mother without whose shadow she cannot exist, poverty is an inseverable part of her. Poverty is entwined with the *abject* and she speaks through it against the homogenizing rhetoric.

The other conflict between Gülfidan and the militant group generates from the gender discrimination of the latter. Tekin does not explicitly give references to their attitude to the women in the organization but again shifts the attention to Gülfidan’s quandaries over her disappointment. This discrimination will awaken Gülfidan to the fact that her female sexuality and identity are subsumed under the patriarchal hegemony of the political organization. Remembering that she had fled the house because her mother violated the *symbolic* Law by having a sexual relationship with another man, leaving the house meant tearing her own sexuality off. As she was treated as a carnivalesque figure by her family, she associated shame, body, and her mother in her mind. For example, When Gülfidan marries a man in the organization, the shame of foregrounding her sexual desires does not leave her. Her mother accuses her of yielding to her corporeal desires:

Me! You got tired of loving me, didn’t you bitch? You want to get rid of me. You called me intentionally. You drew my dead body on this slippery ground [...] You suppose that you saved love for your future, didn’t you? Poor child! You put the burden of all your ruptures on me but do not suppose that you whittled me away. I will never leave you alone. The things that you whisper with your husband in your bed.
(*Night Lessons* 117)

The voice of her mother in her dream suggests that even in bed when she is closest to her husband, her mother continues to cast a shadow on her. She believes that she has broken the dyadic unity with her mother a second time; firstly, by leaving her house and secondly marrying a man. She feels guilty for having betrayed her mother by directing her desire to her husband. She blames herself for trying to get rid of her mother. She attempts to negate her mother's image but her marriage is marred by her mother's haunting image. She yearns for "turning back to my [her] primordial form by passing through the ways inside me. I[*she*] want[s] to carry myself[*herself*] to the point before the universe was constructed, even without letting myself know it" (*Night Lessons* 71). Tekin's novel takes us deeper into the maternal body. Gülfidan's identification with her mother is so intense that she dreams about her and her husband fornicating (*Night Lessons* 34). Her mother's accusation of her to find a substitute for her desire and Gülfidan's eroticization of her mother sleeping with her husband show that in her psyche the subject and the object separation is very fragile. As Kristeva clarifies, "precondition for narcissism, *abjection* nevertheless accompanies psychic diachrony and its evolutions throughout psychic life, to which it is coextensive and that it constantly renders fragile [...] I become this subject by pushing away, by rejecting: by pushing myself away, by rejecting myself, by ab-jecting" (*Hatred* 187). Her identification with her mother gets denser as she welcomes her body and her own female identity when she feels suffocated by the gender discrimination of the organization. Despite the organization's purportedly egalitarian viewpoint, the hierarchy between male and female members is persistently maintained. She gives information about how the women in the organization disguise themselves not to be recognized by the police:

All dark skinned and dark haired leading women, had their hair dyed black not to be recognized. They graced their foreheads by little ringlets and large waves of hair [...] And our Leader, who protected me from numerous dangers, unfair criticisms and relieved my heart with her love, disappeared and descended into the underground. (*Night Lessons* 18)

Gülfidan cannot get used to altering her physical appearance so quickly like the other women activists. Tekin's criticism is directed against the attitude of women in the

political organization during the 1970s and 1980s who never question gender politics, adapt themselves to male oppression easily and forsake their female identity. She also demonstrates how the male leaders of the organization wanted women members to speak and act like men.

Gülfidan can never understand why it is necessary to give up being womanly. She is taught to look masculine if she wants to be a real activist. An unknown voice in the novel orders a woman activist to be decent: “He/she said: If so, take off that hairclip on your hair in a decent manner. Trust it to the Revolution caretakers. The workers do not like fancy hairclips. Disgusting rhyme! Now, cherish me in your bosom gleefully, and then make a coffee” (*Night Lessons* 60). Likewise, some day-laborer women complain about the women with make up to the organization in the form of a letter: “To the Presidency of the Council, we came from G.suyu Neighborhood. We are here as we are day laborers. Z. friend did not tell us it would be like this. There are women with make up here. We do not recognize socialism as such. Güleser, Gülefer, Zeytin, Pamuk, Altın, Pembe, Köpük” (*Night Lessons* 86). The worker women adopted the stereotypes of military women but they cannot align themselves with them when they see a militant woman with make-up. Ironically all their names are very delicate womanly names. Tekin mocks the attitude of these women whose names are quite paradoxical to their behavior. On the surface, the leaders of the Revolution purge women of their femininity but when it comes to traditional women roles like making coffee, they want women to perpetuate these roles. In this respect, Gülfidan does not fulfill the requirements of the organization and besides her pregnancy triggers the anger of her militant friends. She is married but giving birth does not correspond to being a man-like activist. Concerning this issue, Berktaş in “The View of Turkish Left to Women: Is there anything Changed?” states that:

... as woman is considered a harmful substance just like alcohol, gambling and drugs, the Left foregrounded “sister (*bacı*) cliché as a way out for avoiding this. ‘Sister’ was a ‘woman friend’ type whose gender and sexuality were oppressed. With the formulation that “all my love is my citizens, all girls are my sisters”, men activists tried to protect themselves from the “intriguer (*fitne*) element called ‘woman’ who has the potential to ruin the solidarity and revolutionist brotherhood [...] The Left in Turkey, “adopted the values of our public”, adopted the feudal prejudices and behavioral customs and under the effect of “sexual collectivism” accusation directed

against communism, they embraced the things called “the values of our public” tightly , namely, family and monogamy . Yet, what is interesting is that the things related to “the values of our public” are always about the women and sexuality. The Left is moralist and considers it as one of the preconditions of being a revolutionist. (316, 317)

This is highly related to Gülfidan’s oppression in the political organization because she complains about the belittling attitude of men and women’s getting used to such attitudes for the sake of being accepted as a revolutionary. Her friend Mukoşka gets married although she does so unwillingly; Gülfidan is given the duty to “measure the space between the poles by steel tape” (*Night Lessons* 82) and she mocks at the absurdity of the situation as “I [she] could not look at the paper stars hanging out of the ceiling as I[she] was a ferocious militant” (*Night Lessons* 82). The paper stars represent her limited freedom; even her nick name “Secretary Rüzgar” is more masculinized than her real name Gülfidan, which evokes femininity. She is one of the “sisters” of the organization and she is supposed to espouse a masculine name and position to be a real socialist. Gülfidan revolts against these indictments; she both gives birth and leaves the organization as she is disappointed by it. She also writes her experiences in her mother’s language, which means that as a woman, she rejects not only the patriarchal discourse of the government but also the same attitude of the Leftist group. As Berktaş states “what women went through in the parties, organizations and groups that the Left created has nothing to do with the common ‘men and women are equal’ slogan. The Left, just like the entire society, is a social formation where the rules are established and performed by men” (280). The Leftist group is so much embedded in the *symbolic* structure that the hierarchy between genders in their minds leave the women activists silenced in patriarchal hegemony.

Gülfidan feels estranged in such a densely *symbolic* realm whose language is based on a rule-governed system and which positions the subject by structure and law which stands for the “inevitable attribute of meaning, sign, and the signified object” for the consciousness of a transcendental ego (Kristeva *Desire* 134). The organization has internalized the binary between man and woman as they do not include women in “the decision making mechanism” (Berktaş 280) and they equate man with mind and

woman with fragility. Smith puts forward that the real estrangement of the subject stems from the limits of language; “even our first language, our mother-tongue, opens up a gap between being and representation, between language and the world of objects [...] Language is at once our home and agent of our homelessness, responsible for our separation from things” (25). Every individual in this sense is an exile in language because language starts with the separation from the mother. The political organization is exiled in the *symbolic* and patriarchal language as they adhere to the “inevitable attribute of meaning, sign and the signified object” (Kristeva *Desire* 134).

Accordingly, Gülfidan embraces her own female identity as a result of the organization’s attitude to women. By giving birth, Gülfidan comes closer to her own corporeality. Her emotional and psychic attachment to her mother increases and she welcomes her mother in her psyche as a force to stand against the patriarchal hegemony of the organization. Getting pregnant is a process where the rupture between self and other is annihilated as motherhood erases the boundaries of the self and language. Gülfidan makes a pact with her own female identity as a mother. Gülfidan’s pregnancy is violently opposed by the organization because it is not considered proper for an activist woman to give birth and prioritize her body while more serious issues are handled. They put pressure on her to have an abortion, which can be regarded both as physical and emotional torture.

Tekin, during our interview in Gümüşlük Academy in 2016, correlated the power of woman to give birth and look after children with the man’s loss of potency. She argued that “women reign over life. They maintain a household, bring up their children and they have to exert life energy to survive. Streets, on the other hand, are the domains of men and their domain of power is being invaded by women. Such a case induces a great deal of acrimony among men” (Tekin). Upon hearing Gülfidan’s pregnancy, both the male and the female members of the group oppose it because giving birth is something that belongs to home. An activist woman must put her political aims first and forsake her body. The hypocrisy of the political group is also marked when they collect abortion money for Gülfidan and charge her with cleaning the meeting hall. When she gets pregnant, one of the worst blows of reprimand stems from a woman

who “touched my [her] shoulders quietly and spoke with her mouth pierced by authority, ‘I would never expect it from you. I would think that everybody could give birth but you’” (*Night Lessons* 85). She juxtaposes her mother’s warnings about pregnancy with the indictments of the organization. Her mother exhorts her not to “faint due to pain” during the delivery; she warns her to be entirely alert at the moment because she told her that “she will be spouting the light of stars, the leaves of trees and the blue space that surrounds the universe; she will fill the groves of the rocks with the seas” (*Night Lessons* 69).

In contrast to her militant friends’ *symbolic* frame of mind, her mother encourages her to enjoy the moment when her body unifies with nature during birth. The stars, leaves and the rocks that will be revitalized with the life force of the body reclaim the fleshly corporeality of subjectivity which erupts into the *symbolic*. References to nature evoke the semiotically charged language conjoining the corporeal and the incorporeal realms. Kristeva states that “without an optimal experience of motherhood, the female subject has difficulty attaining-and perhaps never attains-a relationship to the other sex or a relationship to the other[...] It is in motherhood that the link to the other can become love” (*Hatred* 87). She maintains that women grasp the *jouissance* as they are carried to the realm of the *semiotic* when they give birth. The corporeal connection between the mother and the baby, despite being in the form of narcissism, provides a sense of unity to the mother through “an indiscernible double, and a priori object[...] but in fact a formless pre-object, the empty content of a self-stimulated container in and against the link to the father-genitor and the environment” (*Hatred* 87). In other words, the woman approaches the zone where self and other are undifferentiated by giving birth. It is an *asymbolic* perceptiveness of the *semiotic*; birth is evocative of the primordial sense of cohesion; it is the space where two bodies are identical and there is no rapture between the subject and the object. As it belongs to the pre-*symbolic* realm, women sense *jouissance* untouched by the *symbolic* regulation. In addition, she states that when a woman gives birth, she comes closer to the archaic attachment with her mother, which begets the sense of unity among all women in the world: “Within this strange feminine see-saw that makes ‘me’ swing from the unnamable community of women

over to the war of individual singularities, it is unsettling to say ‘I’” (*Tales* 258-259). When women come to terms with the musical rhythm of their bodies, especially by pregnancy, they can upset the privileging of the *symbolic*. The women’s body cannot be restricted to the immaculate conception of Virgin Mary, who has been deified by the patriarchal religious discourse. The “transverbal communication” (258-259) of women heralds the incorporation of the body with culture by bringing the speaking body back into discourse, referring to the musical, poetic and *semiotic* realm of language.

Turning back to the opposition of the political organization against Gülfidan’s pregnancy, it can be argued that the same parameters of patriarchy are visible in the political discourse of the Leftists of the 1980s in Turkey. Tekin criticizes such an understanding as she believes that such a dichotomy between body and politics enforces women to give up their bodies and speak through the patriarchal/ *symbolic* language entirely. She believes that women need to observe their bodies carefully in order to explore the semantics of language. She adds that giving birth enables women to explore their own bodies (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 177). Furthermore, during our interview, she stated that

women have a different connection with the world when compared to men. They do not even want to harm a stone, believing that it is alive. It must be related to their fertility and child-bringing properties. I do not claim that all women must be regarded so; yet there is a female world outside and this world has integrity in itself. Birds, cats, water, stones all complete the integrity of this world. Yet, women have got detached from nature in time inevitably due to civilization and culture. Nevertheless, they continue to have the spirit of nature in themselves. This is the reason why I call women’s language rhythmical and musical. (Tekin)

When Tekin’s and Kristeva’s overlapping ideas are considered together, it is seen that they approach pregnancy in the same fashion. They both confront the question of women’s body in the *symbolic* order. Despite the differences of the contexts, both of them show that the knotted structures of political and ideological relations leave no place for women’s body and women are dissociated from their bodies due to a tight system of control. Therefore, Gülfidan’s pregnancy and her yearning for her mother are related to her quest for female subjectivity and sexuality. By embracing her body

and female sexuality, “she constructs her new identity through interweaving body, language and memory from her shattered self and fractured consciousness” (Bayraktar 123). That is, her political identity brings along the oppression of her female identity. Yet, she stands against this constraining binary thought and embraces her female sexuality. That Tekin dwells on the pregnancy of Gülfidan brings this study in contact with the Kristevan *abject*. Gülfidan welcomes her body, which she has seen as an *abject* before because of her mother’s immorality. She embraces what she has expelled before, which makes her closer to her mother. So the body gains more importance in the novel especially when she writes about the physical traumas she encounters.

The body can be used as a signifier to sublimate and poeticize the maternal other in writing. As Parla points out, Tekin foregrounds the body and accentuates the fragmentation of the body particularly to articulate how Gülfidan harbors two identities in herself. Gülfidan, as the suppressed identity, metaphorically bursts out of Secretary Rüzgar’s body. Bursting out of the former identity out of the borders of the new identity and expression of the violence and psychological trauma by corporeal images demonstrate that Gülfidan overcomes her own self-schism by writing through the body. During the ten years in the movement, she is exposed to the coercion of her friends who forced her to forsake her body and all bodily desires. She has been accused of prioritizing love and desire as she has an affair with one of the members of the group. When she gives birth, as mentioned before, she has been chastised for not paying enough attention to fulfill the aims of the organization. She utters the backlash of her body against all the limitations as:

My body wanted the compensation of the ten years, the roughness on its skin, and the secrets that I have worn off hidden inside its balmy curves. It was in the pursuit of an exact and bloody revenge [...] How would these ten years have passed if I had not forced my body to have carnal love with the slogans [...] Then I found frozen veins on my pillow, broken nerves [...] They were very ornamented, which must be so in order to deceive the ones who are eager to turn concave stories into cambered ones. (*Night Lessons* 89-93-143)

The dismembered body organs and the decaying body suggest that the body as matter is transformed into the body as meaning. Gülfidan’s body does not adhere to the

patriarchal parameters; the whole pack of references to the body shows its urge to escape fixity and unity, which reinforces the idea that she writes her experiences of militant years through bodily writing.

In tune with Kristevan theory, Gülfidan expresses the emotional and physical pain “through the semiotic element [by which] bodily drives manifest themselves in language” (Oliver “Introduction” xx); the living body penetrates into language, and therefore language is not cut off from the body; the rupture between soma and psyche is closed. Gülfidan expresses her anger at the hegemonizing attitude of the Leftist group by referring to her body: “her devotion of her own body to the service of the organization and to the workers turns out to be a failure when she confronts the fact that the ideals of the leftist movement are not desired within the worker class” (Bayraktar 122). For instance, while singing the marching songs of the organization, she expresses how she “devot[ed] my [her] visceral organs for the sake of our folks’ sunny future” (*Night Lessons* 18). Likewise, when she learns that one of her female friends in the organization wastes her days washing the dishes in the house where she hides, she utters her pain ironically again: “I tumbled down by laughing so much that my face was smashed into pieces” (*Night Lessons* 20). She is vehement in her acceptance of the new name and embittered by the loss of her former identity: “Look at the name that you associate with me. Secretary Rüzgar! You want people to read my name not with their eyes but with their noses and you want them to take a burnt secretary smell” (*Night Lessons* 31). The senses are replaced; the invisibility of her real identity is connoted by the sense of smell, which is another quality of the *semiotic*. The deployment of a wide range of senses arouses a sense of semiotic disposition which “musicates” signification (Kristeva *Revolution* 233) in the novel.

Her mother’s shadow and the stories she used to tell Gülfidan coexist with the state violence. If the former is thought to be closer to the *semiotic* and the latter to the *symbolic*, these two realms are signified together, enabling Gülfidan to utter the traumatic experiences and the violence on her body during the coup. The harrowing experiences such as being beaten up by the police are expressed indirectly. Tekin intentionally avoids the representation of the traumatic experiences directly and

realistically to reveal the inadequacy of representation in narrating violence and trauma. She dismantles the conventional language. As Bayraktar underlines, the novel

renders the brutal experience of military violence and political terrorism with uncanny immediacy, and [...] do[es] so by registering the trauma on the body of the traumatized person [...] *Night Lessons* pushes the limits to the boundaries of the body and boundaries of the self through creating its narrative on the controlled, weakened and fragile female body within the patriarchal system [...] Thus, the act of witnessing approves a memory that is "not confined to the individual psyche," but is constructed in the culture in which the subject lives. (112, 117,118)

While talking about violence, the images of her mother in the past penetrate into the painful bodily trauma and she envelopes herself in her mother's soothing protection. She is on the verge of losing all her hope after being beaten up by the police:

I was torn into pieces by pain when I was dragged on the pavements upon realizing that me and my mother were sacrificed for a "tepelek" tale. I was divided into two between ladder creaks, footfalls water voices. I tumbled down among the voices of spoons, laughter and cries. I fainted while looking for my mother's cough, warm breath and her gold tooth shining at the very bottom of her mouth. (*Night Lessons* 39)

Fainting, being dragged, sacrifice, tumbling down and being torn into pieces are all indications of inaction and inner turmoil. Given that these words are associated with physical torture executed most probably by the police and Gülfidan and her mother were lost in childhood folkloric tales, it is clear that the clash between the *symbolic* and the *semiotic* is the acutest when Gülfidan is prevented from fulfilling her dreams to be an activist. Her attempt to find a place for herself in the political movement is hampered by the force of the state. That she is exposed to state power, the *symbolic*, does not only block her way to fight the patriarchal discourse but also culminates in being divided between the *symbolic* and *semiotic*. She is divided and sacrificed by her mother because she can never forsake the *Thing* she has lost. She yearns for her mother's cough and breath, as *semiotic* evocations, because this is the only way she can fight. Remembering Kristeva's argument that it is hard for females to kill their mother's image even after the *symbolic* bears paramount significance at this point because even under the most dramatic situations to the extent of fainting, Gülfidan does not give up looking for her mother. Gülfidan's pre-*symbolic* tie with her mother

is reciprocal, as well. Her mother asks her “in which part of me have you been for such a long time, Gülfidan, where have you been my daughter?” (*Night Lessons* 40). Such a return of love by her mother is what she wishes to possess, which is the healing power of the maternal other.

Tekin questions the possibility of the representation of the traumatic events especially after the 12th September 1980 coup, which suggests that she does not display the conflict between self and Other directly. As writing the violence on the body and its traumatic effects would be re-representation of violence, she conflates the past and the present, creating a new type of language where the referred image is delayed. The violence and the torture people were exposed to during the coup are written without direct references; therefore “rather than merely as the signifier of the trauma, the body is depicted as transformable and provisional, which paves the way for Gülfidan’s search for a distinct female identity through breaking the patterns of the strictly determined political identity” (Bayraktar 119). Although the novel is the reflection of one individual’s deteriorating psyche in the face of violence, Tekin’s narrative unfolds the violence committed on the social base. Gülfidan is not the only socialist activist who experiences state power; all her friends are exposed to the same trauma. The intersection of the personal and social is revealed as the junction of the *abject* and the trauma. The tortured body pushes the limits of the unity of the self and causes the one who experiences torture or the one who describes it to be estranged from the body and the language. For instance, when Gülfidan witnesses a man’s torture scene, she expresses the limits of language to write about pain. She watches the man “dancing in torture with the accompaniment of the unforgettable music that only her screams can spin [...] Her trembling body as if exposed to electricity in company with her looks blurred by violence seemed like a harbinger of a brand-new language” (*Night Lessons* 65). The ultimate sublimation of the inexplicable, unsignifiable and boundless language is actualized via music. Only “screams” can spin the tongue of the speaker which is literally overrun with references to Kristeva’s *semiotic*:

Music itself is a derivative. It is simply the sonorous indicator of a break, of a deaf, mute, mortal, and regenerative rhythm. It takes place where the body is gashed by the blows of biology and the shock of sexual, social, and historical contradiction, breaking

through to the quick, piercing through the shield of the vocal and symbolic cover.
(*Desire* 179)

Likewise, Gülfidan's screams and laughter, the musical voice of the *semiotic* pierces through the *symbolic* cover that all the people around speak but her mother. It is the midpoint between the biological and the social contradictions. Tekin embellishes her narration with music and matches every feeling with a sound. The examples such as "All wheezy sounds are my witness" (*Night Lessons* 97), "murmuring in pain without scaring my lips and tongue" (*Night Lessons* 162) and all the repetition of murmuring, screaming, laughing and horseshoe sounds serve as the affinity between the *symbolic* and the *semiotic*.

Besides torture, witnessing the death of her friends is another example for representing the inexpressible and unutterable pain through *semiotic* elements that transform the *abject* body into writing. When she visits the house of one of her dead friends, she likens herself to "the shadow of a miserable insect which is afraid of scaring itself with its own voice" (*Night Lessons* 135). She takes the personal possessions of her friend such as her glasses and clothes and puts them in a black bag and watches the ceiling of the house which she defines as a "death museum": "I saw the stains of her rapturous scream. My heart was torn and I silenced myself without letting my voice be disrupted by shudder" (*Night Lessons* 135). The narrative of how she silences herself not to cry is a leitmotif against the silence and numbness that possess her body. The impossibility of capturing and representing the reality of death reconstructs the narrative. This is an example of how trauma and *abject* are juxtaposed. Death is one of the events that confronts the individual with the fragility of her corporeal borders; it unsettles the tenuous borders of the subject. Death is inseparable from life because the corpse is "both human and non-human, waste and filth which are neither entirely inside nor outside the socio-subjective order" (Lechte *Kristeva* 160). Although Gülfidan does not see the dead body of her friend, the house like a "dead museum" shrinks her size to that of an insect and silences her voice. She expresses the unbearable reality of death by the impossibility of referring to it as a signified. The boundaries between animality and symbolicity are shattered; the insect motif is the metaphorical manifestation of the

abject as it unsettles the fragile border between beast and human. Her reaction against death represents the “abject as the excessive residue left untapped by symbolic functioning” (Gross 87); death confronts her with her own corporeality and turns her body into a grotesque animal shape.

Apart from foregrounding the body, Tekin unveils the breach between self and “Other” through Gülfidan’s strong emotional attachment to Mukoşka, who is Gülfidan’s best friend in the organization. In this instance, an implicit criticism against the marriage institution and the organization’s adherence to patriarchy which leaves no space for Gülfidan and Mukoşka to be together is woven in the novel. Mukoşka is the manifestation of her pre-Oedipal narcissistic union with the *abject* mother. Gülfidan makes a pact with her own female identity as she transforms her pre-Oedipal attachment with her mother into a narcissistic union with Mukoşka in her letters:

Mukoşka, oh Mukoşka.. My beautiful sister, my daisy, my curly pigeon. I want to kiss you under your wings, why? Aren’t we ever going to make love with you, tell me?. I know that you are going to say “maybe we will make love” by coloring the white parts of your eyes to pink [...] Please tell me what is left for us to miss in the past? Why do I keep wandering in between ragged pieces of time, among many insanity pictures? (*Night Lessons* 25)

Gülfidan addresses Mukoşka as her sister in the letters. Even if their intimacy has more to do with sisterhood one cannot deny the erotic overtone in the letter. Gülfidan questions why they cannot make love despite mutual consent. She feels lost and isolated in a torn picture and she thinks that the political atmosphere that surrounds them is nothing but insanity. She misses the past but she cannot make sure what she misses there and pleads with Mukoşka to enable her to remember what she left in the past. This letter can be interpreted as a woman’s split identity who has the pre-Oedipal narcissistic desires for her female friend because she ejected her m(other)’s body. Nonetheless, the *abject* mother calls her back as she tries to remember her past, the pre-oedipal stage and only a female friend can help her. Besides, they are women comrades and their mutual intimacy has no place in the patriarchal political organization. Gülfidan is belittled as she is pregnant and Mukoşka is used only to do the house chores although both of the women were adamant advocates of the leftist

ideas, but they are exploited in the party due to their traditional gender roles. The abuse of their male comrades may have brought them together. She feels bitterly resentful after Mukoška's marriage:

Your lips were like a pinch of hot smoky ashes. I don't know why but you were engrossed in the feeling of burning my cheeks. You kissed me and my eyes closed in pain. I stumbled behind all my feelings and I hit my head on the wall [...] My darling! Our mutual platform was pulled down. We can no longer mention lovemaking. As you know the bourgeoisie concocted a fake coup against the marriage institution. (*Night Lessons* 91)

The fact that Mukoška marries and she is not very willing to marry devastates Gülfidan and her articulation of resentment is alluded to in sensual referents like the lips and the cheeks, suggesting the physical intimacy between them. They can no longer mention love making as they used to imagine before because the marriage institution, as a pillar of the *symbolic*, prevents two same sex people from making love. Gülfidan directs all her love and attention to the political organization: "My dear childhood heart! Your sister underwent the training of turning that voice into love making whispers" (*Night Lessons* 93). Gülfidan lets herself be entrapped by the *symbolic*; she thought that she would make a clear cut distinction between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* after she had lost her mother and Mukoška, yet as the novel suggests, her *abjection*, "the childhood voice in whispers" proceeded to cast a shadow on her. She learned how to combine the two voices, and she sublimated the *abject* by letting it speak for itself.

Gülfidan addresses someone who is unknown but can be accepted as her mother or Mukoška because the addressee is a woman. She complains about her predilection for the same sex desire: "All of these are because of your perverse ambitions. We attempted to get the first gods of people jealous by being a double-headed woman and with our four breasts and two crooked legs and we went into a lot of trouble" (*Night Lessons* 94). That two bodies of women are rendered one unified perverse body points at the fact that Gülfidan wanted her love for Mukoška to be praised and the ones who would envy them would be the first Gods who were perverse, as well. The *abject* and the unlikelihood of expelling the maternal body are conspicuous in this part since rather than getting rid of the maternal body, Gülfidan embraces it and doubles her body

organs although such a grotesque body image, as it represents the *abject* and casts fear on people, would result in a lot of trouble.

In another letter to Mukoška, Gülfidan reaffirms her affection for Mukoška and displays her resentment due to Mukoška's inability to deconstruct the patriarchal discourse. As she always does in every letter, she connects the letter with her wish to be with her mother and solidifies the fact that the image of her mother and Mukoška replace each other:

Mukoška, oh Mukoška. My faded high school picture in the dark blue uniform. When are you going to arrive in your red gipsy dress that you used to wear walking on the wooden desks by breaking the safety chains? [...] The layer of time where my mother wanders is so destitute of restoration. How painful! You know how I wish to get her out of there, taking her voices in my lap and sorting them out, writing them down and sticking them. (*Night Lessons* 116,117)

The dark blue uniform and the red gipsy dress signify the *symbolic* and the *semiotic* respectively as the former is worn at high school and refers to the uniform and conventional school rules while the latter symbolizes freedom, flamboyance and vitality. Mukoška enveloped herself in the *symbolic* as she married and left Gülfidan, and she turns her face to her mother as the *abject* again. Her pre-Oedipal connection should be restored and she is supposed to embrace the *abject* mother in order that she can concretize her desires in words. The other letter to Mukoška consolidates the idea that every letter closes the gap between her and her mother:

Dear Mukoška, I am writing this very short letter from the strange angle between me and the world[...] As you see the name of my pain is no longer the hope "to hold and bring her back to me" because your sister turned out to be a half-Goddess girl at the end of this journey. Her father's dynasty spread to the outside of the world whereas her mother's dynasty expanded inside time. (*Night Lessons* 149)

Gülfidan comes to the understanding that if she cannot draw her mother or Mukoška closer to her, she can go back to her mother by carrying herself into the *semiotic* realm where her mother is located. On the surface Gülfidan's loss of her mother and her faith in the political movement seem to be a kind of mourning for what she has lost in life. Her mother betrayed and left her because of falling in love and her party let her down

by its insistence on abortion. Besides, her attempts to get into a genuine contact with the working class women was to no avail since she could not get her messages across to them due to her inability to speak their language. What is more, her only real friend Mukoška got married and is distanced from politics. Gülfidan mourns after her as the following quotation shows:

Mukoška, the day when you married in that décolleté wedding dress, the moss-rose purlane on your forehead and the ragged shadow in your eyes drove me mad [...] My heart is in flames, but farewell... Oh Mukoška, she/he is dead. They kept her/his death as a secret from me for six months and you married. Trees, the sky and the land changed their colors so swiftly that, I was baffled, dear. (*Night Lessons* 91)

The memories of a dead person who can be considered as her mother are always intermingled with Mukoška in the novel and her letters to Mukoška are not only addressed to her but also to her mother because Gülfidan's inner voice is not fixed solely on one person. Her stream of consciousness lurches backwards and forwards in time and alters its focus. In many parts, the reader cannot make sure who she is referring to. Thus, it is not farfetched to claim that her mother and Mukoška's images blend into each other because both of them symbolize a lack for her; a lost object she cannot name. As it is so hard to immobilize her mother's image in her mind, she alters her appearance sometimes as a giantess, sometimes the sounds of the horseshoes are coiled in her image and sometimes the letters to Mukoška speak to her all of a sudden. The dead person she mentions might be her mother or a friend of her. It is not certain who the dead person is. Yet, there is a person she lost and mourns after. The mother or the dead person is just a metaphor that stands for the lost object and as the novel is basically related to her mother and her death, so the person whose death was kept as a secret might be interpreted as her mother.

The *abject* space sublimated and poeticized between self (Gülfidan) and the maternal other (her mother) has two functions in the novel. Firstly, on individual base, by adopting the "stranger" in herself, Gülfidan is able to heal herself because her speech harmonizes her body and her words. Such a harmony enables her to overcome self-estrangement, which could have been a possible consequence of being disdained by the organization. She recognizes that she is actually estranged from her own selfhood

by assuming another means of survival. The novel demonstrates that the otherness does not necessarily stem from the *abjection* of the others but it is generated from the *abject* m(other) expelled from the self. On the other hand, Tekin's exploration of Gülfidan's sublimation of her mother by writing shows that the subject's position is not static and the *abject* is a stimulus in the construction of the self rather than the feared alterity. On a larger scope, the novel demonstrates that the organization is under the sway of hegemony and encumbered by the Symbolic Law just as Gülfidan's family and this information is given between the lines.

4.3. The Sublimation of the *Abject* Mother Through the *Semiotic* Writing

The *semiotic* elements of signification in *Night Lessons* are subversive and they manifest the linguistic aspect of the sublimated mother in writing. Gülfidan narrows down the difference between herself and the *abject* mother, "retracing the fragile limits of the speaking being [...], [and] through that experience, which is nevertheless managed by the Other, 'subject' and 'object' push each other away, confront each other, collapse and start again-inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable" (Kristeva Powers 18). The sublimation of *abjection* by writing can shed light on the political and structural acts of inclusion and exclusion. It generates the boundaries between the individual and the social body, so it is a force that disrupts social order and has a transformative and subversive potential because it challenges the binaries between the inside/outside, self/other and private/public. Tekin's literary self-consciousness as to the inefficiency of the conventional language in terms of reflecting a realistic picture of the traumatic effects of the coup is explicit in the novel. Sibel Irzik states that *Night Lessons* "tampers with language in a modern style by shattering the mimesis notion; it goes beyond the pure representation on an aesthetic level which only exists in language and which is only possible in language" (26). Her argument is noteworthy because as she underlines, the aesthetic dealings of Tekin are enacted in language, which is the only available means of writing. This argument can also be broadened by focusing on how she pushes the limits of *symbolic* language to express the inexpressible, putting the unknown into discourse. In

connection with this, Kristevan *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language can help understand how the borders of language are shattered. Tekin puts forward that

to be able to write, one has to detach herself from the language of her house. I do not believe that the writers who cannot observe language from the outside can write [...] I think a rupture is necessary to be able to write [...] There is a fragmented style in *Night Lessons* but the voice unifies those fragmented pieces. It is far-fetched to claim that this novel was written by a fractured technique but it has a style made of fragments, murmurs and disjointed thoughts. (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 38, 88, 100)

The rupture Tekin mentions as the springboard for writing is highly associated with the chasm between the signifier and the signified. Observing language from the outside can be interpreted as being aware of the constructed and hierarchical nature of language and the firm structure of the *symbolic* base. What she mentions means “fragments, murmurs and disjointed thoughts” (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 100) can be analyzed as uttering what cannot be written by the intelligible boundaries of the *symbolic* language. They stand for the *semiotic* and material base of signification which “precede[s] the distinction between ‘subject’ and ‘object’” (Kristeva *Revolution* 34). As the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* bases of signification are inseparable from each other, Irzik is right to claim that Tekin creates a unique style which “is only possible in language” (26). In other words, *Night Lessons* does not attempt to annihilate language and generate another means of writing. Since the *symbolic* and the *semiotic* are always interdependent, it can be claimed that Tekin manages to energize the *semiotic* as the “extra-verbal way in which bodily energy and affects make their way into language” (McAfee 17). The *semiotic* is manifested through the subversion of the *symbolic* and it is generated from the pre-Oedipal realm where the subject and the object (maternal other) are unified.

If we turn back to the main argument of this section, the *semiotic* rush on the *symbolic* signification in this novel erases the distinction between the self/other, subject/ object, and body/ mind, leading the novel to adopt a different style to the question of otherness. Body is expressed as an openness towards the maternal other and Gülfidan “confronts her past self- the ‘defeminized’ or ‘unsexed’ self in her search through her memories and she witnesses the distance between her oppressed female identity and given

political identity” (Bayraktar 120). Furthermore, as the chasm between mind and body is erased, the chasm between the signifier and the signified becomes larger because the *semiotic* pulverizes the *symbolic*. The rigorous control of the political organization over language is counterattacked by the uncontrollable urges of the desire to be unified with the maternal other. Therefore, the whole novel turns out to be the articulation of yearning to reach the realm of the *semiotic chora*, “a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their states in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated” (Kristeva *Revolution* 25). The text becomes the other which stands for the desire to be mingled with the maternal other; the other is always out of reach and its unreachability challenges the certitude of language and any form of authority. The text inclines towards an elusive style and it tampers with language considerably as it tries to come closer to the maternal other. Signs are removed from their referents, making it visible that the natural, accepted and conventional representations of reality are already shaped by the hierarchical nature of language. As Bayraktar underlines, “rather than merely as the signifier of the trauma, the body is depicted as transformable and provisional, which paves the way for Gülfidan's search for a distinct female identity through breaking the patterns of the strictly determined political identity” (119). When the body bursts out of the ascribed identities, the authority of the political organization is undermined and she liberates herself from the dialectic of language and reality. Therefore, the whole writing process gestures towards self-reflexivity and the self-conscious interrogation of being an outsider; therefore, its political engagement is created by different means.

The textual and linguistic properties of the novel display how the *abject* mother is poeticized in language. Tekin remaps and transgresses the limits of *symbolic* language and interrogates the relationship between Gülfidan and her mother using the tropes of bodily exploration. The novel amalgamates the corporeal and incorporeal particularly when Gülfidan expresses her psychic anguish in terms of physical pain. Such bodily writing disconcerts the phallocentric order and departs from the paternal discourse. Bringing the body back into language is in tune with Tekin's reckoning with language. During our interview in Gümüşlük, she stated:

I have always thought that male writers do not need to worry about tampering with language. It is natural that every writer strives for constructing a personal style and narrative expression. Every writer should have a distinctive personal style. Yet, language has always presented itself as a barrier to me. I would not be able to use language as it is because language, words and meaning have been constructed differently; language is not feminine. What I always pinpoint is that women learn language from men and they speak it by translating this language. If they do not translate it, they cannot communicate with men. Language is a barrier and a serious material for women writers. Without crashing it and creating their own words as a result of this crash, they cannot write. (Tekin)

Accordingly, in *Night Lessons* Tekin creates a new language style which exceeds the barriers of the patriarchal language. She enacts a new discourse in which the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language connect with each other, thereby the hierarchy between the signifier and signified is broken. Such a semiotized language enables Gülfidan to reach out to otherness and write from an intermediary position between self and (m)other. In the following parts, I will be explaining how the *abject* mother is transfigured and sublimated in writing by inscription of the *semiotic* elements of signification. Foregrounding the body in writing, metaphors, folkloric language, fragmentation of time and space, shifting subject positions and multiple narrators are all implications of the *semiotic* base of language. However, these elements should not be considered as purely *semiotic* because the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* are always in interaction. Gülfidan creates her own discourse in the hegemony of the symbolic language of the political movement. Her “ceaseless defense against nondifferentiation” (Keltner *Thresholds* 46) and sublimation of her dead mother’s image enable her to transcend her subordinate place in the patriarchy.

Firstly, the novel is laden with a lot of metaphors. These metaphors, as the representations of the *semiotic* base of language, are mostly related to Gülfidan’s mother and death. Gülfidan’s writing style is effusive and metaphorical. The metaphorical expressions breach and destabilize the gap between the signifier and the signified, allowing the language of the novel to challenge the orderliness of the *symbolic* aspect of signification. The *semiotic* metaphors are predominantly related to Gülfidan’s fear of being engulfed by her mother’s image. Paradoxically, she makes a pact with the images of her mother and death as “a phobic who succeeds in

metaphorizing in order to keep from being frightened to death; instead he[*she*] comes to life in signs” (Kristeva *Powers* 38). As Parla offers

The metamorphic language that Latife Tekin created in *Night Lessons* arises from the need and desire to juxtapose body and psyche again as it is observable in her other novels, as well and this language nurtures itself from this desire. The more the emotions are somatized, the closer the body and the psyche will be and as a result of this closeness, the individual will be able to become independent of all hegemonic systems and discourses. (*Türk Romanında Yazar ve Başkalaşım* 221)

The mirror, veil and diamond metaphors are repeated in the novel many times as evoking images of her mother. Gülfidan remembers her mother as her “mirror” adding that they were physically identical: “She was my splay feet, my two hands with slender fingers like sparrow nails” (*Night Lessons* 23). Likewise, the black veil is a ubiquitous metaphor in the novel and it symbolizes the breach between the mother and the daughter. Death and horror are the analogies the black veil evokes. She imagines her mother getting off one of the cars in the funeral:

...by unveiling her black veil [*she said*]: “I know what you did very well, bitch, I followed you” *she said*. Although I knew that there was no reason to be scared of according to the trade unionists, I was intensely scared [...] My body was crushed under the pressure of my soul through uttering a disjointed voice. My mother’s black veil fell on my eyes. I thought that it was unlikely for my body and soul to come side by side again. (*Night Lessons* 48)

Despite her effort to seem strong among her militant friends, the image of her mother with the black veil casts horror on her; her dead mother is the *abject* and instills horror; she is horrified of being devoured by the *abject* mother image that “simultaneously beseeches and pulverizes the subject” (Kristeva *Powers* 5). To get rid of this horror, she picks up her courage realizing that “I [*she*] no longer needed the veil [...] I[*she*] exposed the veil to the sun and burned it. But you know what happened? Under the smoke and burnt veil pieces, this diamond piece appeared” (*Night Lessons* 56). The veil, as the symbolization of her archaic relationship with the maternal other, never disappears and the diamond appears under the veil as a transmuted form of the *abject* mother. She also admits that she substituted the General Secretary as a mother figure but the model she created in her image is broken and fragmented like the image of her

mother. She cannot provide her with the sense of a unified identity. There is a gap “between the child’s perfect unified image and its imperfect fragmented body” (Oliver Kristeva 70) which evokes the mirror stage of the child:

Later, I found myself without the black tulle veil on the basement floor of that huge site with the makeshift mother model I made with my unskillful hands. Behind the vanished shadow of my mother, I found our dear General Secretary’s cankered face whose secrets have been sporadically disclosed and her broken body and scattered body in front of me. (*Night Lessons* 150)

Among the women to whom Gülfidan devotes herself in the political movement to ameliorate their situation, she initially feels that she does not need an emotional bond with her mother anymore and she gets rid of the veil symbolizing her mother’s protection. The analogy between the mirror and her mother suggests that she used to identify herself with her mother. The metaphoric mirror evokes Lacan’s mirror stage in which the child “establishes the watershed between the imaginary and the symbolic” (*Écrits* 57). Gülfidan’s imago was her mother as she metaphorically hanged her on the wall as the mirror. Yet, this identification did not suffice to evolve into a stable ego because the *symbolic* is rigid enough to push the boundaries of such a reciprocity. The veil that Gülfidan burns to tear herself off her mother can be considered as *objet-petit-a* that unleashes the desire of the individual for the m(other). This is the lost object that the subject desires and the desire has some relation with separation. It is the residue of the separation. A glance, breast or a song can be the *objet-petit-a*. The object of human desire is always the desire of the Other. Gülfidan, likewise, has an insatiable desire to be the desire of her mother but the only way she can manage to find a stand-in for her desire is writing. In *Desire in Language*, Kristeva underlines the importance of literature as a tool to unveil the desires; writing “would be the recording, facilitation, discharge that operates-constitutes the signifier but also exceeds it, adds itself to the linear order of language by using the most fundamental laws of the signifying process” (102). If Gülfidan’s wish to be her mother’s desire is handled in a signifier-signified system, and if the desire is the signifier, the signified is a sort of displacement. As her mother is separated from her, after her death, this separation is certainly cemented and the signified cannot be fixed to a certain meaning. The discharge of the desire

manifests itself in the form of repetition and displacement in Gülfidan's life, because the veil metaphor turns into a diamond in her life. No matter how strongly she embarks on detaching herself from her mother, and no matter how she tries to erase her traces in her life, she turns back within another symbolization or displacement.

During her activist days, Gülfidan blends in with the crowd of women so that she can compensate of the lack she feels after she is separated from her mother, yet the diamond underneath the veil persistently exists. That Tekin uses the diamond as a metaphor carries positive connotations because as she states:

To be able to write, a rupture from childhood language is required. Innocent people do not sit and write novels. A rupture is necessary but I feel like I am stuck both inside and outside of people I talk about [...] The writer is the person excluded from something, somebody who wishes to turn back to her home. Home is not right beside her mother, she talks to a dead mother; a child, pure, not raided, missing its unbroken form and a remembering child. (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 114)

The veil and diamond metaphors stand for the unbroken language that Tekin uses and a parallelism can be drawn between the repetition of these metaphors and Kristeva's understanding of writing. Writing is displacement for Gülfidan, by displacing her desire firstly in political movement and then writing, she writes both inside and outside of the *symbolic*. Writing is particularly an inversion for her; she writes within the symbolic- linguistic order but she espouses a "sur-meaning" (Kristeva *Desire* 102). This is a contrapuntal style and panoply of displacements, inversions, love and hatred:

I said: Why do you suppose that I have been looking for my hatred stone, Matmazel? I was not planning to squeeze it into my own eyes and go blind and crippled, most probably. Of course I am going to harass you with my cuty diamond. Law regulations! Chilling and dreadful handbooks! The pitch dark, sooty and thin matters of shiny, white marbles are not written by the inner voices of children coming from reverse. (*Night Lessons* 60)

Writing by the mother's voice is incarnated in the diamond metaphor and denotes the *semiotic* while the law books of the political organization stand for the patriarchal language and the *symbolic* base of the political organization. This *symbolic* language does not suffice to reveal the desires of a woman who inverts the language. Given that the diamond symbolizes the mother, it is not surprising that Gülfidan calls it the hatred

stone. She is cognizant that she hates her mother as she was betrayed by her. Yet, she confesses that she is not going to use the diamond to make herself blind. If she hates her mother as culture demands her to do, she knows that she will be “blind” and “crippled”. That is, she will be dysfunctional. Rather than inflicting such a pain on herself, she decides to use that diamond for better aims. She is going to disturb the ears of her friends in the Leftist movement as she will use another language different from theirs. She is a child who comes from the “reverse” direction as her path is not directed towards the *symbolic*. In contrast, she begs turning back to her mother, to the *semiotic chora* where she and her mother were united before language and culture separated them. The laws cannot be written with the language of “the children coming from reverse” direction, but the *symbolic* can be punctuated by the *semiotic* as observed in the quote above and the rupture which is closed between the daughter and the mother becomes the principle context.

In a letter to Mukoška, Gülfidan explains to her that the biggest hindrance in her life is her mother yet she regenerates herself as she is in love and found a new object to project her desire to. The following inner voice refutes her relief and she is again engrossed in the inevitability of her mother’s shadow in her life. The black veil appears again as a metaphor as Gülfidan admits that it is an inseparable part of her mind:

I read my very old childhood dream that rejuvenates itself in void and I found my place. –Voidness. The most terrifying part of this journey is that I believed I could save myself by generating myself. “I can hold her and bring her by me” This is the name of my pain [...] I went deep down or I ascended. I know I overturned many things. Insomnia started, I am waiting on alert, there is a curtain and I know that I can find my real treasure when this curtain is torn apart. All patterns into which my language pours, the maps of feelings and ideas. Believe me there is scarcely no time left to get out of the hell on the earth and go to heaven. The biggest obstacle was my mother but I overcame it. Yet, what a vulgar trap it was that my shameless body called for love...in alliance with my soul. Using my mother against me [...] That black veil, in other words, the black *tülgrek*, was the impaired part of my brain, Mukoška. I am glad to have noticed. You are right. What I did was an unbelievable slyness. (Tekin 116,117)

The black curtain metaphor sounds like the membrane of the placenta and it may be interpreted as returning to the uterus, the mother’s womb. When this curtain is torn down, the narrator will be able to untangle her real feelings because she will have

found the pattern of language she needs. For a while, she is engrossed in the power of love and she supposes that love for the other sex will enable her to assume this new language. Nevertheless, as she admits, it was a trap as she can never expel the black veil of her mother. The feeling of emptiness, the void, Gülfidan expresses marks a clear break with her temporal and illusory dominance over language. She is relieved to cast her mother aside and construct a new language for herself but this new language is alien to her. Her confession above is a veritable exemplification of the emptiness of the signifier without the *semiotic* punctuation. The nexus of this quote with Kristeva is clearly seen in *Powers of Horror* where she puts forward that *semiotic* language “is a frantic attempt made by a subject threatened with sinking into the void [...] with infantile semiotization-for which pre-signifying articulations are merely equations rather than the symbolic equivalents for objects” (51). The quandary over choosing a peculiar language is only resolved by the combination of them; the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* have a dialectic effect on narration in this novel. The pre-signifying articulations belong to the realm Gülfidan names as the curtain, which stems from the mother of the body.

The other way that the *semiotic* base of language ruptures the *symbolic* in the novel is the use of folkloric and epic stories along with religious imagery. As Parla points out, these stories can be read as Gülfidan’s connection with her mother: “Gülfidan owes her language to her mother and she is determined to preserve this language” (*Don Kişot’tan Bugüne Roman* 354). When Gülfidan decides to leave her family and partake in the political movement, she expresses her anguish by fantastic stories. Among the legislations and handbooks of the organization, whose language seems very unusual for her, she finds solace “in her mother’s fabulous, fantastic voice” (Parla *Don Kişot’tan Bugüne Roman* 354). She welcomes the pre-*symbolic* realm in her dreams. Unable to accommodate herself in the political movement, in her dream, “she starts to run to the mid-afternoons of September when my [her] mother used to collect fruit sprouts from our [their] garden” (*Night Lessons* 14). She sees a cocooned giant woman (*börümcekli devler karısı*) “to whose breasts she leans her mouth and she climbs up to her lips in the sky after her mouth is soaked by her milk” (*Night Lessons* 14). Although

she does not clearly state that this giant woman is her mother, it can be thought that a female figure, either her mother or a giant female in a folkloric story, is nurturing her. After she realizes that “she would fall down and be broken apart, scattered and lost when she swung on the branches of the oleaster tree gushing from the cloud roots” (*Night Lessons* 14), she decides to register in the political movement. The giant woman on whose body Gülfidan reaches the clouds feeds her with its milk. She is afraid of falling off her body.

The cocooned giant woman figure can be aligned with a beastly grotesque figure of a female figure who looks like a spider. She can be interpreted as a devouring mother figure as the *abject*. Gülfidan refers to metaphors and “perverts” language (*Powers* 16). She delineates the *abject* devouring mother figure as a spider who is to engulf her body. It is both nurturing and fearful and the poetic voice of Gülfidan tries to jettison this body that envelopes and suffocates her in order to open up a space where she can jettison the spider’s body through signification. The cocooned giant spider threatens the borders of her body and she strives against the obliteration of this corporeal limit by *semiotic* signification embellished with metaphors. Her dreams are the reflection of her repressed desires; a motherly figure is repressed in the shape of an animal that nurtures her. The insertion of the dream is somehow related to her mother in the narration, which ends up with her decision to “be registered in the organization book” (*Night Lessons* 14), which can be interpreted as the *symbolic*. It reveals that Tekin manages to align the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*, in other words, dream and reality. Her recollections of her mother’s image are always furnished with the imaginary stories. She places her mother in the realm of imagination. She stands out as a fairy tale character who “used to live in imaginary places from the snow wells to bottomless cliffs” (*Night Lessons* 75). She also associates her father with a magician or a malevolent character in the stories:

I do not know how my father dragged her to the world we know by punishing her with a talismanic needle. I always remained as a little creature belonging to reality. I was scared of her hair whose length my eyes cannot fathom and which was scattered to the universes and her skirts which held the winds of the magicians so tightly that I cried out. (*Night Lessons* 75)

An unnamed narrator, likewise accused Gülfidan (the lines might be her inner voice) of being preoccupied with the supernatural creatures and imaginary stories. The narrator even hints that she was so much immersed in the surreal that she slept with the djinnis:

Your consoling yourself with the dead shadow of your mother, falling asleep in the arms of the djinnis towards morning [...] I wish you could have protected your body against the painful games you played at nights and the wild passion of your body which wanted victory. But you were possessed by the dream of acquiring a piece of life that belongs to you and started consorting with its dark fairies whose eyes swam in foams. (*Night Lessons* 90)

The djinnis and the animal figures in her dreams manifest the revolutionary power of *semiotic* configuration in the *symbolic*. These are the manifestations of the *abject* images that connect her with her mother. Even though she thinks that she detached herself from her mother and stepped in the *symbolic*, her *semiotic* bond with her mother is never broken; therefore, the absence of her mother is filled with words. The phobia of the devouring mother image “does not disappear but slides beneath language [...] the one who tries to utter this ‘not yet a place’, this no-grounds, can obviously do so backwards, starting from an over-mastery of the linguistic and rhetorical code” (*Powers* 38). The djinnis are a part of her life; they are the realities of the people who live in the villages. Therefore, Tekin challenges the notion of reality by including the supernatural elements in her writing because reality is shaped in accordance with the life style of an individual.

Along with the *symbolic* realm, Gülfidan questions power figures who are generally comprised of men. She likens the *symbolic* to the prison of Div-e Sefid²¹, who is the chieftain of demons and who exerts great physical strength and is skilled in sorcery: “How can I save Gülfidan from the prison of Dev Sefid and run away from this tale time that surrounds my soul like a serpent? [...] Dev Sefid is a male like King Kong, isn’t he? I moved forward like a small wiggling shadow in a huge watercolor painting”

²¹ Div-e Sepid is the chieftain of the demons of Mazandaran in the Persian epic of *Shahnameh*.

(*Night Lessons* 27). Gülfidan is at war with the patriarchal discourse and she notices that many famous literary and movie characters are male. They are always depicted as strong and big figures with devilish powers. Dev Sefid figure which she heard from her mother in her childhood days is analogous to the police force and state violence imprisoning her. So she associates the *symbolic* power figures with the folkloric stories, letting the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* cross fertilize each other. She expresses her fear of being caught by the police “in a big watercolor painting” (*Night Lessons* 27). Keeping in mind that the police belong to the *symbolic* as the representation of state power, her fight is both against the power structures of the state and the language of the state that shrinks Gülfidan’s and women’s existence as in a big watercolor painting. Nevertheless, writing against the grain is an attempt to change the traditional discourse where Dev Sefids and King Kongs reign.

There are also some religious references in the novel which are on the threshold between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. The most obvious one is that Gülfidan likens herself to the younger son of Caliph Ali when she realizes that the people living in the shanty houses prefer to be silent in the face of poverty. Although she devotes her life to them and anticipates the same emotional attachment from these people, she is never welcomed as a member of their class. Additionally, she could never attach herself to the group consciousness that the political organization purported to have and therefore she was ostracized by them, as well. The reason why she makes an analogy between herself and the younger son of Caliph Ali (*Night Lessons* 147) might generate from the historical fact that Husayn Ibn Ali was killed in Karbala by Yazid’s army although he was assured by the people in Kufa that they were going to support him. This analogy can be elucidated by Tekin’s own explanation on her disappointment with the silence and indifference of the working class people besides the ostracizing attitude of her militant friends:

If there is one more reason why I wrote *Night Lessons* after *Dear Shameless Death* and *Berji Kristin Garbage Tales*, it is because I got the impression that there is no passage between the poor and other people. I felt the class division property of language and culture so vehemently that I decided that there could be no common language between two disconnected worlds. If there were a mutuality, they would already understand what I meant. Then I told myself that the language I constructed is

estranged from them and what I write conveys no meaning to them. (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 108)

The silence of the poor is one of the preoccupations of Tekin and many of her novels serve as an answer to the reason why they were silenced. Gülfidan is both poor and a woman, so she is doubly silenced; therefore, she carves the patriarchal and *symbolic* language not via her whispers but mostly by her cries in this novel. She makes an association between herself and a silent worker: “They [The party members] are scared of me taking dancing lessons from a mute worker; they are scared of me being a malicious mirror to them” (*Night Lessons* 66). The political movement is supposed to give women and workers freedom of speech because otherwise it runs counter to their ideologies. However, both Gülfidan and the workers are silenced as the organization imposes its own language on its participants and the people for whose sake they speak. She tells the reader that her mother does not know “love has rotten by being thrown hither and thither, her language turned green like over trod moss, her language lisped. Vibrant and nonsensical. She does not know a rubber pipe was installed in their throats and their voice sounds terribly whizzy” (*Night Lessons* 70). The rubber pipe is related to working in the factory and the workers cannot speak but make whizzy voices because the sound of the factory equipment renders them mute. Gülfidan’s language is still vibrant but nonsense as she fails to articulate her thoughts within the *symbolic* system; her self-constructed language is not meaningful for the common people but this is their fault because the mainstream language is devoid of love. Therefore, she likens herself to Caliph Ali, who was left alone by his own people.

The mythological references also draw attention in the novel and they straddle between the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language. She encounters a militant woman who was “in chequered skirt, with flat-heeled shoes, whose eyebrows have never been plucked and whose hair was short like the hair of a man” (*Night Lessons* 22). When the woman approaches her, she is appalled by Gülfidan and calls her “Iya whose boots were demoniac” (*Night Lessons* 22). She cries out “Nostalgia, Nostalgia” to soothe her (*Night Lessons* 22). In Lakota mythology, Iya is a storm monster who eats humans and animals. When he appears, he is often faceless and formless. This

mythological reference suggests that Gülfidan is regarded as an *abject* figure who instills horror in people with her uncanny appearance; she is in a liminal space and her existence straddles the line between the real and the fantastic; she is to be feared as “the ambiguous, the in-between, what defies boundaries, a composite resistant to unity” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 160). Her attempt to soothe the woman by paromasis (Iya/ Nostalgia) hints that language as registered by the *symbolic* has limits so the only recourse left to her is to “musicate” language (*Revolution* 233) sonorously. She uses transverbal *semiotic* elements to get herself identified by her friend. Tekin’s drawing on mythology and evocation of a pagan world, which resist the *symbolic*, is a feature which could be considered as the resurgence of the *semiotic* in the novel. The connection between objective reality and fictional artifice is very tiny; the mythical overtone, fairy tales and religious allusions create a rupture in the traditional discourse. They project the threshold between the individual psyche and the social realm because as seen in the example above, she articulates the semiotically charged language in real situations. The *semiotic* realm is not confined to the dreams or hallucinations but they are verbalized in the situations when the *symbolic* base does not suffice to utter the reality.

The other way that the novel is semioticized and goes beyond the borders of a realistic text is its fragmentation of time and space. The fragmentation of time and space is congruent with Gülfidan’s fragmented psyche and body. The distortion of linearity and ambiguous references to space are the artistic powers of the novel “probing the limits of language and representation and subverting the idea of a unified, coherent, and internally consistent self” (Bayraktar 112). There is no exact reference to the real time and place of the events in the novel. Although it is known that the novel pertains to the political atmosphere in the 1980s of Turkey and it revolves around the 12th of September 1980 military coup, the time and place are not given in a documentary fashion. Tekin reconstructs the historical realities by interrogating the already constructed nature of history and reality. She deliberately disrupts the notions of history, but the text’s relationship with the historical subtext is still obvious and active. So, the political time of history is reified by the reflexive mode of one character.

Similar to Coetzee, Tekin's interest lies in the position of the outsider who is engaged with the problem of constituting a response to her *abjection*. Despite the lack of historical references, *Night Lessons* engages with history and reality by inclining toward imagination and semiotization of language rather than presenting the facts as supplementary material. In other words, the density of the individual phrases and the inclination towards an elusive and fragmented style are alternative explorations of realism. The narrative is disrupted by frequent new beginnings and the time does not follow a unified and regular pattern. The blank spaces between the lines, constant shift of events, the multitude of narrators ranging from Gülfidan, her mother, her husband, anonymous narrators and her militant friends create a defamiliarizing effect. The shifts of time and place force the reader to reflect on the epistemological dimension of reality and language. Nurdan Gürbilek in *Ev Ödevi* explains that the fragmented language, time and place properties that are prevalent in *Night Lessons* demonstrate Tekin's orientation towards a new writing style different from her previous novels (57). The fragmentation of the narrator is in tune with the fragmentation of language which is marked by a new approach to the traditional syntactic structures and conventional expressions.

Gülfidan expresses her qualm about her digression from the *symbolic*: "If you had not insistently looked at those wet soils, you would not have encountered that void that you claim to be reading with the voice of your home which is beyond you and time" (*Night Lessons* 138). The voice of [her] home challenges the linear time and static place, echoing Kristevan *semiotic* realm. Her confession that she "flew with the dead shadow of my[her] mother wing to wing and met with the broken piece of a wild dream" (*Night Lessons* 141) problematizes time and reality as a continuum. The "wild" dreamy world of her mother stands for the absent signifier she is in pursuit of; she disregards the label and identity in the *symbolic* base, stating that "You[she] could not fit into Secretary Rüzgar mold and your[her] soul started to be ruptured" (*Night Lessons* 138). She also believes that the working class people who live in shanty houses dwell in the same spatial-temporal space with her; she names their mutual time as an "internal time" which is furnished with "the fragmented stories I[she] learned

from my[her] grandmother” (*Night Lessons* 145) and this “internal time” had a “distinct rhythm and it was not different from the lullabies I [she] used to listen to” (*Night Lessons* 146).

As for the places, the same elusiveness is explicit. She describes herself walking “in the twine-like thin and crooked streets of night houses” (*Night Lessons* 8), coming from a house “where the women were lonely” (*Night Lessons* 13). The *semiotic* realm where the image of her mother dwells is the “little night room” which “was really but really dangerous; it is the place where “I[she] had my[her] brain got used to perceiving what I[she] saw with my[her] eyes and what I[she] touched with my[her] hands” (*Night Lessons* 120). Her archaic connection with her mother and her proximity to the maternal other cannot be expressed via rationality or visibility. Parla argues that *Night Lessons* is “not a novel of recuperation; it is better to call it the diary of fragmentation. If the word recuperation connotes diagnosis and treatment, question and answer, right and wrong, history and lesson, *Night Lessons* is determined not to represent them. It is a poem which pays the cost of this determination by the broken pictures painted by words” (*Don Kişot’tan Bugüne Roman* 356).

Another unconventional writing style that shatters the unity of the self is observed on the visual gaps between paragraphs and pages. When Gülfidan cannot utter an event in the established framework of language and when her mind cannot assimilate pain, she leaves some gaps between the paragraphs and the pages. The visual gaps are in tune with her immobilized body vis-à-vis pain. While some pages are almost blank and there are only one or two sentences on them, some are totally empty. Gürbilek states that “the novel differs from Tekin’s first two novels due to its visuality; it is more broken and the words started to utter meanings beyond the flux of the sentence [...] and emerge as signs on their owns” (46). The moments when the narrator makes a certain decision that will affect her life drastically or she needs to render her criticism or disappointment with the organization more clearly are mostly narrated in one paragraph very briefly. On another page made up of only one paragraph, Tekin reflects how the body is immobilized in pain and how her speech is silenced like that of a worker:

I decided to flutter in order to tell what I have understood when I absorbed in watching our secret solemn love with scientific look and whose one ear is offended with the other secretly by moving myself up to our class based convention. I could only manage to draw some strange shapes by fumbling in the void I was tumbling about by my hands. The movement of my body in pain, the crumbs of words pouring down in between my teeth and the sweat flowing over my face through my hair brought a dummy worker to my mind. (*Night Lessons* 62)

The body is silenced, crumbled and agonized. Secretary Rüzgar expresses her inability to speak as she is not class conscious and what the organization is telling the workers sounds like scientific information. She likens herself to the class of workers she is supposed to educate yet she is unable to tell them what she understands. Language does not function as it is not a medium for Secretary Rüzgar to convey any idea. All she can do is just to draw some shapes in the void with her hands. She cannot move her body; the impossibility to utter a meaningful word renders her body immobilized. The whole paragraph is the explosion of the *semiotic* in the *symbolic*. There is a *symbolic* base on which words can be uttered but the words the narrator arranges one after another are meaningful only when the difficulty of expressing them in a *symbolic* structure is realized. The body is brought back so as to enable the narrator to articulate what she thinks of. Her psyche is verbalized through the drive based words stemming from the body. That Tekin leaves the rest of the page empty is consonant with the impossibility of writing the rest of the paragraph.

Night Lessons is a decentered and fragmented text due to its non-linear narrative, multiple converging sub plots, repetition of events and the conflation of tenses between past and present. One of the most distinctive stylistic properties of the novel is its shifting positions and multiple narrators, including Gülfidan, Secretary Rüzgar, the ascribed political identity of Gülfidan, her mother, husband and military friends. The voice of the narrator belongs to the same person at different times of her life. The voices of Gülfidan and Secretary Rüzgar are intermingled and the reader is almost never certain who is speaking. Apart from Gülfidan and Secretary Rüzgar, sometimes an anonymous voice speaks to another anonymous person. For instance, a third person tells the reader that “While my sighs make love in the flames tonight, oh what if you die because of these unnecessary pains? If I have a daughter, I will name her Secretary

Rüzgar” (*Night Lessons* 93). Apparently, the owner of this voice is not certain because if we consider it Gülfidan’s mother, one wonders how she decides to call her Secretary Rüzgar because she has nothing to do with the political organization. The owner of this voice might be the political organization and in this respect Tekin must have given a paternal/maternal role to it because it names its daughter. Thus, it is quite impossible to decide who the voice belongs to. Likewise, Gülfidan’s mother talks directly to the “feeling of bastardy” (*Night Lessons* 99) although the addressee is not even a person. Another voice addresses “Dear Spirits!” (*Night Lessons* 113). In the last part of the novel, the narrators are mixed again and this time Tekin talks to the writer of the novel as if it was a different person:

I waited for autumn patiently because the last pages related to the writer’s Secretary Rüzgar days required a heavy rain. I wanted her to write my withering memories and breathtaking confessions as she keeps on mentioning deep blue mirrors shining in the ragged lights of the sun and the might of courage. I was so sure that she would not turn me down. I decided to pursue her one morning five years ago although I knew that she was well protected and it was impossible to reach her. (Tekin 187)

Tekin defines Secretary Rüzgar as the writer of the novel instead of the narrator. Her argument that the writer must know how to objectify herself is very clear at this point. She objectifies herself and talks to Secretary Rüzgar in the last chapter by “creating borders of an always tenuous ‘I’” as Mc Afee states. (45). Tekin scrutinizes herself as a writer on trial. She renders herself as a writer always in-process. She threatens the boundaries of the self as a writer intentionally and she is cognizant that it is impossible to reach the narrator/writer as an entity which is always there. Therefore, she disrupts the reachability of the writer and the *symbolic* realm of language. Gürbilek likens the broken voice of the first person narration to a child’s invitation to the language and her disappointment of not being able to reign over the world by the words. Her desire to dominate the world via words is counter attacked by language and the child realizes the limits of her power; “she will be recalcitrant with the outside world as much as herself, and she will have a temper tantrum during this process when she insists on being ‘I’” (Gürbilek *Ev Ödevi* 48). She adds that Gülfidan’s story is a passage from “the pre-subject stage to subject stage; it is her transformation from her mother’s voice to the voice of forty women” (48). In this inner journey, she learns to regard herself

from the outside, that is, she transforms her own being to an eye from the outside and watches herself from the outside.

Some paragraphs are written in a form of conversation and they start as “She/he said...I said...” The structure of such conversations reminds one of old folkloric stories like Dede Korkut and provides some musicality for the novel. Some sentences are written by a very large space between them in quotations. These sentences sound like monologues because there is no addressee:

“You just live to watch the strife from a safe place, do you?”
“Oh! And this results in some slyness, darling, inevitably.”
“The traces of heart tearing childhood lived in poverty”
“I admire your understanding”. (Night Lessons 95)

It is very evident that the narrator avoids danger and ensures a safe place for herself without joining the real activities, presumably the riots in the streets. Yet, her guilty conscience keeps reminding her that by giving the real danger a wide berth, she becomes sly. Then, coming from poverty inflicts pain on her and the last sentence sounds like a sarcastic complaint about a person who does not understand the real problem. All these assumptions are individual and every reader can interpret them differently because the text leaves such a gap for the reader. The important thing is that these sentences follow each other like sobbing, hiccups or in every sentence the narrator seems to take a breath for a while and pauses. The inner voice of the narrator sometimes accuses herself and sometimes gets resented by another person. The sentences gush out of the narrator in resentment. There is a natural affinity with glottal sounds and these sounds demonstrate that the novel reverberates to a *semiotic* beat.

Toward the end of the novel, the voices of Gülfidan, as the narrator and Tekin, as the author mesh together. The author states that she waited for autumn “because the last pages related to the writer’s Secretary Rüzgar days required the rain to lash down” (*Night Lessons* 187). Then she confesses that Gülfidan/ Secretary Rüzgar would have never rejected her wish to write and she decided to write this novel five years ago. Although it is clear that Gülfidan / Secretary Rüzgar and the author who writes *Night Lessons* are the same people, the author talks about Gülfidan as if she was a person

about whom she had little knowledge. She states that she did not know much about Gülfidan apart from some leaflets and stories written by her. After inquiring about her, some of her militant friends took her to the gipsy neighborhood where Gülfidan was hiding. She saw a tulle veil hanging from the open door. She touched the worn-out veil for days and begged it to listen to her. The veil started writing her story very violently and the narrator-author wanted it to wait for five more years to start writing. She promises that she will tell what happened to her and her one hundred friends. Then, the narrator-author addresses Secretary Rüzgar, confessing that “I guess I desperately need the silent movement of the pencil on the sheet. After floundering for a long while, I decided to write with my own hand-writing” (*Night Lessons* 191). Her handwriting, which was found ugly by the organization when she wrote slogans, becomes the medium through which she can unite all the voices in her mind. In the last paragraph of the novel, she states that “the name of this return was fear, unfortunately” (*Night Lessons* 191). The fear, she confesses, stemmed from being caught by the police in the house where she used to hide; but she is now cognizant that “I dream about listening to my own wounded voice far from the poignant, always heartbreaking, inattentive and enraged visions of my friends” (*Night Lessons* 191). The author’s address to Gülfidan (Secretary Rüzgar) and her confession that her writing process started with the realization of her real fear, which was listening to her own voice and facing her deep worries over the disappointment by her friends, reveal that her subjectivity has been tormented and disintegrated.

Multiple personal voices and the amalgamation of the voices of the narrator and author in the end suggest that it took a while for the author to internalize her pain and write them down. The overwhelming pain of the past is filtered through the present because “the narrator’s struggle with her past takes place in the space of writing both as a register of her personal trauma and a strategy of distancing from it” (Bayraktar 123). Rather than a monolithic voice and identity, a polyphony is prevalent in the novel; all the voices clash with each other mirroring the disintegration of identity. This disintegration is articulated by the reenactment of the past events by blurring past and present, reality and imagination and multiple voices. The disintegration of identity and

use of different narrators are important in two ways. Firstly, there is no authorial position in the novel and the hierarchy between the author and the narrator is erased. Tekin, in our interview, explains her avoidance of an authorial voice in the novel as follows:

I am against traditional fiction because there is a man's hierarchy in man's language from the way that the heroes talk about themselves and to the way they use language. Life is not like that, this is not how I perceive life. Secondly, there is the "god-author" notion. The author distributes the roles to characters. Such a writing style does not fit women's world. As I mentioned in *Muinar*, we (women) love the world without making a distinction between animate and inanimate objects.

The narrator in *Night Lessons* wants the reader to be aware of the fictive nature of her stories. She does not claim to have an omniscient position or authority over the narrative. The fragmentation of the voices demonstrates the impossibility of a coherent and unified self. Tekin employs a variety of focalizers unlike conventional narratives. As she explains in the quote above, plotting, linearity and a monolithic approach to literature do not correspond to the constructed nature of reality. She allows the novel to float free of time and place. The text announces its own fictionality by spurning the conventions of realism or verisimilitude. It is necessary to remember that language is made of a hierarchy between the signifiers and signifieds and Tekin is preoccupied to write outside the limits of language not to fall in the trap of the linguistic hierarchy. Besides, all the polyphonic voices in the novel suggest that realism cannot survive in a world where people are just powerless objects in the face of historical facts and individual perception of historical reality is more foregrounded in the novel. Besides, the traumatic effects of the coup are so intense that Gülfidan "creates a defense mechanism against the danger of being annihilated by the recent events" (Bayraktar 125) and writes about the present events by turning back to her childhood memories. The polyphonic voices and sudden shifts in voices and time are in tune with the fragmented body of Gülfidan; as she senses the heavy burden of the traumatic political events most on her body, the voices are dissected like her body.

Tekin's use of grammar does not follow a conventional pattern and the confusion stemming from the uncertainty of the possessive adjective abound in the novel. In one

of the letters to Mukoşka, the narrator causes such a confusion over who she talks about:

Mukoşka, you know that the day when I wanted to smell his/her blue skin, I realized once more that my life did not belong to me. There was nothing more real than your/his/her eyes' mist and weepy look. When the fractions on your/his /her face permeated into my breath, filtered through my lungs and were reflected on the dark walls of my soul, I was shaken by being bent. (*Night Lessons* 83)

In Turkish, the same possessive adjective can refer to different subjects different from English. The narrator might even be talking about herself as a third person. The fractions on a person's face can be interpreted as the wrinkles on Secretary Rüzgar's mother's face or the painful looks on her own face or Mukoşka. The reader cannot come up with a certain judgment about who is mentioned. The unnamable Thing can be expressed through the *semiotic* dimension of language. The poetic voice of Tekin neither succumbs to the imposition of the *symbolic* nor yields to the chaotic flux of the *semiotic*; the in-betweenness marks her language. Her language is immersed in linguistic dissolutions and erases the differences between the subjects and the objects.

Welcoming a new language is the perennial occupation of Tekin in this novel and the general narrative pattern is concordant with Tekin's literal aims. Gülfidan's mother and poverty are the *abjects* and unfolding that terrain is what enables her to write and what leads Tekin as a writer to write a text using poetic language. The collapse of the paternal laws leads one to use rhythm and music because conventional language does not serve as a tool any more. In what is considered as conventional language, the subject may fit herself in the subject-object dualism, the bridge between the signifier and the signified is thought to be more stable. However, this arbitrary stability is shaken when the unmentionable or unsignifiable are uttered by rhythm and music. The object is unsymbolizable and the *semiotic* sublimates the *abject* person's dilemma. Gülfidan's *semiotic* punctuation of the *symbolic* is primarily discerned when she notices that her voice does not overlap with that of the political movement she is involved in. Smells and sounds coalesce and she thinks that

[a] smoke that makes Gülfidan lose her sense of space when she smells it fell on her lungs in a small room where the trade unionists gathered. After she giggled in a voice resembling a sheep bleating because of her spoiled lungs, she realized the seriousness of the situation and she managed to hide behind her spleen by sliding between the foams slowly. (*Night Lessons* 43)

As the paternal laws and the normative language cannot project her affliction, Gülfidan is cognizant of her being an outsider among these people. The words such as “giggling”, “bleating” and “sliding” evince her difficulty in making her voice heard. The olfactory effect carrying one to “that archaic universe, preceding sight” (Kristeva *Tales* 334) sharpens the immersion of the *semiotic* voice. Unusual analogies between senses point that her voice has not been located in the *symbolic* because only a substitute sense rather than voice, a means that is different from a normal word can reflect what she thinks. Her lungs are spoiled by the smoke in the place, which suggests that the conventional language mars her voice because she resists being tied up by the *symbolic*. She needs to discharge her repressed desire in language. Accordingly, her voice withers away but she will find courage with this new discovered voice gradually and quit the political movement in the end. She tells Mukoška that “they are robots living with definitions. What I want from you is not to sleep and let my voice be heard” (*Night Lessons* 44). She defines the language of the organization as a static and robotized one.

The childhood rhymes also contribute to the musicality of the novel. In the first part, the narrator recites the following song:

She is just a child lay lay la
Watches the world in the mirror
How should she know we are real people
Supposes we are all shadows lay lay la (*Night Lessons* 33)

Music provides the semiotic aspect of language. The musicality of the word divorced from its signified meaning influences the narrating voice, which suggests that the material sounds of language as repeated in the first and last lines of the rhyme above signify something beyond the symbolic. The rhythmical effect acknowledges inarticulate expressions that evoke powerful emotions. She also associates her childhood

days and her mother with the horseshoe sound. In a meeting where each of the activists gives a speech one by one, Gülfidan hears the sounds of the horseshoes again. She murmurs her words in a musical tone “cavaliers, cavaliers, the rattles of whom are sweet. Let me get out of here. Let me get out of here!” (Night Lessons 47). During her dialogue with the leader of the movement, she explains how it is impossible to speak the same language with her: “It is impossible to talk about life sciences ghosts, the camels that go to the other world offended, a mass of diamond that is made up of the word hate. Because we started to understand each other” (Night Lessons 59). There is a clash between the semiotic and the symbolic, but as Kristeva underlines, they have to cooperate because a pure semiotic language is impossible because it is the reflection of madness. The leader and Gülfidan can understand each other but she just notices that her inner voice is the repercussion of old folkloric stories where impossible things can happen like the offended camels going to the other world. Because the folkloric stories where irrational things can happen belong to the oral tradition, they can be regarded as less unspoiled by the symbolic language and it is more akin to the semiotic. Gülfidan’s war with the language and the patriarchal discourse of her friends in the political movement is vivid especially when she shows her reaction by laughing. The leader states that:

She said: You were a smile nymph and we plucked the colorful quills of your feathers in the small night room, pulled out your shining teeth mercilessly. You ended up as a revenge bird, didn’t you? You’re right, we criticized you a lot as you were laughing too much, and in the end we sent you to court-martial. “My lips are free and they will always be free, comrades!” In which legislation is it written that the ones who say, in the small night room with a cynic face, that they came out of a story world will be treated well? (*Night Lessons* 59)

Laughter is one of the best ways of reversing the patriarchal discourse. Gülfidan’s reactions range from self-effacement in *melancholia* to laughter in mania. Yet her laughter stands in contrast to the legislation. The legislation bans her laughter because it is revolting and it is likely to deconstruct the solemnity of their aims. The party’s criticism of Gülfidan’s laughter is a reflection of Latife Tekin’s real life. She states that “I seemed like a lunatic to some leftists most probably because I wrote in a different style they were not used to. They should have actually taken my writing *Night*

Lessons normally” (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 69). Gülfidan furnishes her language with fairy tales, yet her lips are pulverized by the *symbolic* and she stands against the *symbolic* by laughter.

When all the examples of the *semiotic* and poetic bases of signification in the novel are considered together, it is seen that Tekin lays emphasis on the difficulty of speaking by a different language in various parts of the novel. The more she gets fragmented in her Secretary Rüzgar identity, the more she lays emphasis on how to speak and write in a revolutionary way. An unidentified voice reminds Gülfidan that “if you[*she*] had not looked at those wet soils insistently, you[*she*] would not have encountered the emptiness you[*she*] call[s] the language of our home” (*Night Lessons* 138). The language of home is referred to in negative connotations like “emptiness” because Gülfidan supposes that her words have no referents. The omniscient narrator blames her for insisting on carving up the unnamable and ending up in meaningless blubbering. Tekin scrutinizes how the people stuck in the *symbolic* regard a new language. A writer’s attempt to speak through a novel language is not easy as understood from the criticisms of Tekin’s leftists friends who called her a lunatic after writing this novel. Similarly, Gülfidan unburdens her feelings to a voice in the novel and says “you know, there was a language problem with me and my mother all the time [...] I guess we experienced an inner diversification of dream taking the place of reality” (*Night Lessons* 143). The key force behind turning back to her mother’s language is to internalize the conflicts of that language because dreams are more foregrounded than reality. It is not the language of science and law; it takes its impetus from tales, music and dreams as its root is where the *symbolic* did not start to infuse. Gülfidan believes the plenitude and voluptuousness of her mother’s language as “this language has not dried up yet in its celestial sphere as I understand from my mother’s disappearance by drawing her knees towards her belly” (*Night Lessons* 144). Tekin celebrates this language as a heavenly entity and what induces her to come to such a conclusion is that when her mother died, her body was in the shape of an infant, with her knees under her belly. Her mother returns to her infantile position in her death

which points at the eternity of this circle. Gülfidan compares her father's language with that of her mother and states that the language she learned from her father:

looked like the semilunar shapes she used to draw on the edgings of her notebook when she was a child. It was the telling of a tiresome repetition that starts at a point and rises up, and turns back to the time line after drawing a straight curve. Later, I ghastly realized that my mother's language was the mirror of another time consciousness. (*Night Lessons* 148)

Within this respect, her father's language, standing for the *symbolic*, is made of repetitions and follows a straight line and there are no divergences on this line. Even the curves are drawn straight and neatly. However, her mother's language had a different concept of time; its time was not restricted to the present and this is the reason why Gülfidan goes back and forth in her memories. Time is not linear and her narration is trimmed with unconscious desires. Toward the end of the novel, the writer who speaks to Gülfidan defines what a writer is. Tekin states that "I primarily need a voice before the meaning and words. I go to a silent place so that I can hear that voice, to hear the music of that voice. Therefore, I believe that real writers are secret composers at the same time" (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 187). Another interesting point is that Tekin states that she wrote this novel with the rudimentary Quran sounds left in her ears (101) and she recited *Night Lessons* like reading a passage from the Quran with its musicality. She also points out that she could not forget the musical rhythm of the Quran because her father was reciting the lines of it loudly at home. Such a confession sheds light on Kristeva's argument that the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* have to converge and the *semiotic* is released in order that desires can accommodate themselves in the *symbolic*.

In conclusion, *Night Lessons*, which is one of the post-1980s *coup* novels in Turkish literature, brings a new perspective to the question of otherness. The common point of the novels written after the 1980 *coup* is reflecting reality by different means and by leaving the conventional realistic techniques behind. The aesthetic concerns have preoccupied the writers of the time and they started dealing with the problem of representation. The political distress, the polarization among people, poverty and the failure of the Left to come up with an alternative solution have been the major concerns

of the writers. As Alver pinpoints, “in the aftermath of the September 12th *Coup*, the Leftists activists lost their hopes and forgot their initial purpose which was to carry out a revolution[...] In place of this agenda, there is [was] a void which became filled by hopelessness and fear” (17). This feeling of emptiness and the traumatic atmosphere of the military intervention brought forward the desire to return home, which “becomes a common trope in the literature of the period representing the failure and defeat of the opposition movement” (Alver 17). Tekin explains this desire as: “I designed *Night Lessons* as a story of returning home. Turning back to mother... If somebody comes up and makes a review of the stories and poems written at that period, she will sense that we all cried out for ‘Mother’” (*Latife Tekin Kitabı* 112). Accordingly, returning home and mother are the driving concerns of *Night Lessons*. The novel has been harshly criticized by the Leftist activists of the time as they were disturbed by their representation and they were not satisfied with the unconventional writing style of Tekin. She was accused of trivializing the social and political effects of the coup and not reflecting the historical realities substantially. Yet, this study maintains that Tekin’s subversion of the conventional language forms and displaying the faults of the leftist organization by focusing on Gülfidan’s individuation process are not far from any realistic representation and they have a very vehement political criticism.

The elusive language of the novel shows that building a politically engaged novel does not have to depend on mimetic representation and it does not necessarily accentuate the conflict between self and Other. So, the first part of this chapter elaborated on how Gülfidan is seen as an outcast by her family. The second part dealt with how she is estranged in the political movement as she could not adopt their *symbolic* language. Tekin’s attachment to nonreferentiality and metaphorical language lay bare the organization’s perpetual proclivity for a hierarchical mindset, which has been explained as their being stuck in the *symbolic*. The third part of the study has focused on the *semiotic* pulverization of the *symbolic* by the metaphors, religious and metaphorical allusions, folkloric stories, fragmentation of time and space, and olfactory and auditory senses. The *semiotic* signification demonstrates that a mimetic representation does not overcome the separation between the subject and the object

but rather reproduces it. So, the novel pushes the limits of mimetic representation and demonstrates that the *symbolic* language represents the internalization and reproduction of the patriarchal thinking. In regressing from the *symbolic*, the whole novel becomes more opaque, challenges the empiricist view of language and manifests the extreme sense of the loss of the mother (maternal other). The music, melody, rhythm and semantic polyvalence of the text, which are the properties of Kristevan poetic language poeticize and sublimate the lost maternal object. This sublimation of the maternal *abject* diminishes the chasm between subject and object because the maternal other “is both other and inseparable from the subject’s own self [...] and thus prior to the capacity to posit another like oneself- a capacity indicated, for instance, by the mastery of the pronouns I/you” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 132). Adoption of the maternal body which is neither I nor you and which is also both of them refutes the *symbolic*’s subject-object separation and unveils the impossibility of coherence and self-unity. The fusion of the I and other runs counter to the determinacy and unity of identity by reclaiming the *abject*. That is, the exclusively delineated distinction between self and Other in the *symbolic* is dissected by the amalgamation of them in the *semiotic*, which is a challenge to the identity politics of the society.

As a character who cannot keep in step with the established norms of her family and the political organization, Gülfidan heals herself by turning back to her mother. So, my contention is that the whole novel is manifested as the other which stimulates the protagonist’s desire to be unified with the maternal body. The unreachability of the (m)other keeps the death instinct at bay and perpetuates the subject’s being “in process/ on trial” (Kristeva *Revolution* 22). Considering the text as the other and the fragmented style of the novel are in tune with the political consciousness of Tekin as a writer. The syntactical gaps, altering narrators, density of individual phrases and the entire *semiotic* quality of the novel never allow the reader to have a unified, solid and fixed interpretation. Besides, she abstains from an authorial position by the multiplicity of voices and deferments of meaning. The novel does not present itself as a solution for the ills of its time but it is certain that it has a healing effect on the author as the author/ narrator tells the reader in detail how she decided to write the novel. The novel lets the

reader question the possibility and capacity of language to articulate the truth. The bodily pain which is so overwhelmingly engraved in every line also shows the difficulty of uttering pain in language. The wounds of the body and psychological suffering cannot be uttered in the patterns and structures of language. The “I” which is lost in the family and political organization is brought back into existence in writing, by which Gülfidan uses her body as a way of being and she affirms herself bodily. She can overcome the *abjection* of others and the hegemony of the existing system by adopting her feminine identity and the (m)other inside her psyche.

If Tekin had written this novel by an authorial voice, with direct references to reality and following the rules of *symbolic* language, she would have been trapped in the same patriarchal discourse. Therefore, it is wrong to assume that the novel is ahistorical or nonpolitical. On the contrary, *Night Lessons* is a clear manifestation of Tekin’s political consciousness and ethical stance. She shows us that realism does not necessarily inhere in verisimilitude and direct references to historical and political facts. The position of the outsider, how the outsider heals herself and the annihilation of borders between self and other, the *semiotic* signification and the prevalence of fictional stories do not deny the whole novel’s reality; on the contrary, they demonstrate that there may be other ways to represent reality. As Ertem underlines, “*Night Lessons* is a women’s novel. It interrogates the woman’s relationship with her darling, marriage institution and society. It touches on the mother-daughter relationship. It questions the problem of woman’s having no say on her body” (259). So, the novel is not the story of one character; it probes many problematic issues including poverty, politics, torture, trauma and so on, toying with its own linguistic difficulty of representation.

CHAPTER 5

***LIGHTHOUSEKEEPING* (2004) BY JEANETTE WINTERSON**

Lighthousekeeping with its focus on love and story telling brings a new perspective to the question of otherness. In a similar fashion with the other novels, the main protagonist of *Lighthousekeeping* registers a new stance to the problem of alterity and this new discourse entails finding love as a salvation for one's body and turning *abjection* into positive signification. This study draws into focus the limited nature of lesbian/feminist/queer critique of Winterson's novels. This field of criticisms is very likely to be turned into a metanarrative if the queer subjects are studied as marginalized, *abjected* or uncanny figures of society or if the critics are always in pursuit of foregrounding the lesbian love story as the centralized theme in Winterson's novels. I argue that criticisms about Winterson's novels can be broadened by focusing on her interest in the subjectivity process of an individual in her novels rather than repeatedly putting her novels in the lesbian criticism pigeonhole. The benefit of such an approach is that if the unified and closed nature of language and subjectivity are called into question as she ushers us in, the other problems such as gender construction and sexual orientation can be dissected by moving deeper into the problem itself, which is language. Therefore, on a broader scale, this study aims to show that Winterson renders her political perspective very explicit and broadens the queer political perspective without risking it being downplayed into a totalizing metanarrative. Drawing on Kristeva, the subversive and revolutionary power of art can lead us to question the ethical and political aims of the artist without turning these terms into fundamentalist concepts. As queer studies are already embedded in politics, a novel's potential to be political can be enlarged by focusing on the writer's subversive vision which transcends the boundaries of totalizing forms of selfhood and politics.

Gender, sexuality, identity and narrative voice have been the driving concerns of Winterson so far and the bulk of the studies about her novels hinge on these topics. As Grice and Woods put forward

the complexity of Winterson's texts constantly invites a number of alternative interpretations [...] Despite the many differences between Winterson's texts, they return repeatedly to certain issues: love and desire, identity and subjectivity; artifice and aesthetic self-reflexivity; lesbian and gendered perspectives; the difficulty of forging a language suitable for the discussion of non-heterosexual love; and the relationship between narrative and reference. (3,7)

Winterson's life story has always concerned the critics because her novels have been thought to reflect her life. So, a large majority of the critiques have taken their source from the private life of Winterson. Although interpreting the novels of an author in connection with her life style is an outdated approach in this century, it is an evitable fact that Winterson's intriguing life as an adopted child and her sexual orientation seem to continue to arouse curiosity in public²². Winterson's novels are somehow pertinent to the problematization of sex and gender and most of her novels can cursorily be generalized as queer literature once the author's sexual orientation is taken into account as a starting point. The fact that she is a lesbian writer creates an erroneous impression and perception that she always writes coming-out novels and propagandizes the queer world. In connection with this, Winterson in "The Semiotics of Sex" veers away from the faulty association of the gender/work of the writer and states that "I am a writer who happens to love women. I am not a lesbian who happens to write" (104) and she adds "art must resist autobiography if it hopes to cross boundaries of class, culture....and...sexuality" (106). As her novels can be categorized in queer literature, one may tend to simplify or disregard her basic motive behind

²² Adopted by a couple who were the members of Pentecostal Evangelical Church, Winterson was raised as a pious girl (Makinen 1). After the publication of *Oranges*, Winterson became a public figure and by dint of the great interest of the media-with newspapers, articles, magazine, radio, and television interviews, and the highly acclaimed broadcast of her novel rewritten as a television script, *Oranges Are not the Only Fruit*-has gradually opened the path for her work to figure prominently on many British school syllabi and university curricula. (Grice& Woods 1)

writing. In the “Semiotics of Sex”, she evinces her fundamental preoccupation in writing:

The Queer world has colluded in the misreading of art as sexuality. Art is difference, but not necessarily sexual difference, and while to be out of the mainstream of imposed choice is likely to make someone more conscious, it does not make someone automatically an artist [...] If Queer culture is now working against assumptions of identity as sexuality, art gets there first, by implicitly or explicitly creating emotion around the forbidden [...] Art coaxes out of us emotions we normally do not feel. It is not that art sets out to shock (that is rare); it is rather that art occupies ground unconquered by social niceties. Seeking neither to please nor to displease, art works to enlarge emotional possibility. (106-108)

As she explains, identity awareness, especially sexual identity awareness, is not necessarily awakened solely by queer literature or queer writers. Independent of the writer’s private life and autobiographical background, art can be a trigger for awareness. Art has the power to elicit a state of emotional arousal and consciousness in the reader and it is accomplished provided that the forbidden, the hidden, the unspeakable, the unpresentable or the untrodden are sublimated. Art lets the writer graft new possibilities onto the fossilized social norms of identity. Merging of emotions and the words in a text, be it historical or imagined, is possible provided that language is revitalized. *Lighthousekeeping* and the other novels of Winterson seduce and disturb readers towards changing their accustomed relations with a text. The writer does not have to assume a politically oriented identity to denounce any shortcomings s/he encounters. As Winterson puts forward, “[t]he rebel writer who brings healing and pain need not be a Marxist or a Socialist, need not be political in the journalistic sense” (in “The Semiotics of Sex” 109) in order to write against the grain. As Xhonneux underlines, in the novels of Winterson, “lesbianism is clearly not the protagonist’s sole encompassing viewpoint, but rather a *constituent* of their identities. This constituent, therefore, becomes a possible site for protest and change” (108).

As for *Lighthousekeeping*, the scope of academic studies and critical books related to the novel is more limited compared to the other novels. Onega states that the novel “has been unanimously welcomed as a return to the type of writing that launched her to fame in the 1980s” (76). Likewise, Makinen states that:

most of the reviews and interviews describe *Lighthousekeeping* as her eighth novel, thereby once again sidelining *Boating For Beginners*. While Winterson places *Lighthousekeeping* as the first of a new cycle of her fiction, the consensus of the reviewers tends to be that she has refound her earlier voice, or returned to an earlier success, thus positioning it as part of the same cycle. (155)

Andermahr touches on many various points the novel includes such as the reconciliation between the opposite notions such as “light/dark, fixity/fluidity, self/other, objective/subjective, male/female” (113). She also tackles the postmodern elements of the novel such as intertextuality and metafiction. Then she makes an analogy between Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* and the novel. (117). She briefly mentions that the novel is related to the “split personality and estrangement [...] the otherness of human identity” (115)

Similar to Andermahr, Onega scrutinizes the intertextual elements (204-205) in the novel but she has a longer and more detailed comparison than that of Onega. She highlights in what aspects *Lighthousekeeping* visits the other texts (she also includes Muriel Spark’s *Memento Mori* and Ali Smith’s *Hotel World* and Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*). Besides intertextual references, she analyses the Victorian novel properties (206) and the mythological references (208) in the novel. Another trait of the novel she asserts is “the initiation of a purblind hero/ine by an old and wise wo/man is an archetypal *topos* that Winterson had already used in *Oranges*” (209)

The last study belongs to Jenzen who argues that although there is not a “defiant lesbian hero” in *Lighthousekeeping* the double meanings, coincidences, the play between darkness and light can be read as the manifestations of the queer uncanny. She interprets the uncanny properties of the novel by referring to Freud’s definition and concludes that the novel lets itself be analysed through “queer critical lens, deconstructing and defamiliarizing the assumed naturalness of gender, sexuality and heteronormative kinship” (181).

The previous studies, thus have mostly delved into the intertextual elements of the novel because there are many references to the mentioned texts and also Winterson’s own novels. This dissertation has similar concerns as the article by Jenzen because it

focuses on the queer politics of the novel. However, it diverges from the study of Jenzen and the aforementioned studies in its attempt to bring a broader angle to the novel by analyzing the otherness problem through Kristevan lens. Although the deconstructive attitude of the novel and the problem of otherness have been highlighted by the mentioned studies, this study offers a detailed psychoanalytic reading of the novel and considers the main tenets of it which are love and story-telling as forms of the sublimated abject.

Before the analysis of the novel, a brief summary can be helpful at this point. *Lighthousekeeping* is about a little girl called Silver, who has never known her father and lost her mother because she flies off the universe where there is no gravity. Her mother carries Silver near her by a rope but one day she accidentally flies off the ground and has to undo the harness to save her daughter's life, and dies. The plot in the rest of the novel spins around how Silver manages to survive after her mother's death. Nobody adopts Silver and she ends up in a lighthouse in Cape Wrath in Scotland where she will be trained to tend the light by the lighthouse keeper Pew who believes that learning to tend the light is tantamount to telling stories. After leaving the lighthouse, the novel traces the life story of Silver including her visits to other cities, her encounters with the other people in public places and her love affair with a woman.

Babel Dark is one of the important figures in the novel as much as Pew and Silver because along with their story, what happened to Babel Dark takes up the majority of the novel plotwise. He marries a pious woman after breaking up with his girlfriend Molly. He can never feel genuine love for her and when he sees Molly again, he sets up another life secretly. He realizes that he cannot brush aside real love and visits Molly twice a year, and has one more baby by her. Meanwhile, he is recognized by a person from Molly's town when he comes to the church for a Sunday prayer who notices that the priest is the one who lives in his own hometown by another name and occupation. The interacting strands of plots in the novel include the stories of Charles Darwin as well as Robert Louis Stevenson. Their conversations with Babel Dark shape his understanding of double personality and the origin of the universe. As the story goes on, Molly learns about the real life of Babel and their love story ends in frustration

and disappointment. Babel Dark commits suicide in the end. The side stories of Babel Dark, Stevenson and Darwin told by Pew mesh together and create an artistic and literal backdrop to the novel.

Overall, *Lighthousekeeping* (2004) is a novel about the positive effect of storytelling, the significance of making up one's own story to survive, forging one's understanding of his/ her place in the universe and welcoming the unstable, slippery ground of being. The novel does not fall in the trap of homosexual/heterosexual binary. Winterson embeds the lesbian love story of Silver as a side story in the whole narrative and shifts the focus to how a society engulfed in the *symbolic*/patriarchal structure can make one estranged from herself. Although Silver is treated as an abject figure by the people around her especially after she leaves the lighthouse, the reason of her being seen as a stranger is not her sexual orientation but the way society operates within a *symbolic* system pushing Silver to think that she is a marginalized subject.

The reason why Silver cannot easily accommodate herself in society is that there is a communication gap between them. The communication gap stems from the society's being enveloped in a unitary and enclosed structure of language. As mentioned in the introduction part, every social practice, ideology and institution is "determined by a set of signifying rules, by virtue of the fact that there is present an order of language; that this language has a double articulation (signifier/signified), and this duality stands in an arbitrary relation to the referent" (Oliver "The System and the Speaking Subject" 125). Therefore, all the ideologies are based on the dual nature of language, which is the *symbolic* base of language. As long as social practices are encumbered by the binary structure of signification, there will be a gap between heteronormativity and homosexuality. Winterson focuses on subjectivity as an ongoing process and she treats identity as an open system. In this respect, her understanding of language and subjectivity are in tandem with Kristeva's theories which refute language as a static product and regard meaning as not a closed "sign system but a signifying process" (Oliver "The System and Speaking Subject" 28). Within this signification process, bodily drives leave their "imprint in language" (Lechte *Kristeva* 99). Accordingly, the

speaking subject is always in a dialectic between drives and language, “where body and culture meet” (McAfee 2) as will be observed in the life story of Silver.

This chapter is divided into five parts. Firstly, the novel’s preoccupation with otherness is manifested by foregrounding the dyadic unity between Silver and her mother. Secondly, storytelling and love as the forms of sublimated abject will be studied. Thirdly, Silver’s experiences in the public life which act as the *thetic* movements leading her to experience the vascillation between differentiation/nondifferentiation will be analysed. Then, the otherness issue will be dealt with by the analysis of Babel Dark’s life in terms of the dialectic between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* and the abject. This part will focus on the tiny line between religion and body, Babel Dark’s encounter with Molly and his daughter, his meeting with Robert Louis Stevenson and Charles Darwin, the opposition between melancholy and storytelling, and the implicit references to the androgyny of Babel Dark. Lastly, the novel will be studied in terms of its *semiotic* signification.

5.1. The Dyadic Unity Between Silver and Her Mother

The first way that the novel demonstrates the in-between space between self and other is Silver’s dyadic and *semiotic* unity with her mother. Upon being disengaged from her mother’s body, Silver will start going through the *thetic* phase where signification takes place. Yet in accordance with the nature of the *thetic* which “marks a threshold between two heterogeneous realms: semiotic and the symbolic” (Kristeva *Revolution* 48), Silver will encounter a lot of moments of the *thetic* phases in the public domain. This archaic and pre-Oedipal unity is significant in the novel in two aspects. Firstly, it will be the backbone of Silver’s individuation process in the future as she learns how to transform it into sublimation without falling into melancholy and this is how Winterson shows the reader the significance of creating a self without expelling the maternal other entirely. Secondly, the absence of the father and lack of gravity in Silver and her mother’s house are not woven in the novel as a battle against the *symbolic* or the phallic system but as the intensification of the “ante-phallic [*semiotic*], as opposed to anti-phallic” (Gambaudo 17), which broadens the novel’s political angle.

There is a close identification between Silver and her mother; the symbiotic mother-child interaction and the infant's pre-Oedipal attachment to the maternal body are intensified by metaphors. These metaphors, however, never have a stable meaning; they are poeticized through the destabilized relation between the signifier and the signified. The first metaphor is the rope by which her mother carries Silver "behind her like an after-thought" (*Lighthousekeeping* 6). Attached to her mother's body by a rope, Silver sees herself as the extension of her mother's body, which evokes the umbilical cord between the mother and the child. As Silver is a little child and her physical power is not strong enough to defy gravity, she needs to be tied up around her mother's body, which means that she has not been furnished with the notion of a separate and unified body yet. She is still immersed in the *semiotic chora* where bodies and souls are entwined in a psychic space which resists disjunction. Her mother drops past Silver and she hangs on the branches of "spiny shrubs- escallonia- I [she] think [s] it was, a salty shrub that could withstand the sea and the blast. I [she] could feel its roots slowly lifting like a grave opening" (*Lighthousekeeping* 7). She cannot hang any longer and her mother undoes the harness and lets herself fly down the cliff. Detachment from the mother's body and the death of the mother are told without referring to death as a notion. The death of the mother is aesthetically and poetically inscribed between the lines, which can be explained as the *thetic* phase "mark[ing] a threshold between two heterogeneous realms: the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*" (*Revolution* 48). This attachment is imprinted on poetic language which opens up a space in which the infant experiences no sense of a separate self. The pre-Oedipal realm where there seems to be no bodily extension and no division of self and other is written through "the extra-verbal way in which bodily energy and affects make their way into language" (McAfee 17). "The spiny shrubs- escallonia" onto which Silver holds when her mother "dropped past me [her]" (*Lighthousekeeping* 6) positions Silver to the edge of the *thetic* space "which produces the positing of signification" (Kristeva *Revolution* 43).

Escallonia, which is both a soft and spiny flower, is on the threshold of the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. It is a hedge plant that is a super evergreen shrub with dark green

leaves and masses of bright flower. The evergreen plant symbolizes the never ending force of life that the mother bestows upon the child. Silver clutches at the “spiny shrubs” of the evergreen plant to be able to survive. The sharp thorns of the flower that can withstand the wild nature imply that Silver is going through the *thetic* space upon being detached from her mother’s body. Silver utters the detachment from her mother through a voluptuous diction; she foregrounds the sensuous knowledge of her body which is demonstrative of the material base of language. Her words have not entirely been forged by the *symbolic* base of language; just as her body is suspended in the air, her words drift from metaphor to metaphor in the *semiotic* luxurious void.

Winterson does not delineate their house as an entirely *semiotic* place, either. The house does not conform to the rules of physics. There is no gravity; therefore, they “kept their own hens, but the eggs rolled away, and we [they] had the only hens in the world who had to hang on by their beaks while they tried to lay” [...]. The chairs were nailed to the floor and they could never eat spaghetti. They had to eat the food that could stick on the plate. Once they tried peas, but as they flew around the house, they found them “dusty and green in the corners of the room” (*Lighthousekeeping* 4,6). Sleeping is also a serious problem because Silver’s mother fastens her into a hammock so that she would not soar in the air (*Lighthousekeeping* 4). Silver complains about the difficulty of fighting gravity: “I dreamed of a place where I wouldn’t be fighting gravity with my own body weight” (*Lighthousekeeping* 4). It is a matter of time for them to slip through the rope that bound their bodies together and to find themselves “on the railway with the rabbits” (*Lighthousekeeping* 4). Situated outside the social norms, the house straddles between the real and the fantastic; it is both exterior to the *symbolic* realm because there is no gravity and “lacks “the defining structure, coherence and spatial fixity” (Becker-Leckrone 28) but also within the realm of the *symbolic* because they always have the risk of finding themselves on the railway.

In addition to the dyadic attachment between Silver and her mother which is narrated poetically through metaphors, the mother figure is also narrated between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* realms. Silver’s mother thinks that she is not like other children and she advises her “to make a world of her own” (*Lighthousekeeping* 5) if she cannot

accommodate herself in this world. Silver knows that her mother projects her own lacks and desires onto her: “The eccentricities she described as mine were really her own. She was the one who hated going out. She was the one who couldn’t live in the world she had been given. She longed for me to be free, and did everything she could to make sure it never happened” (*Lighthousekeeping* 5). From a Kristevan perspective, Silver’s mother fits to the definition of the mother who paves the way for the child to step into the *symbolic*. After giving birth, the mother functions as a medium to prepare the child to be enveloped by the *symbolic* realm “intervening as order, identity, consciousness” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 130). The mother goes through the same process and she is already embedded in language and culture. She belongs to the *symbolic* domain. Yet, when she gives birth, she can turn back to the time when she used to speak her own mother’s language. She imitates the infant’s voice and they share a common musical language different from the *symbolic* language. Later, the child reaches the realization of the fact that her mother is another being and they are not united forever, which makes her disappointed and embittered. With regard to Silver’s situation, the deep attachment with the maternal body is disrupted when her mother dies. She states that “...The light called me out-I remember it was a cry, though you will say that it was mine, and perhaps it was, because a baby knows no separation between itself and life” (*Lighthousekeeping* 24). The *symbolic* death of the maternal figure results in the birth of the child. The cry that Silver hears belongs to herself; yet she is not able to differentiate her body from that of her mother yet. This is the reason why she thinks “I [she] came to life at an angle, and that’s how I’ve[she’s] lived ever since” (*Lighthousekeeping* 4). The light calling her out of the womb is the light of a new world, a separate identity. On the other hand, she loses the light when her mother dies as she says: “when we buried my mother, some of the light went out of me [her]” (*Lighthousekeeping* 24). Winterson weaves every metaphor into the fabric of the novel by double connotations. The light bears both positive and negative connotations in this context. It is the symbol of culture and the *symbolic* base of language that calls the infant out of the womb. It is also the joy of life that one derives from the attachment with the mother. The archaic relation to the maternal body is lamented by the use of the light metaphor. The world Silver shares with her mother is pretty delicate,

intangible and inexplicable by scientific explanations; therefore, it is indicative of the *semiotic*. Devoid of an “anchor” to hold on to, Silver’s mother drifts out of the world; likewise, Silver spends all her life zigzagging from one destination to another, floating on the world without weight as her name suggests. She starts her life without a beginning and continues evading any endings. She thinks of her life as moving in circles without arriving at a certain destination; a life which is: “part miracle, part madness. It’s better to accept that I [she] can’t control any of the things that matter. My [her] life is a trail of shipwrecks and set-sails. There are no arrivals. No destinations; there are only sandbanks and shipwreck; then another boat, another tide” (*Lighthousekeeping* 127).

Although lack of gravity and the absence of a father figure are very viable and recurrent themes²³ in Winterson’s novels and they are likely to be considered as subversive strategies of Winterson to challenge the patriarchal mindset, analyzing them as opposing forces against the patriarchy has the risk of generating the same hierarchical mindset. Although the characters who defy gravity in Winterson’s novels are generally homosexuals, dwarves, giants, grotesque figures or the ones who do not respect social norms and dictations, regarding them as supernatural creatures who dwell in another fantastic realm solidifies their abject status. Rather, lack of gravity can be explained as a metaphor which demonstrates the body resisting the unified understanding of it. Gravity is the magnetic force that pulls the body towards the center of the earth. This physical phenomenon helps the body to be unified; the disintegration is prevented because all the body parts interact in unity. Winterson celebrates the fractured, slippery and de-spatialized body which disconcerts a unified and ossified subjectivity. Lack of gravity is analogous to subjectivity which is always in process and on trial (Kristeva *Revolution* 22).

²³ To give a few examples, In *Passion*, Villanelle with her webbed feet can walk on the water; Dog Woman and Jordan live on the banks of the Thames in muddy water in *Sexing the Cherry* and Jordan travels to the house where the members of a family defy the normal spatial behavior.

Likewise, lack of a biological father is not an attempt to create a utopic society where father figures are erased. His absence solidifies Winterson's insistence upon the fact that father, as the representative of the *symbolic* realm, does not necessarily impair the child's signification process. The very first sentences of the novel imply that the father figure is annihilated from the beginning: "I have no father. There's nothing unusual about that, even children who do have fathers are often surprised to see them" (*Lighthousekeeping* 3). Silver hints that her father left them after he impregnated her mother. He was a fisherman "who came out of the sea and went back that way" (*Lighthousekeeping* 3). Silver draws an analogy between the sexual affair and navigation terms. Her father's "splintered hull shored him for long enough to drop anchor inside my [her] mother. Shoals of babies vied for life. I [she] won" (*Lighthousekeeping* 3). There is a similarity between Silver's and Pew's life stories because Pew associates himself with Jesus as his mother gave birth to him like Virgin Mary without a father (*Lighthousekeeping* 91).

The fact that both Silver and Pew have no fathers and there "is nothing unusual about it" (*Lighthousekeeping* 3) reifies Winterson's rethinking and rewriting of identity construction. She diminishes the role of the father as the embodiment of the *symbolic* realm in the novel. Subjects can comfortably enter the *symbolic* realm without a father figure. The very first succinct sentence of the novel "I have no father" is quintessential as it is followed by the non-gravity of the house Silver and her mother live in. Associating Silver's father's penis with the "anchor", Winterson points at a very mocking and sarcastic criticism as to the role of the father who is normally accepted as the pillar of the house and society in normative discourse. After he leaves Silver and her mother, they cannot hold on to an anchor and fly in the air because of non-gravity. Echoing and parodying Freud's insistent and outdated preoccupation with the father and the importance of going through the castration by accepting the role of the father so that the individuals can have a life of normalcy, Silver's nonchalant response to not having a father is a stance against the necessity of the Oedipus myth. Winterson's family pattern and parental categories do not conform to the biological categories of parents. Just as Kristeva argues "[t]he maternal is neither solely the privileged function

of the mother nor is the paternal function reserved for the father. Rather both functions can exist within one parent and are the source of double-connectedness of the linguistic subject” (Gambaudo 29). Keeping this in mind, lack of a father in this novel should not be read as the lack of a biological father. The father and mother figures must be unleashed from their biological and accepted parental roles. A parent can function both as a father and mother figure. For instance, Silver’s mother is not completely devoid of a paternal role; she limited the freedom of Silver although she was not happy with the social norms, either. When individuals enter the *symbolic* realm, they have to leave behind the freedom of the semiotized realm. *Symbolic* law functions as the organizing principle of the excess of affect. However, these two modalities should not be considered as independent of each other; the *symbolic* does not function as the impenetrable bar occluding the flow of the *semiotic* flux. The *semiotic* drive-based affects can resurge in the *symbolic* realm. So, Kristevan theory does not idealize the *semiotic* space which presides over the *Symbolic*. Likewise, Winterson does not glorify the uncanny terrain inhabited by the child and the maternal other. When the father figure is regarded as the representation of the *symbolic* realm, it is noticed that the mother figures also embody the role to enable the child to be encultured. Besides, Silver never shows any resentment against her father because he left them. She normalizes her father’s absence. She does not claim that they were ostracized from society because their father is absent, either. Rather, society puts the blame on the mother because she gave birth without wedlock. Rather than the biological existence or the parental function of the father, the lack of a legal family structure causes the disdain of society.

In this regard, Winterson brings forward a different perspective to the absence of the father, who is the first “Other” in the *symbolic* after the child is detached from the maternal other. Her main concern is related to the attitude of people who valorize the *symbolic* function of the father in the establishment of the legalized family triangle. What matters for her is how the subject goes through signification without privileging the *symbolic* or the *semiotic* over each other. As Duncker underlines, “the mother/daughter dyad was a key subject for theory and fiction, especially since it was

an area of enquiry that had been so foolishly ignored by early Freudian theory” (83). There is ample support for the claim that Winterson interrogates and extols the forgotten emotional connection between the mother and the child. However, the biological mother’s function must be broadened to the “maternal other” who strengthens the corporeality of subjectivity which erupts the *symbolic*. If the individual celebrates the *semiotic* fullness of being without denying the *symbolic* completely, the equilibrium between the corporeal and the incorporeal can be achieved. The individual who makes a pact between her lost maternal heaven and the *symbolic* realm becomes free to shield herself against *abjection*. Besides, total immersion in the *semiotic* or *symbolic* causes one to get stuck in the predicament to locate herself in culture. In this sense, the *symbolic* space where the Law reigns and where the individual meets the other individuals cannot be interpreted as a totally hellish place. The orderliness of the *symbolic* is still a sine-qua-non for the signification of the subject. The complete violation of the *symbolic* leads the subject to aporia. So, Winterson’s main occupation with her outcast subjects in her novels lies in “experiencing difficulties in verbalising the body” (Gambaudo 23). Accordingly, the absence of the father figure in *Lighthousekeeping*, in tandem with the Kristevan approach, should not be viewed as an opposition to the patriarchy but an accentuation of the pre-Objectal state.

While Silver is still closer to the space of undifferentiation, the *semiotic* nearness and closeness between her body and other states of being is in sharp contrast with the enclosed and static *symbolic* structure of society; “in a culture favouring ready-made representations of the human, the subject’s capacity to represent drives and affects is increasingly disabled” (Gambaudo 23). Silver and her mother are the *abjects* in the Kristevan sense; they symbolize the disorderly and unclean aspect of the *symbolic* order that expels the ones who defile the strict borders between self and other. In this thesis, I opt to explain the ostracization of Silver and her mother as abject figures, because a society which demarcates its borders as “us” and “them” is just an illusion and Winterson celebrates a society where some people are not classified as “Others”. As mentioned in the introduction part, a group of people expel the ones only because they are reminders of their own uncanny strangeness. The uncanny feeling does not

come from the outside but it is inherent in one's own psyche. What seems strange is indeed what is familiar. Yet the unfamiliarity of the other (*unheimlich*) casts fear on the subject because the other reminds him/her of her repressed side. Psychoanalysis and art are solutions for welcoming "the strangeness of the other and of oneself, toward an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable" (Kristeva *Strangers* 182). Although they do not promise a universe where all the irreconcilable poles are reconciled, for the individual, adopting the other in herself has a healing and subversive effect. So, in this novel, although there is no change in society, Winterson offers us an alternative subversive strategy to overcome the feeling of being *abjected* by the life story of Silver.

As a child who is closer to the *semiotic* realm, Silver's mindset has not been marred by the binary between subject and object yet. Living her life attached to her mother's body until her mother's death, she cannot differentiate between the self and other. For instance, she does not make a distinction between herself and her dog. The only friend she has in life is her dog DogJim which Silver likens herself to. She thinks that she is as misshapen as her dog as "I [she] have [has] a pointy nose and curly hair. My [her] front legs-that is, my[her] arms, are shorter than[her] my back legs- that is, my[her] legs, which make asymmetry with my dog, who is just the same, but the other way around" (*Lighthousekeeping* 16). She does not have clearly demarcated spaces between self and other. The reason why she has to live on the fringes is that her mother does not conform to the ethical norms of society. She brought Silver up by herself as a single mother and "she had conceived out of wedlock. There had been no lock on her door that night when my [Silver's] father came to call. So she was sent up to hill, away from the town, with the curious result that she looked down on it" (*Lighthousekeeping* 4-5). Inside and outside has no clear demarcation for her mother; she does not preserve the inside of the house as a sacred place; the house is not always locked. Her mother is cast in the role of the abject; although not mentioned explicitly, the patriarchal society keeps their surroundings clear of immorality by sending her to the fringes of the town.

The abject, in Kristevan terminology, does not only refer to the archaic connection with the mother's body which challenges the *symbolic* realm "from its place of its banishment" (*Powers* 2), but is also a social and cultural phenomenon. Human civilization and culture are based on excluding the other who is seen as a "demon, that threat, that apprehension generated by the projective apparition of the other at the heart of what we persist in maintaining as a proper, "solid us". (Kristeva *Strangers* 192). The fear of the other usually causes society to stigmatize them or render these people invisible. As Arya points out, *abjection* is quite common and the people who do not conform to the homogeneity of society "are seen to represent a threat, a fact that legitimizes their exclusion from the social fabric" (7). So, as Silver's mother does not conform to the "homogeneity of society", she is jettisoned as the abject.

The oscillation between the "collective subjectivity" and "individual subjectivity" creates a tension in the novel. Kristeva's analysis of individual subjectivity and her critique of the manifestation of social bonds in the *symbolic* order overlap with Silver's rites of passage and her ongoing process of individual subjectivity. After her mother dies, Silver finds herself among people who distanced themselves from the *semiotic* affiliation with the maternal body because they draw a boundary between themselves and the one who "disturbs identity, system, order" (Kristeva *Powers* 4) and they never dare step out of the rules decided by society. This is a borderline case of the subject "sent to and abandoned at its borders, at the limit of the ties between the individual and society. The borderline subject shows up where a society does not accompany the subject to those limits, which are also the society's own limits" (Beardsworth 15). The subject is left alone to connect the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*, so "to resist this normalisation of the human subject, and move beyond the crisis it constitutes for contemporary subjectivity [...] the individual must step away from this act of 'collective subjectification' and return to a more individual approach to development" (Gambaudo 42). Kristeva describes the situation of the modern man as a narcissist: "We have neither the time nor the space needed to create a soul for ourselves [...] Held back by his aloofness, modern man is a narcissist-a narcissist who may suffer, but who feels no remorse" (in *Portable* 207).

Winterson's insistence on love and story-telling can be scrutinized as her wish to present her socially *abjected* characters as the ones who are able to "create a soul" for themselves. Silver constructs her "original identity" in the face of "collective subjectivity". This can be explained as the positive effect of the *semiotic*. Although such a cognizance does not promise a utopia where all people resolve this crisis, on an individual base, Silver resists "the normalization of the human subject" (Gambaudo 42). Winterson does not give voice to the *abjected* subject in this novel; she enables the reader to see how it is possible to attain a unique individuality without falling into the malady of the modern subject who cannot reconcile the maternal and the *symbolic*.

Accordingly, Winterson juxtaposes the fluid subjectivity of Silver in contrast to Miss Pinch, who is a borderline subject and increases Silver's feeling of estrangement and isolation, which can be interpreted as Winterson's criticism against the society where individuals suffer from connecting the private and the public life. Silver's encounter with Miss Pinch is significant in two ways. Firstly, Silver's every human interaction in the public space positions her as an outcast because the society she lives in is encumbered by the borderline subjects, like Miss Pinch, who do not have the ability to connect the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. Therefore, they jettison Silver as an abject figure to protect their demarcated borders. Secondly, Silver goes through the *thetic* place many times after she is detached from her mother and despite the other people's effort to ostracize her as an abject figure, she challenges the orderliness of the *symbolic* by challenging the *thetic*. Silver's sense of primordial oneness with the maternal body is not entirely cut off as she resists disjunction and has the sense of oneness and fullness with the objects around her.

So firstly, Miss Pinch can be given as an example of the borderline subject who cannot connect the ties between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*; she is a subject who cannot go over the boundaries of the *symbolic* realm. She puts Silver up in her house for a few days, but later offers her to be adopted by a family because "my [her] house is not suitable for children" (*Lighthousekeeping* 18). The antagonistic attitude of Miss Pinch "who hated saying yes" and who was "one of those people for whom yes is always an admission of guilt or failure. No was power" (*Lighthousekeeping* 18) leaves Silver

faltering in questions as to how she will continue her life. In contrast to her mother who used to leave the door unlocked, Miss Pinch is obsessed with the protection of her house. She lives in "Railings Row" which was "a terrace of houses set back from the road. They reared up, black-bricked and salt-stained, their paintings reeled, their brass green" (*Lighthousekeeping* 8). All the houses were "boarded up" (*Lighthousekeeping* 9) in Railings Row and to protect herself against the outside world, Miss Pinch opens "the rain-soaked, marine-ply that was hinged over the front door, and undid the triple locks that secured the main door" (*Lighthousekeeping* 9). The Railings Row was accommodated by the rich tradesmen before but they left long time ago and Salts turned out to be a derelict place where nobody prospered any more. Silver mockingly states that Miss Pinch was quite knowledgeable about history "even though she had never left Salts in her life" (*Lighthousekeeping* 16). Her knowledge about the world and the way she educated children was quite mechanical and based on memorization: "Dangerous. Unpredictable. Threat. The world according to Miss Pinch" (*Lighthousekeeping* 17). Miss Pinch's fear of the outside world is obvious as she locks her doors three times and her depiction of the Atlantic Ocean brims with terror and unpredictability. She is quite a Dickensian figure; she has no mercy for Silver; she rebukes Silver for her insistence on taking DogJim with her and she always reminds Silver that she is nobody as she is an orphan. She orders Silver not to believe in the stories Pew tells and above her oven is embroidered "Life is a Steady Darkening Towards Night" (*Lighthousekeeping* 48). After Silver leaves the lighthouse, Miss Pinch advises her to apply for a job in a library, warning that she should not be too ambitious to get the job. She tells Silver that "librarianship was suitable for Females. Miss Pinch always said Females, holding the word away from her by its tail" (*Lighthousekeeping* 104-105). Besides, when the lighthouse was to be automated, Miss Pinch supported the automatization: "Salts, she said, must move with the times, which seemed odd to me [her] when Miss Pinch had never moved at all-not with the times nor with anything else" (*Lighthousekeeping* 105). When Silver steals the copy of *Death in Venice* from a woman, she gives the name of Miss Pinch to the police as the only person who knows her. When she asks the police to call her, "she [Miss Pinch] claimed never to have heard of such a person as myself [herself]" (*Lighthousekeeping*

145). Later, in one of the stories Pew tells, Silver learns that Miss Pinch was an orphan and “never was a descendant of Babel Dark. Never forgave any of us for that” (*Lighthousekeeping* 230). As she is an orphan, it could be stated that Silver reminds her of her own strangeness. She wants to get rid of Silver immediately because as another orphan, Silver triggers her own uncanny strangeness despite her endless effort to protect her borders. Miss Pinch is portrayed as a malicious woman who is unduly attached to stability in life. She allows nobody and nothing to throw her into disarray. Silence, stability and immobility are her basic principles in her life. However, Winterson never depicts the *symbolic* realm as impenetrable; notwithstanding their efforts to shelter themselves from the outside effects, their houses have been licked by the “salt-stained” waves of the sea. They are positioned in the liminal state between the safety of the interior and the fierce effect of nature. The inside and outside are always penetrated. As a rebuttal to the towns people who adhere to the *symbolic* and expel the Others who threaten their boundaries of a unified self and Miss Pinch who opts for an entirely stabilized and enclosed life, Winterson extols an ever changing, dynamic, fluid and mobile identity.

Secondly, as opposed to Miss Pinch’s sharp distinction between inside/ outside, subject/object and self/other, Silver is still closer to the *semiotic* realm because the distinction between the subject and object does not prevail in her mind. The way she challenges the *thetic* can be exemplified by the eiderdown as a brilliant grotesque image in the novel where the uncanny feeling is foregrounded:

By placing the chairs end to end, Miss Pinch gives an eiderdown to Silver; one of those eiderdowns that have more feathers on the outside than on the inside, and one of those eiderdowns that were only stuffed with one duck [...] So I lay down under the duck feathers and duck feet and duck bill and glassy duck eyes and snooked duck tail, and waited for daylight. (*Lighthousekeeping* 9)

Silver feels that she turns into the duck she is covered under. The layer between her and the cover vanishes; although there is only feather inside the quilt, Silver feels like sleeping under the dead body of the duck. She identifies with the other states of being, with another object outside, which is suggestive of the *semiotic*. By contrasting Miss Pinch’s attempts to create a stable surrounding for herself and Silver’s interiorization

of the exterior as seen in the eiderdown example, Winterson shows us that identity is not something subjects attain as a ready-made completeness; identity is constructed and reconstructed through processes involving the engagement with the world, the objects outside, our bodies and language. The signifying practices shape our subjectivity and the prescriptive notions of normality and totalizing systems always push our limits of body and psyche. The psyche

is not simply the closed, pre-social individual that it is generally thought to be. Rather, as a threshold [...], a social melting spot, a political openness and most of all a mental plasticity. The psyche is the spatio-temporal site at which (traditional) contraries meet: space and time, word and flesh, mind and body, self and other, individual and society, and so on. (Keltner *Thresholds* 9)

Winterson, in this novel, offers love and story-telling as two solutions that propel the individual to have a fluid and ever changing identity. Adopting the “stranger” within her own self is not an easy process for Silver. The way she copes with the ostracism of people after she leaves the lighthouse has been enabled possible only after she learns the meaning of love and the value of telling her own story. In the Lighthouse, she recognizes that subjectivity is never monolithic or fixed. The construction of an identity is pertinent to what kind of stories you tell and to what end they carry you. In contrast to the people living outside the lighthouse, who have a distrust of everything that lies outside the border of their selves and who define their boundaries of the self in their safe and domestic zones, Silver acquires a nomadic consciousness; she rejects any kind of permanent identity and she saves herself from the incarceration of clear categorizations. Adopting the other (the maternal other/the semiotic) in herself enables her to graft her identity out of the heteronormative restrictions. To put it simply, the most viable way to unleash herself from the ostracization of the other people has been embracing the abject in herself.

5.2. Story Telling and Love as The Forms of the Sublimated *Abject*

Storytelling and love are the red threads which run through the novel, which can be analyzed as the sublimation of the abject that narrows down the gap between the subject and the object. Pew, as the imaginary father figure, teaches Silver what the core meaning of love is and how story telling enables Silver to treat herself as a fiction.

Love stories and storytelling skills in which imagined histories are recontextualized are bestowed on the characters who cannot keep step with the cultural or social codes in Winterson's novels. Neither love nor storytelling can be considered within their denotative meanings, though. Winterson does not resort to the cliché and overused romantic love affair theme in her novels. Love wavers between the desire to have and the inevitability of being one with the lover. She explores a new route to articulate what love is like; in *Art Objects*, she makes an analogy between art and love. Both art and love have transformative effects on the individual: "True art, when it happens to us, challenges the 'I' that we are" (15). At the outset, *Lighthousekeeping* seems like a *Bildungsroman*, yet rather than the character's psychological and moral growth, this novel focuses on the protagonist's encounter with language, which she learns to use by storytelling. The way that Silver grapples with existential questions such as where she comes from and where she will end up as an orphan girl leads her to speak the language of love; yet rather than using ossified definitions of love, she experiences the meaning of genuine love thanks to Pew, the main storyteller in the novel. The end of the novel is suggestive of such a euphoria stemming from the cognizance of genuine love:

Life is short. The stretch of sea and sand, this walk on the shore, before the tide covers everything we have done.
I love you.
The three most difficult words in the world.
But what else can I say? (*Lighthousekeeping* 232)

Love as the main topic testifies to the fact that poetic language creates a new realm of discourse and reality through which one's perspective changes and s/he puts herself on trial. Poetic language in which the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* interact is the means by which Winterson can write about love. In the interview by Catherine Bush, Winterson singles love out as one of the tenets of her novels and states that:

I do think that love is the most significant achievement and most people never realize that achievement whatever else they manage [...] Human beings run away from anything big because they're scared. I'm really trying to drag people back to these big questions and say "Look at them, and yes it's frightening, and yes you may be turned to stone, and yes it may ruin your life, but what life is there unless you do face up to these things?" (57-58)

So, she challenges the notion of safe love which does not create a crisis in which the borders of self and other are not broken down. She sublimates love as an *object* and wonders what happens to individuals if they dare step into dangerous grounds. Love is frightening and if one is scared of unleashing the repressed fear, s/he can never realize the achievement of feeling genuine love. Sublimation of such brushed aside and feared feelings requires a different discourse concomitantly because language must be given a new shape, torn into pieces so that the individual can encounter the crisis of self and other through love. Only when the stability of language is challenged can one cut across the limits imposed on notions like love. In the same interview, Winterson states that: "I want to use language in a very raw and tough way so the reader can't pull back from the experience, from how shocking the experience of loss is" (57). So, rather than being caught up in the bathos of unreturned love or the loss of the lover, Winterson tries to define love via a new language; crisis between the self and other brings forward questioning certainty and stability. Both self and other are in a mutual process, changing and evolving. So, according to Winterson, language which the writer leaves intact does not suffice to project the play of the signifiers. Language does not impose a limitation on Winterson, rather she is aware of the fact that as long as she can experiment with it, she can benefit from it. The acuity of having freedom in language derives its power from being aware of the fact that language does not exist to frighten her, but it is there to be crafted and molded by an artistic intensity.

Accordingly, love is not downplayed as a romantic relationship between partners in this novel. Love is the conduit through which an individual triumphs over melancholy. Love's meaning is broader for Silver as it means challenging the unified identities and culturally established codes of society. Love is adopting the uncanny feeling that one struggles to overcome in life. As the subjects can never reach the point of bliss that they had before being enveloped in the symbolic, love with another individual does not promise a never-ending bliss. Therefore, like many novels of Winterson, Silver's love story with another woman is narrated open-endedly. The genuine love experience for her is to sublimate the maternal other through story-telling. In the same vein, the meaning of storytelling is enlarged; it refers to seeing life from a multi-layered

perspective; stories are the mediators between reality and fiction. When Silver starts telling stories to herself, she starts telling her life story as a fabricated story. In *Passion*, the recurring phrase “I am telling you stories, trust me” becomes the backbone of *Lighthousekeeping*. Only when one learns to see her/his life as a tale and becomes the teller of her/his own life story, can love act as a healer rather than inflicting pain. Only through coming to terms with the fact that being an individual is a process and this process with its trials and errors matters more than the product, can the individual reach happiness. As storytelling is an action where the teller either recounts a story s/he heard from somebody else or fabricates a new one, either way entails the imagination of the speaker. Even though the storyteller tells the story as a hear-say, s/he embellishes it with his/her own voice. So, there is no story in the world which has not been told through the unique voice of the teller. From a larger perspective, if a person treats his/her own life as a story, s/he will produce it through his/her own voice, imagination and perspective. In Silver’s case, as an outcast, there are two ways. Either she will adopt the labels of people and continue her life considering herself as an outcast or she will be the major character in her life story and reconstruct her own identity. Both forms signal that identity is a construction; some people live in accordance with the epithets of the “Others”; the others plough their own furrow. Foregrounding authentic love through art will break taboos.

Winterson zeroes in on personal conceiving of desire and prioritizes the positive effect of love as a gesture which has political implications. The opposition of love is disgust; the rift between the self and other causes disgust which is, for instance, a salient theme in *Stonegods*. Bradway states that “disgust implies a strict hierarchy between subject and object, in which the former repudiates the latter to maintain its solidity. The subject of disgust simultaneously hates and strives to protect itself from the other” (192). Disgust, in this context, is highly associated with the abject feeling the human being has for the other; on the other hand, love erases the boundaries between self and other; the abject is sublimated, one does not fear to lose his/her existence when he welcomes the other. Therefore, queer or not, love has a deconstructive power in the face of hierarchies and binary oppositions. Desire, as the inevitable corollary of love, is the

context against which Winterson wields her lyrical style and the spell she weaves with words results from her attempt to venture into the linguistic unknown; the exuberance of love and desire demystifies the frontiers of sexual identities, and correspondingly Winterson defies any ingrained, fossilized or irrefutable thought system and supposedly incommutable structure of the symbolic language by the plenitude and tempestuousness of equivocality and polyphony of *semiotic* language. She pierces through the normative and unified language structure so tenuously and artistically that the *symbolic* and the *semiotic* dimensions of signification interact in an interdependent continuum.

Although love and story-telling have been analyzed a lot in the novels of Winterson, “love” from Kristevan approach can offer greater insight to this novel to understand how she welcomes the fusion of the subject and the object. The imaginary father figure is the threshold between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* conceptualization of Pew as an imaginary father figure in the novel which solidifies the in-between space where the subject and object are not totally separated. He is also on the verge of the maternal other and the Other people that the child will encounter after being dispatched from the mother. According to both Freud and Kristeva, the imaginary father figure “whose imaginary presence introduces a third term in the mother/child dyad and enables first the baby’s distanciation from the maternal and second its transfer onto the paternal” (Gambaudo 136) is significant in the signification process of the child. This father figure which the child creates in her imagination eases the tyranny of the *Symbolic* father figure. The subject needs a softer father figure who will support her “transition through abjection into the Symbolic order” (Oliver Kristeva 4). Besides, s/he “becomes the basis of the first movement away from the mother towards the place of the father” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 169). In this novel, Pew acts as the imaginary father figure who teaches her how to step into the *symbolic* realm softly, without fearing either the abject mother or the *symbolic* father. Not having been adopted by anybody, Silver ends up in a lighthouse in Cape Wrath in Scotland where she will be trained to “tend” the light by the lighthouse keeper Pew who believes that learning to tend the light is tantamount to telling stories. Upon being asked what it means to keep the light,

he answers that "...the stories. That's what you must learn. The ones I know and the ones I don't know" (*Lighthousekeeping* 40). Pew gives her a tiny room and bed which she can barely fit into with her dog and her routine in the lighthouse never changes. She starts every day by "brewing a pot of Full Strength Samson and take it to Pew", continues by "cooking, taking the dog for a walk, polishing the instruments" (*Lighthousekeeping* 37), and ends with Pew telling her a story, tending the light and going to bed. She becomes an apprentice to the lighthouse where she learns the life story of Babel Dark from Pew. Storytelling emerges as a form of mediation between extremes; she takes the stories and spins them toward an ontologically and existentially deconstructive end. The stories Silver hears from Pew are imbricated upon each other poking holes in language; as the narrator suggestively states in one of the epithets "A beginning, a middle and an end is the proper way to tell a story. But I have difficulty with that method" (*Lighthousekeeping* 23). Winterson's self-consciously and densely imagistic narrative spirals into an affective discourse, propelling the reader to question if love is the content that the structure is shaped or misshaped around or the novel can talk about love only if it is bereft of a linear and unitary structure. In the lighthouse, Silver's whole perspective changes thanks to Pew. He teaches Silver that storytelling is an integral part of lighthousekeeping and tending the light as a metaphor is woven in the novel as story-telling (*Lighthousekeeping* 40).

When the duty to raise her in the lighthouse is given to Pew by Miss Pinch, another page is opened in her life. Pew becomes another maternal/paternal role model for Silver. Pew and the lighthouse bear a profound significance in her emotional and psychic maturation. Silver gets used to living in darkness easily as she underlines, "darkness was a presence. I learned to see in it, I learned to see through it, and I learned to see the darkness of my own" (*Lighthousekeeping* 20). Silver affiliates the absence of light with the absence of her mother. The lighthouse where she starts living after being hired by Pew represents both darkness and light. It sheds light on the sailors to find their way but inside is so dark that Silver feels like "she was back in the womb" (*Lighthousekeeping* 32). Winterson's lighthouse "looked like a living creature, standing upright on its base, like a seahorse, fragile, impossible, but triumphant in the

waves” (*Lighthousekeeping* 80). Winterson does not erase the boundaries between light and dark because in darkness, Silver learns how to find her way and it helps her have another sensational vision. She learns “to see darkness” of her own which means that darkness enables her to have introspection. She feels as if she returned to the womb because darkness provides her the safety she had there. Besides, the lighthouse does not merely stand for an erect, indestructible phallus signifier, it is fragile and it is like a “seahorse²⁴”. The lighthouse is at the point where the mother and the child are separated after birth. Pew is the *imaginary father* that disengages the child from the engulfing maternal body. Kristeva broadens Lacan’s ideas and she argues that unlike the dominating and forbidding *Symbolic father* of Lacan, the imaginary father helps the infant to step into the *Symbolic* order. He is “the one who loves us, not the one who judges us” (Kristeva *Tales* 313). Pew is like a father figure for Silver, but he is not defined as a punishing and prohibiting father who poses paternal threats; he represents the Kristevan “loving father against Lacan’s stern authoritarian father” (Oliver Kristeva 77). It is “a combination of the mother and the father”...and has (77) “the characteristics of both masculine and feminine” (77). Pew refers to the merging of two realms: there has always been a Pew working in the lighthouse. The lighthouse nullifies death and linear time. Pew straddles both the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*; he cherishes Silver, tells her stories, leaves her money and a diary before he leaves.

Pew’s blindness is in stark contrast to the sight of the Symbolic father. Such a phallogentric understanding of sexual difference is suggestive of the Freudian understanding of sexual difference which rests upon the opposition between the presence and the absence of the penis, as Moi notes: “The Freudian theory of sexual difference is based on the *visibility* of difference: it is the eye that decides what is

²⁴ The seahorse is another salient metaphor in the novel. Babel Dark finds it in the caves and keeps it in his pocket all the time. It is reminiscent of the old days when there was life; the life neither Darwin nor Babel Dark can attain or explain; it is the unfathomable trace of the unreachable past. In this respect, it functions as Lacan’s *l’objet petit a* “which is the cause of desire...the object of the radical lack lived by the child who is separated at birth from its mother” (Sarup 98). As the signifier of desire, the seahorse is the *l’objet petit a* for Babel Dark.

clearly true and what isn't" (*Sexual/Textual* 131). Pew does not cast a threat by the power of the gaze. He is not endowed with the power to make a differentiation between femininity and masculinity; because as the imaginary father, he embodies both the maternal and the paternal figures. There has always been a Pew in the lighthouse; he represents fluidity, continuity, and the individual who is always in process. Silver asks him what he can see with his second sight. Babel tells her that he sees "the past and the future. Only the present is dark" (*Lighthousekeeping* 48). When Silver asks him what the present is, he says:

I've never lived on land and I can't say what's this or that. I can only say what's
ebbing and what's becoming
What is ebbing?
My life
What is becoming
Your life. You'll be the keeper after me. (*Lighthousekeeping* 48)

Pew as the imaginary father who "insures the subject's entrance into the universe of signs and creation" (Kristeva *Black Sun* 23), helps Silver to "ab-jet" her mother's body and thereby separate from her" (Oliver Kristeva 79). Once the imaginary father completes his duty to prepare the child to enter the symbolic realm, he retreats into background because the child will encounter many symbolic father figures. As Moi explains, "[t]o enter into the Symbolic Order means to accept the phallus as the representation of the Law of the Father" (*Sexual/Textual* 97). There is no place for the imaginary father in the symbolic order, because he can't name or define the things. Referring to a signified by a signifier, saying what is what is quite a structuralist attitude and subjectivity is always divided and in process in the domain of language. Nevertheless, the imaginary father can only say what is moving, ebbing, becoming and circulating. This is the reason why there are no beginnings and ends in the stories Pew tells Silver. All the stories begin with another story. At first, Silver does not understand why Pew is telling her stories in so disorderly a fashion: "Why can't you just tell me the story without starting with another story? He says 'because there's no story that's the start of itself, any more than a child comes into the world without parents'" (*Lighthousekeeping* 27). The circular pattern of the stories hints at the idea that Pew does not demarcate stories, eras, people or lives. He is always in process; he is just

another Pew in the history of the lighthouse keeper Pews. He even claims to have seen the events that happened before his birth. The stories belong to the era before he was born. He tells Silver that Molly and Babel Dark, who lived in the nineteenth century, met in the lighthouse as if he had been there. Silver asks him:

What did they talk about?
I only heard some of it- I was outside, of course.
Pew, you weren't born
Well, the Pew that was born was. (*Lighthousekeeping* 98)

Keeping in mind that blindness is associated with emasculation, Pew is far from being a dominant manipulator, a supreme *symbolic* father figure. He encourages Silver to create her own stories as this is the only way to exist and the stories are meaningful “only if you tell it [them]” (*Lighthousekeeping* 109). To put in other words, Pew paves the way for Silver to write the story of her own life by helping her sublimate the abject mother in telling stories. He prepares her for the symbolic Order, where the patriarchy both has the power of speech and writing, to take the control of her own life. Apart from that, as Pew belongs to the pre-*symbolic* realm, he is ill equipped with writing, naming or referring to a certain signified. Language has not marred his realm yet. His stories are at odds with the linear and structural language of the *symbolic* configuration. The *semiotic* is associated with the maternal body; however, this *semiotic* realm challenges the Lacanian symbolic. Lechte points out that the Kristevan *semiotic*/feminine disrupts “the Name-of-the-Father as the embodiment of the paternal function, and thus the Symbolic as the order of language and signification” (*Julia Kristeva* 5). Silver’s own stories written by her feminine psyche under the effect of Pew, accordingly, will disrupt the Name-of-the-Father. The stories of Pew constantly wander off into evasions and digressions, yet their common aim is to teach the value of love. During a conversation with Miss Pinch, Silver touches on the significance of love:

If I hadn't been an orphan, I would never have known Pew.
What possible difference could that have made?
The difference that love makes. (*Lighthousekeeping* 106)

In this novel, love has different functions. Firstly, it is pertinent to the loving imaginary father figure who stands in contrast with the Symbolic Father. Secondly, only through telling stories can Silver appreciate the meaning of genuine love. Stories have brought Silver into communion with the uncorrupted qualities of language belonging to the pre-*symbolic* period. The stories are the means by which self and other dissolve their existences into each other as Silver underlines:

When I look back across the span of water I call my life, I can see me there in the lighthouse with Pew, or in the Rock and Pit, or on a cliff edge finding fossils that turned out to be other lives. My life. His life. Pew. Babel Dark. All of us bound together, tidal, moon-drawn, past, present and future in the break of a wave. (*Lighthousekeeping* 154)

The lighthouse connects the lives of all characters in the novel notwithstanding the time they lived in. It transmutes into the bodies of the people who lived there. The language spoken in there is not cut off from the body; the body signifies the corporeality of the *semiotic* realm. It provides a psychic wholeness to the body/mind and self/other. The sensuous knowledge Silver gleans in the darkness of the lighthouse is disruptive of the *symbolic* realm. Despite the semiotized infusion of *symbolic* realm in the lighthouse and its uncanny properties, Winterson does not depict it as an intimidating, suffocating or engulfing place. On the contrary, it is a cozy and soothing place where Law does not prevail. Pew represents the gray area between the subject and the object. The creation of such a character also evinces Winterson's ante-phallic (rather than anti-phallic) description of a world where a softer, nourishing and gender free father figure prepares the child for the world.

5.3. "Who Cares About Gender at a Time Like This?" The Thetic and the Identity in Process

Silver's interaction with other people in public spaces puts her subjectivity on trial and shapes her identity as an ongoing process; these are the experiences where the otherness issue is foregrounded by Winterson as a matter of the subject's oscillation between differentiation and nondifferentiation. While the people she meets in the library, holiday inn and the doctor in the psychiatric clinic remind her that she is different/strange as she does not conform to the *symbolic* patterns of public life (Silver

is not one of “them”), her encounter with the talking bird, the uncanny animal and her love experience with a woman will put her subjectivity on perpetual trial, thereby diminishing the gap between self and “Other”/other. As the *thetic* phase is not a fixed point in the individual’s life and sometimes the self and the other are not perceived as distinct categories, the exterior is interiorized and the trauma of the thetic break is healed by the affinity between the subject and the object. When she leaves the lighthouse and arrives in London, this is “a new planet” (*Lighthousekeeping* 133) for her as the title of that chapter suggests. This new planet with its customs, the language and the habitants is alien to her.

The hotel is the first place where Silver starts interacting with other people after leaving the lighthouse. After Miss Pinch’s house, the holiday inn is the next place where she recognizes that she is a stranger. She serves at night when there are not many people around and the room given to her prevents her from connecting with the other people; she is rendered invisible. She realizes that even what she wears makes a difference. She cannot decide what to wear; clothes have never meant her anything; this new planet is constructed on certain rules. She stands in front of the mirror “whether or not to wear my [her] oilskin coat. It was yellow and oversized. I [she] was yellow and oversized. And while I [she] had never thought about it at all in the lighthouse, somehow The Holiday Inn was making me [her] self-conscious” (*Lighthousekeeping* 136). Silver’s identification of her body with the clothes as “yellow and oversized” is a case in point because she has no mindset yet strong enough to differentiate between self/other, material/immaterial and her body/oilskin coat. She has taken the shape and the colour of the cloth on her so far; there is no distinction between her body and what covers her body.

The hotel as a public space unsettles Silver’s undifferentiated sense of subjectivity. There is an analogy between her oversize coat and language. As the oversize coat does not fit her, she cannot fit herself in language: “The important things are learned in faces, in gestures, not in our locked tongues. The true things are too big or too small, or in any case always the wrong size to fit the template called language” (*Lighthousekeeping* 135). The ambiguous nature of words and the plurality of

meanings signal Winterson's postmodern approach to language. She regards language as a template, a fixed pattern; however, this fixed pattern falls short of expressing emotions. The real communication between people takes place in the movements of the body and the facial expressions. Silver is unable to strike a right balance between how the other people see the world and how she sees the world. She gets more fragmented as people see her as an outsider everywhere. Winterson demonstrates "how a single character is confronted with multiple pictures and responses of her self simultaneously and is ultimately torn between diverse and often contradictory reflections" (Jamali 85). Likewise, the shopping mall where "she had been the only person wearing a yellow oilskin" (136) spots her out as a different one. But "I [she] put on an extra jersey instead" (*Lighthousekeeping* 136). Her decision to wear her jersey instead of taking off the oilskin coat evokes Pew's depiction of *McCloud* "which was built two hundred years ago, and that was as wicked a ship as sailed. When the King's navy scuttled her, her Captain swore an oath that he and his ship would some day return" (*Lighthousekeeping* 46). Then, the old ship is built again and "the broken sails and ruined keel of the old *McCloud* rise up in the body of the ship. There is a ship within a ship and that's the fact" (*Lighthousekeeping* 47). Unwilling to believe the story of *McCloud*, Silver pesters Pew to tell the truth about the ship:

How could she carry in her body the trace-winds of the past?

'Like a Russian-doll, she is' one ship inside another, and on a stormy night you can see the old *McCloud* hanging like a gauze on the upper deck'. (*Lighthousekeeping* 47)

The Russian-doll imagery suggests that Winterson's perception of signification is imbricated, there are no polar oppositions between things; like "a gauze on the upper deck", time and space cross over each other. The name of the ship also hints at the continuation of time and space. It is "*McCloud*"; the ship begets another ship out of its ruins and it remains existing for years just like Pew who always continues living in the lighthouse for ages. The Pews, the ships and Silvers always perpetuate their existences. Such continuity challenges the traditional understanding of time, space and signification.

Another significant scene where there is a communicational gap between Silver and the people she encounters after leaving the lighthouse is the library. This is the other public space where Silver is treated as an outcast. She wants to read the books without registration. When she steals a book from a woman working in the library, she is labelled as a thief. Unable to persuade the librarian to hire her to work in the library, Silver is perplexed by the mismatch between the librarian's questions and her answers:

'But you may join the library if books interest you'
'Yes, they do very much, then you, I will'
Here is the form. We'll need a permanent address, utility bill, and a signed photo.'
'What, like a film star?'
'Someone who has known you for two years must sign the photo.'
I suppose Miss Pinch might do it... (I was beginning to wonder if this librarian was related to Miss Pinch.)
'Where do you live?'
'The Holiday Inn'
'That is not a permanent address'
.....
'Have you a proof of your address in Scotland?'
'Everyone knows it. It's the lighthouse at Cape Wrath. Straight up the coast and you can't miss it'. (Lighthousekeeping 137-138)

The basic proofs of one's identity are the sign, the parents, a permanent address, a photo or at least a utility bill which proves that one lives in a registered place. All these requirements anchor a person to a definite place and time. For all the people except for Silver and Pew, identity is something that can be verified by material objects or at least parents. Silver considers the world as such a limited place that she gives the address of the lighthouse very simply and childishly. For these people, identity is static, immutable and verifiable. Their references to words are frozen, which leads to a humorous communication gap. Although the sentences that the hotel receptionist and the librarian utter have certain references for themselves, they do not transfer a meaning to Silver. Thus, the lack of understanding stems not from being able to understand the syntax or grammar of their speech but not being equipped with the same signifieds. When she cannot finish reading *Death in Venice* in the library, she follows the librarian who takes the book to her house. She steals the book in the librarian's garden when she goes inside to answer the phone. Then the woman notices her and starts screaming. Silver does not understand that the woman is screaming because she

is an intruder; she rushes to help her, enters the house and looks everywhere and “couldn’t [can’t] find anybody” (*Lighthousekeeping* 145) and later she is labelled as a thief by the police. So, the library is another manifestation of the *thetic* phase for Silver, which she transgresses in her individual style.

Silver’s *abjection* by society is pushed further when she is diagnosed as a psychotic by the doctor. The doctor’s insistence that Silver should attach herself to the real world by medication implies how it is easy for the other people to label one who violates the unity of the borders of society. When she goes to Athens, she sees a psychiatrist and he bombards her with question to learn why she has stolen the book and the talking bird (which will be explained later). The psychiatrist diagnoses her with psychosis as she cannot explain the motive behind stealing them in the normative language:

I told him about meaning, and he suggested, very politely, that might be a kind of psychosis.

‘You think meaning is psychosis?’

‘An obsession with meaning, at the expense of the ordinary shape of life, might be understood as psychosis, yes.’

‘I do not accept that life has an ordinary shape, or that there is anything ordinary about life at all. We make it ordinary, but it is not.’

...

He wrote on a piece of paper with his pencil: Psychosis: out of touch with reality. Since then, I have been trying to find out what reality is, so that I can touch it. (*Lighthousekeeping* 196)

The doctor considers Silver’s stealing problem a detachment from reality. Her understanding of meaning is out of the parameters of universally accepted reality. Psychotic people are said to lose the grips on reality owing to their inability of saving themselves from primary narcissistic identification with the mother. They are believed to have failed in the castration. Therefore, they lose connection with reality and they cannot make a differentiation between self and other. Silver fails to come to grips with people’s obsession with thinking of everything in one dimension. She shows the reader that there are other alternatives in life by which people can apprehend reality. She is just on the fringes of society because the doctor believes she seems to be out of touch with the *symbolic*. Medical terminology imprisons her in the state of madness. However, rather than madness, Silver’s quest for an alternative meaning and reality

can be explained as her sublimation of the abject. The abject never completely recedes and threatens to unveil what has been constituted in the process of subjectivity; therefore, one's own sense of self is never fixed and settled. Silver is cognizant that her perception of the world is different from that of the others and she will try to find that reality that she can "touch". She is not lost in the engulfing power of the abject, which is possible to gauge from her reaction to the doctor. If fantasy is the polar opposite of reality, Silver partakes of both of them. Winterson is cautious about melting the real and the fantastic in the same pot. She criticizes "believers who are too literal in their claims" and "cautions against obsessive self-enclosure in fantasy, she also warns against taking too tight a hold on the real" (Burns "Fantastic Language" 291). She does not let her narrative style be drowned in the *semiotic* base of language; "...she is carefully controlling these extremes, with a particular aesthetic in view" (Burns "Powerful Differences" 388).

Her experiences in the hotel, the library and the clinic suggest that in the public places Silver is forced to think that she is different. She is deemed to be a thief and even a psychotic. Therefore, she is made to believe that she is the "Other" which imbues her with the feeling of being an outcast. Nevertheless, Winterson does not condemn the attitudes of the people in the public spaces; rather, she demonstrates to the reader how they adhere to the *symbolic* patterns of society and how they are disconnected from the *semiotic* realm, therefore consider everything in the parameters of the rules and codes. Silver's other public life experiences, on the other, bring her closer to the *semiotic* space where she oscillates between differentiation and nondifferentiation.

The Talking Bird episode is one of the awakening points in Silver's life as it welcomes Silver as an individual by saying her name. Silver is again pushed to the limits of the *thetic* and she transgresses it semiotically by both identifying with and rejecting the talking bird. When she goes to Capri, she hears a talking bird saying her name in a small apartment. She comments on it as the following:

Names are still magic; even Sharon, Karen, Darren and Warren are magic to somebody somewhere. In the fairy stories, naming is knowledge. When I know your name, I can

call your name, and when I call your name, you'll come to me. (*Lighthousekeeping* 155-156)

The moment when the talking bird calls her name, Silver rediscovers herself. Hearing her name from the bird can be read as the declaration of her identity. The bird provides her with the stability she has been looking for since she left the lighthouse. Given that in fairy tales, the characters' names are associated with their personal traits, one can gather a lot of information if the character is good or evil. This is the reason why naming is "knowledge". The reader gets knowledge about the character in the fairy tale; proper names help the reader identify a certain character or an object. As the quote above suggests, names also draw people close. People get to know each other by calling each other's names. In real life it has a magical effect, as well. Even a change of a letter in the name like "Karen, Darren, Warren" connotes a different meaning to different people. What creates all the difference is the structure of language; every word arouses a different picture in one's mind. Winterson criticizes the way people approach language as a magical entity; real magic of language lies in the unstable nature of the words; according to her "words are fleet-footed things and when right run, escape us at the place where we think we have wrestled them flat" (*Art Objects* 166). Naming is tantamount to situating one into the patriarchal order. Winterson criticizes being positioned under the patrimony. She discards imposed identities and she forces the readers to be aware of the constructed identity formations the primary of which is naming. Winterson deals with the naming issue from a deconstructive angle; she uses a subversive strategy and empowers the talking bird as the name giver. She juxtaposes religion and imagination, thus presents a different order.

Silver's predicament stems from the other people's effort to stabilize her into a meaning. The hotel receptionist, the librarian and Miss Pinch try to locate her in a stable place in the *symbolic* space. However, they deny her recognition and reduce her to the status of an object. Excited about being recognized by the bird, Silver steals it to fulfil her desire to be recognized as an individual rather than an abject. She expresses her predicament as below:

Your business is failing and your relationship is failing- forget the bird.' Forget the bird! I might as well try and forget myself. And that was the problem of course-I had forgotten myself, long since, long before the bird, and I wanted in a messy, maddening way, to go on forgetting myself and yet, to find myself, too [...] 'Bongiorno, Silver! Every day the bird reminded me of my name, which is to say, who I am. (*Lighthousekeeping* 158)

Silver identifies herself with the talking bird; they are both caged, they are trained to speak the language which is void for them. The parrot repeats what it learns from its owner and it is not cognizant of what it is uttering; Silver is unable to harmonize with people because the language of other people is beyond her ken. She yearns for both "forgetting" and "finding" herself. Forgetting the talking bird and forgetting herself are rendered identical, as well. If she manages to forget the bird that reminded her who she is, in other words, provided Silver with recognition by saying her name, she will forget herself, too. "Forgetting" and "finding" are identical with one another in psychoanalytical perspective. It might be helpful to interpret this identification in the light of Kristeva's explanation on "rejection" at this point. She asserts that the processes of identification/incorporation and differentiation/rejection are operating within the material of the body. Rejection is pertinent to the anal-aggressive drive; it is "precisely the semiotic mode of this permanent aggressivity" (*Revolution* 150). This derive belongs to the time before the mirror phase and "equivalent to the separation of the subject from the mother through the expulsion of the maternal object" (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 136). Rejection violates the *symbolic* and puts the individual on trial. Rejection and identification are the intersection points for the individual from where signification emerges. Material rejection such as the expulsion of the waste from the body expedites signification. The identification with the maternal body is relinquished after the child represses her desire for that identification. In order that the child can be constituted in and through language, the identification must leave its place to rejection or forgetting. As a result of entering into the domain of the *symbolic*, the *semiotic* attachment with the maternal body must be forsaken and rejected; what is found must be forgotten. Then, the subject can steer his/ her desire for another Object as substitution. The child must renounce a part of itself- in so far as it is still one with the mother- in order to become a self" (McAfee 48). Silver is immersed in the *semiotic*

base of language; therefore, she ponders over the predicament of entering the *symbolic*- embracing her identity overcoming the pain of forgetting her name. The talking bird as the reminder of the *thetic* moment invites Silver to relinquish her archaic and pre-Oedipal attachment to the maternal other (her mother and Pew) and propels her to welcome the *symbolic* realm by naming Silver and reminding her that that she has more serious preoccupations such as her “failing business and relationship” (*Lighthousekeeping* 158).

The talking bird has one more function; it calls Silver a boy: “The bird regarded me- ‘Pretty boy! Pretty boy!’ Who cares about gender at a time like this?” (*Lighthousekeeping* 157). A lot of critical readings are enacted as to Winterson’s handling of the gender problem. It is a well-known fact that Winterson is renowned for “her fascination with exuberant gender performance and gender ambiguity” (Makinen 84) and she always resorts to “postmodern deconstruction of fixed notions of gender, sexuality and self” (68). The lesbian narrative space has always been one of her preoccupations. However, Winterson is also cognizant that reclaiming the lesbian narrative repeatedly in her novel has the risk of her novels being pigeonholed under the limiting definitions. In *Lighthousekeeping*, it is obvious that she integrates gender construction and lesbian narrative in a larger scope. As Andermahr underlines, *Lighthousekeeping*

is a novel that focuses on the close, platonic relationship between a young woman and an older, seemingly ageless man, the lesbian narrative has been reduced to an almost incidental subplot [...] This kind of decentring lesbian plot may be seen as a positive development, demonstrating that lesbian characters and relationships can exist happily alongside other stories without need for justification.(15)

Until Silver meets the talking bird and the bird cries out that Silver is a boy, we are given no explicit clues about the gender of Silver. Only Miss Pinch advises her to find a job in the library as it is suitable for the female. In the rest of the novel, no character addresses Silver as “she” or “he”. Especially in the lighthouse where temporal and spatial borders are conflated along with multiple dimensions of reality, characters are presented as gender-neutral. In a novel where stories are intermingled, temporality and spatiality are defied, no consistent frame of narration is presented, the bird’s

identification of Silver as a boy is downplayed to triviality. Besides, deemphasizing the biological sex of Silver reveals Winterson's reaction to the exclusively symbolic language which foregrounds "figuration and thus specularization" (Kristeva *Revolution* 26). In Winterson's semiotically charged narrative, the distinctions of sex and gender are shattered as opposed to the gendered strictures of decorum rigidly marked by the symbolic.

The scene where Silver encounters the uncanny animal strengthens her position as the abject but she turns this uncanny encounter into positive signification. The strange animal she encounters in the forest also unearths the uncanny and grotesque side of Silver. Silver faces the uncanny- the primordial horror- in the shape of a strange animal. She cannot name the animal she sees while climbing a mountain in Athens: "I felt I was being watched...Then I saw it-about the size of a medium dog but looking like a cat, with bigger ears and frightening eyes...We stared at each other out-until it silently slunk backwards into a cave behind the rock" (*Lighthousekeeping* 198). The strange animal is poeticized as the abject. Silver finds that certain mode of expression to be able to articulate the crisis she is in. Instead of running away from the animal, which turns out to be a "civet" (*Lighthousekeeping* 198), she dares staring at it. She identifies herself with the civet, but also is aware of her difference from it: "I am part civet, part mouser" (198). The bars that divide the subject and the object are burst open; the self and the other are undifferentiated. The *semiotic* dimension of language allows Silver to utter her inarticulate yearning and cautious avoidance of the abject mother: "What should I do about the wild and the tame? The wild heart that wants to be free, and the tame heart that wants to come home. I want to be held. I don't want you to come too close. I want you to scoop me up and bring me home at nights. *I don't want to tell you where I am*" (198). Silver welcomes her own human/ animal form. The yearning to go home and to be tamed is juxtaposed with the elation at being wild.

The chapter entitled "This is a love story" (*Lighthousekeeping* 209) is a poetic manifestation of how Silver harmonizes self and other while drawing the boundaries between inside and outside delicately. She turns *abjection* into a positive and affective signification style and strips herself off the detrimental effect of melancholy. She

meets her lover, who is supposed to be a woman as they first meet at a convent where nuns work. Silver gives the account of that day by focusing on the sun metaphor, soon after she tells the reader that “my little orbit of life circles love. I daren’t get any closer. I’m not a mystic seeking final communion. I don’t go out without SPF 15. I protect myself” (*Lighthousekeeping* 199). “SPF 15” is the sun-protection factor, which suggests that as long as she can protect herself against the sun, she can be safe in the *symbolic* domain. Yet, by welcoming love, she adds one more story to her stories. She lets the sun infuse her life with a love story: “But today, when the sun is everywhere, and everything solid is nothing but its own shadow, I know that the real things in life, the things I remember, the things I turn over in my hands, are not houses, bank accounts, prizes or promotion. What I remember is love” (*Lighthousekeeping* 199). She places love in a specific and more significant place than daily occupations enumerated above. After a short conversation with this woman, she tells the readers that “when I meet someone new, I do the only thing I know how to do: Tell you a story” (*Lighthousekeeping* 201). Telling a story is a form of *abjection*. So, telling a story heals the ones who experience the primordial horror. She purges herself of the primordial horror restoring her narcissistic identification with her female lover with whom “I [she] felt whole” (*Lighthousekeeping* 200). The feeling of wholeness emerges step by step although it is temporary. While drinking and chatting in the hut, they are two separate people trying to cut across the boundaries between their bodies:

Breathe in. Breathe out. Your rhythm different to mine. Your body not mine; the celebrated strangeness of another. I put my head against your chest, and it must have been something to do with the vibrations of the hut, because underneath your breathing, or through it, I could hear a badger breathing too. (*Lighthousekeeping* 211)

The vibration of the heart and the staccato of the breathing resonate with implications of the *semiotic*. The pulsational rhythm of the heart is the voice marked by the nearness of self and other. Moi points out that it is “the Voice of the Mother, that omnipotent figure that dominates the fantasies of the pre-Oedipal baby” (*Sexual/Textual* 112). The voice represents the realm before the child acquires language. Winterson heightens the poetic voice of the text through an elaborate and detailed recount of the physical

intimacy between the lovers. During their love making scene, the erotic tension reaches its zenith:

We were moving together, you turned me over, covering me from behind, craning your neck to reach round and kiss me, licking the sweat from my upper lip. I love the weight of you, and how to use it to pleasure me. I love your excitement...You are beautiful to feel. Beautiful inside me me inside you. Beautiful body making geometry out of our separate shapes. (*Lighthousekeeping* 217)

The words flow in poetic enjambment which runs over from one sentence to the other. Punctuation is disregarded in the lines when they penetrate into each other: “inside me me inside you” (217). The comma that is supposed to be between “me” and “me” is intentionally left out to give the sense of being enclosed and surrounded by the other’s body. The words such as kissing and licking are particularly repeated to accentuate the drive-based *semiotic* devices. The love making narration is a poetic unravelling of the musical and rhythmical side of language “permit [ting] the survival of rejection to the extent that they [it] harmonize[s] the shattering brought about by rejection” (Kristeva *Revolution* 152). The union with the other’s body and the symmetrical harmony that two separate bodies creates enables Silver to communicate with an other without any gaps, misunderstanding or estrangement. Unlike the strange looking civet, her lover provides Silver with the proximity and immediacy of the kinetic, visual and tactile plenitude of the *semiotic* realm. Whereas “I[*she*] am [*is*] part civet, part mouser” (*Lighthousekeeping* 198), she reaches a union with her lover. She is not divided into two; each part surrounds the other. In conjunction with this, Silver’s same-sex love can be viewed as welcoming the other (the maternal spirit). A modality that transforms the fear of the primordial mother into affectionate discourse is homosexual phratry. As Lechte argues it “pluralizes the law, in effect, or at least refuses to accept the existing law. It introduces the *other* into the symbolic” (*Julia Kristeva* 137). Silver’s temporary identification with her lover is managed through the unification of same sexed bodies. She is completely free of the *symbolic* dictum that downgrades erotic desire to a union between male and female. Silver’s anxiety about finding a reality “so that I [*she*] can touch it” (196) is realized once she goes beyond the *symbolic* order. Writing the body, writing of the body, and writing through the

body depart from the patriarchal discourse. Foregrounding the pre-Oedipal narcissistic desire as the spring of *jouissance* disconcerts the phallogentric order. Winterson's poetic voice is fuelled by the energy of the body; she ties the polar ends of body and mind thanks to a language which unearths the corporality of subjectivity. The interaction between the subject and the maternal body does not fuel fear but *jouissance*. Yet, Winterson leaves the end of Silver's love story open intentionally. In the rest of the novel, Silver does not give any information as to whether she continued meeting with her lover or not. Unlike Babel Dark's disappointment in love, Silver's love story does not end in self-torment but assuagement of repressed desires grafting new stories and possibilities onto the received order of the Symbolic. Therefore, she is not annihilated by melancholy. The end of this chapter shows that her stories will beget new stories:

Doors opening into rooms that opened onto doors that opened into rooms. We burst through, paneled, baize, flush, glazed, steel, reinforced, safe doors, secret doors, trap doors. The forbidden door that can only be opened with a small silver key... You are the door that opens onto a sea of stars. Open me. Wide. Narrow. Pass through me, and whatever lies on the other side, could not be reached except by this. This you. This now. (Lighthousekeeping 218-219)

The continuation of the first sentence the words of which are connected with each other by a relative clause connector "that" gives the hint that the sense of enclosure is avoided within a disrupted grammatical sentence. The following short words are mostly adjectival past participles; the space between the verbal and adjectival is a liminal place between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. The opposite adjectives running after each galvanize the exuberance of life force and Silver steers clear of melancholy. The reason why Winterson presents the romantic tale of Silver as incomplete is because a completely enfolding love story is impossible in human beings' lives. Like all "Wintersonian characters [...]" Silver recognizes that "only the impossible is worth the effort" (Onega 221). She continues believing in the power of this effort because we "recognize each other in the place that is ours" (*Lighthousekeeping* 232). Her love story ends "with an attempt at recreating the fusion of twin souls" (Onega 221); therefore, the unanimous narrator wants the stories to continue: "Don't wait. Don't tell the stories later" (*Lighthousekeeping* 232). Provided

that the stories are not delayed to be told later, the reciprocal union between lovers is likely to have a healing power although it may lead one to nowhere (*Lighthousekeeping* 214). Silver learns to balance the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*; the opposition between them is undone through the power of imagination. She learns to make connections between the *symbolic/semiotic*, the real/the imaginary. She does not reduce her stories to a “single, all embracing and coherent narrative” (Onega 215). There exists no buffer zone between the private and the public anymore; the stable ‘I’ is annihilated and subjectivity is put on trial.

5.4. Story Within Story: The Self is Made of Many Selves

Lighthousekeeping is like a broad canvas on which many stories coalesce into each other. The mutability of identity, playing around with chronology in an astonishingly broad sweep, the gamut of various sections reflecting one part of each other and continuous atemporality instantiate Winterson’s problematization of the grand narratives and western metaphysics. In the following sections, the focus of my attention shifts to the other major character, Babel Dark, whose life story is told to the reader sporadically as the flip-side of the whole narrative. The interpenetrated life stories of Silver and Babel Dark lay bare the consequences of embracing and not embracing the “stranger” inside.

Silver and Babel Dark choose different paths in life. While Silver ploughs her own furrow without being hemmed in by melancholy, Babel Dark drags himself into self-effacement and melancholy because he cannot overwhelm the enchanting power of the *semiotic*. Wavering between his two lives, he commits suicide. Before leaving the lighthouse, Pew leaves Silver a chest which contains some old coins, two identical pins, the first editions of *On the Origin of Species* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* besides two notebooks. The first notebook contains Babel Dark’s diary of his life in Salts and the other one is his diary about his life in Bristol. Silver tells the unnamed woman with whom she falls in love the story of Babel Dark along with her own life. In the course of the novel, Babel Dark questions whether he is really pleased to choose to be a man of religion. His faith in God and stable identity are shattered. Robert Louis Stevenson and Charles Darwin alter his firm beliefs in the *symbolic* stability. As he acts too late

to take the initiative in his own life, he loses Molly. He is torn between the *semiotic* celebration of the maternal body and the tormenting heaviness of the *symbolic*. As he is disengaged from the realm of the *symbolic*, he attaches himself to the “Thing”, which unsettles his sense of cohesion.

Although this chapter divides the life stories of Silver and Babel Dark in an attempt to give a structure to the chapter, Silver inserts Babel Dark’s story into her own life story and they must be regarded as interpenetrating into each other. The chapters in the novel alternate with Babel’s and Silver’s stories and at numerous points they interlock to form a multi-layered narration. They are projected onto each other; one fills the gap the other leaves behind. As Silver states “we’re told not to privilege one story above another. All the stories must be told [...] the stories I [she] want [s] to tell you will light up part of my life, and leave the rest in darkness” (*Lighthousekeeping* 134). She does not give priority to one story over the other since all various characters are enmeshed in a set of relationships within an interlocking narrative. Babel Dark and Silver never meet but their stories are juxtaposed via parallel intersections and mutual emotions. Winterson unfolds possibilities to reappropriate the other as a site of possibility. Pew, Babel Dark, and her mother are various facets of Silver. Stories stretching out of real time, space and thwarting gravity lay bare the underpinnings of the *semiotic* base of language. The shifting structure of identities are liable to break and reshape itself. Silver takes up Babel Dark’s story from the point where he leaves as he commits suicide. Babel Dark chooses “death” while Silver “lives” and she chooses the option that Babel cannot dare to face. One heals herself by living in the story she has woven for herself to survive, the other drowns in melancholy. Yet, as they are untied and their lives are interconnected on a psychic level, and as each and every person in Silver’s life serves as a foil to her, Silver and Babel Dark cannot be separated. They represent the polymorphous and polyphonic human nature. Silver springs from the *semiotic chora*, enters the *symbolic* structure but never leaves the end of the rope her mother tied her up on her body. She inscribes herself into the *symbolic* by means of the *semiotic* transfusion of her body into language. On the other hand, Babel Dark assumes the stability of the *symbolic*, but love interferes and he loses his

control on his unified body and psyche. He is drifted into the *semiotic* and rejects the *symbolic* by committing suicide. They set foot on the mentioned domains starting from different directions. Winterson juxtaposes their stories on the threshold of both domains and resuscitates Babel Dark in the stories of the others. The stories turn one to life; telling a story is a life giving source. In one story Pew tells Silver how a sailor saves his life from drowning by telling stories:

....what kept him alive while others drowned was telling himself stories like a madman, so that as one ended another began. On the seventh day he had told all the stories he knew and that was when he began to tell himself as if he were a story, from his earliest beginnings to his green and deep misfortune. The story he told was of a man lost and found, not once, but many times, as he choked his way out of the waves. (Lighthousekeeping 41)

Similar to the sailor who saved his life by telling stories, Silver survives by sublimating the maternal other by telling stories. On the contrary, Babel drowns in melancholy as he cannot fictionalize his life story and is buried in asymbolia.

Babel Dark's life story unveils the impossibility of a transcendental and unified subjectivity. What Babel Dark repels as the "Other" in his life haunts him in the end because all the things he brushes aside in his life such as Molly, his body and his blind baby are indivisible parts of him. As a man whose mindset is shaped by the Cartesian binaries at the beginning, Babel Dark buries everything related to body in his psyche but whatever he expels turns to shatter his stable identity. The most evident distinction he has in his mind is between religion and carnal desire, which is assailed by his erotic dreams. Although he becomes a priest to shield himself against his carnal desires, religion and eroticism penetrate into each other

Firstly, Babel Dark's attempt to expel his body and his erotic desires from his life and embrace religion presuming that it is a realm purged of body unveils the novel's engagement in the problem of otherness. Winterson makes the reader question if it is possible to brush the body aside entirely and if religion is solely in the *symbolic* domain. Babel Dark's attempt to purify himself by religion is nullified because neither religion entirely belongs to the *symbolic* nor corporeal love can be regarded as solely

semiotic. Lending an ear to Kristeva again, religion is both in the realm of the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. Although the father figure in Christianity represents the Symbolic father who both protects and punishes, the body of Jesus and Virgin Mary represent the *semiotic* base of religion.: “the cult of Virgin covers up the *semiotic* maternal body, especially what Kristeva calls the “abject” maternal body” (Oliver Kristeva 55). In many religions, some rituals are held to abject the fear of the maternal other. In *Powers of Horror*, she states that *abjection* “persists as exclusion or taboo[...]It finally encounters, with Christian sin, a dialectic elaboration, as it becomes integrated in the Christian word as threatening otherness- but always nameable, always totalizeable”(17). So, the sacred is always aligned with the abject because it starts with the symbolic matricide of the mother. The desire for the mother is renounced in Christianity because the mother awakens the horror and the disgust which are related to the pre-Oedipal desire of the child. Kristeva reads religion and *abjection* coextensively for political aims. She is concerned about the reason why “structuralist readings of the Bible are silent about the dimensions in which religion gives expression to the limited experiences of suffering and desire” (Direk 191). In accordance with this explanation, it could be claimed that Winterson also challenges the notion of religion as purely *symbolic*. She shows us that Babel Dark finds himself in a real predicament because he considers religion as a purifying force that will help him abject his corporeal desires. Yet, religion and desire are juxtaposed in his mind gradually when he cannot control his bodily drives.

Babel Dark consolidates his patriarchal position in society; he is a man of religion and abnegates desire and love in his life, and as the title of one chapter indicates “to make an end of it Dark had decided to marry” (*Lighthousekeeping* 51). He regards abstaining from desire and love as a precondition for being pious. By his choice to marry and devote himself to religion, “Dark sought atonement for having yielded to the temptations of the flesh incarnated by Molly” (Onega 217) because Molly “behaves more self-confidently. She takes off his t-shirt and “touch[es] his sides both with his hands, running her hands down over his buttocks and thighs” (*Lighthousekeeping* 71). When they meet secretly, Babel wonders how she can be so sure while he feels relieved

to be in darkness. Then he makes sure that “he had not been his first lover” (*Lighthousekeeping* 72). Another night, he watches Molly in her house and sees her embracing another man, who was actually her brother. Upon learning that Molly is pregnant, Babel hits Molly and causes their daughter Susan to be born blind. Feeling deceived, he decides to be a man of religion. From a “dandy” (*Lighthousekeeping* 27), he turns into a priest dressed “all in grey” (*Lighthousekeeping* 30). The double life of Babel Dark starts after he impregnates Molly and leaves her with a baby. He turns a deaf ear to his father’s insinuations on wedding Molly and taking responsibility. He decides to reconstruct another life, thinks of “the rock as his beginning” (*Lighthousekeeping* 30) and becomes a priest.

His dualistic mindset which separates religion and body leads him to marry a woman “who was gentle, well read, unassuming, and in love with him. He was not in the least in love with her, but that, he felt, was an advantage [...] He would hew his path, and if his hands bled, so much the better” (*Lighthousekeeping* 51). In his mind, religion, as an ordering system and law is pertinent to the mind and psyche whereas body is the sub-category in this hierarchy. The love-making scenes between Babel Dark and his wife are devoid of passion: “In the bedroom, he turned her face down, one hand against her neck, the other bringing himself stiff, then he knocked himself into her in one swift move, like a wooden peg into the tap-hole of a barrel” (*Lighthousekeeping* 54). However, he becomes estranged from his duties as a priest; his visits to the poor disgust him; he loathes “the low houses, mended furniture, women patching clothes [...] He did not understand how any person could live in such wretchedness. He would rather have ended his life [...] He murmured something about Jesus’s love and left a shilling on the table” (*Lighthousekeeping* 55). His unflinching venture into a religious life turns out to be the frustration of his unfulfilled expectations. The *symbolic* life he inserted himself in, marriage and religion start bothering him. He was supposed to prioritize mind over body; but “he had trained himself to think of absolutely nothing” (55).

The fabricated bifurcation between body and mind is a chief concern of Winterson in her novels. She “does not “explode the binary, however, she puts it in a dialectical and problematizing relation” (“Powerful Differences” 376). Exploding the binary is

impossible because a structure cannot be eradicated from within. Also, exploding a structure brings along the likelihood of generating another structure in return, which means that one falls in the same trap. We need to pay heed to Kristeva at this point because what she underlines is the interconnection between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. They bear the traces of each other owing to their slippery nature. One should not consider the *symbolic* as an impenetrable and immutable domain as much as the *semiotic* base which is the anterior of the *symbolic* domain. As observed in Babel Dark's attempt to "think of nothing", mind is erased out of the picture if one forsakes the body. He was supposed to be a man of mind but it is unlikely for one to disassociate the bond between the body and the mind. His failure to prioritize the mind is a conspicuous example of questioning the stability of the hierarchical binaries.

Embittered by the unfilled desires and the boredom of his religious duties, he finds his wife's dullness more irritating; he finds her as such a boring person that her indulgence in reading the miracles in the Bible "surprised her in someone whose nature was as unmiraculous as a bucket" (*Lighthousekeeping* 56). Once, he punishes himself because of hitting her in a fit of tantrum, by plunging "both his hand up to their elbows in the boiling water" (*Lighthousekeeping* 56). Babel Dark's self-punishment shows that he retaliates against his lack of self-control with physical torture. No matter how much he tries to overcome his anger, which is the result of psychic impoverishment, he is unable to control his body. As he loses his grip on the *symbolic* (mind/reason), he tries to compensate for it by bodily pain. Besides, his unified self is shattered by his erotic dreams, reflecting a rift in his own consciousness:

He left his mind drift out to sea, imagining Molly lying there next to him. In Bristol [...] he liked to draw his hand out from under the warm sheet, and into the cold air of the bedroom [...] Sometimes she opened her mouth to breathe, and he felt the breath of her on him, the way Adam must have felt God breathing first life into his sleeping body. (*Lighthousekeeping* 68)

Babel Dark makes an analogy between Adam and himself; he assimilates the religious into the erotic; the narration becomes more viscous by images of the sea. Words are piled onto each other and the text is eroticized. All binary oppositions are dissolved in the erotic voluptuousness of the words. Winterson brings the oppositions together.

Babel Dark remembers his old love making days and amalgamates fantasy with recollections. The narrator deploys tactile and olfactory senses to be able to articulate the denseness of the love-making scene:

And then he would take her in his arms, burying his face in her neck, and trying to identify all the different smells of her. She was clean but she smelled of herself, something like new hay with the flowers still in it, and something greener, sharper; nettles in the cut hay. And apples he thought, the white flash and its faint pinkness. (*Lighthousekeeping* 68)

The infusion of sensory perceptions reflects the *semiotic* infantile plenitude; the physical intimacy of the bodies reverberates with the maternal affection. The olfactory and tactile senses consolidate the bodily base of language. The body is brought back to the fore. Then, the *semiotic* base of language is more foregrounded by the dense eroticism in the narrative:

Stomach to stomach, mouth to mouth, his feet across her shins and wrapped under her feet. Her hands on his back. His hand stroking her ears, his forearms on either side of her shoulders, like the forepaws of a hound. He could smell her excitement, and he bent his head to kiss the bolts of her collarbone. (*Lighthousekeeping* 72)

Two bodies are interconnected; the body parts are likened to animal organs, which reflects the animalistic side of people. Abstract senses like excitement are transmuted into solid and olfactory feelings. The self and other are intermingled; “to some degree, the desire involves identification and not merely opposition, and hence the self/other division is already undermined” (Merleau 94). The name of this chapter is “The door was his body”. (*Lighthousekeeping* 67). He opens the doors of his repressed desires and lets the smell, sound and the organs of the other flow on him. This is the reason why liquidity and fluidity are emphasized. The fluid *semiotic* penetrates the *symbolic* doors.

There is a parallelism between Silver and Babel Dark with regard to their being positioned as a subject by somebody/something. Silver hears her name being uttered by the talking bird; likewise, Molly utters his name while they are making love and

she positions him as a separate being. The subject/ object differentiation is unrolled both as identification and differentiation:

He was in her, fused to her spine, so that the tip of him felt every vertebra, it seemed. He counted her to himself, travelling upwards, into her mouth, so that she could not speak to him. She said his name- *Babel* [...] He looked at himself through her eyes- his neck, his chest, his eyes full of love. Was this him-through her eyes? Gentle, ardent, hesitant a little, his skin unwritten but filling up with this new language? (*Lighthousekeeping* 72)

While the yearning to acquaint herself with the other results in both happiness and fear for Silver and it is painful to step into the *symbolic*, Babel Dark is surprised to see himself through the other's eyes. Hearing his name from the other's mouth shutters his unified identity. Molly is like a mirror in which Babel Dark explores his appearance. The illusion to be unified in one body is upset by the gaze and word of the other. This sounds like a new language; the temporary identification with the other and then the obliteration of the sameness by language- by hearing his name- breeds astonishment. First, the divide between self and other is annihilated as Babel Dark transgresses his body and penetrates into Molly's body; but this is temporary because Molly throws him back to his separate, object position by saying his name. Albeit temporary, this identification which is followed by separation is profound enough for Babel Dark to realize that "his skin is unwritten" but "a new language" echoes in his ears. Molly can be regarded as the embodiment of both the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language; she enables Babel Dark to travel to his retrograde realm, the pre-Oedipal domain and the journey backwards to his habitual self after he hears his name is a journey from the *semiotic* to the *symbolic*. All the binaries are dissolved gradually between religion/ desire, mind/ body and self/ other. The journey is rendered possible once Babel Dark frees his body; it results in *abjection* and then the inability to abject the maternal base and in the end melancholy. It should be noted that Babel Dark goes through this transformation prior to his decision to devote himself to religion and marry another woman. But the reader hears about his copulation after he leaves Molly, which suggests that his memories haunt him, as a result of which he starts dispatching himself from the *symbolic* domain.

The second way that the novel lays bare the grey area between mind/body and self/other is through the diaries of Babel Dark and his encounter with Molly and their daughter. Both of the examples mark his fear to be castrated by a phallic mother figure and devoured in the *semiotic* realm. The diaries he keeps “the first, a mild and scholarly account of a clergyman’s life in Scotland. The second, a wild and torn folder of scattered pages, disordered, unnumbered, punctured where his nib had bitten the paper” (*Lighthousekeeping* 57) are perfect examples for his oscillation between two lives. The first is structured and neat as expected from a self-effacing pious man and the other is disordered, violent, rupturing and piercing. The first and the second diaries dovetail Kristevan *symbolic* and *semiotic* bases of signification respectively. He “began to write it all down” (57) to soothe his agony and frustrations. Writing will heal his wound. Similar to Henry’s in *The Passion* “obsessive writing” is “an attempt to fix his understanding of the real and, with it, certain ideologically sanctioned discourses on gender and desire that would enable him to reconstruct a core self” (French 240), Babel Dark experiences himself as a subject and unleashes his other repressed side by writing. The other diary’s writing was “big and uncertain. There were drawings of himself, always with the eyes scored out, and there were watercolours on cartridge paper of a beautiful woman, always half-turned” (*Lighthousekeeping* 125). Babel’s metaphorical act of blinding himself can be interpreted in different ways. Firstly, he punishes himself for causing her daughter to lose her sight. Secondly, he may be feeling embittered about the day when she saw Molly with her brother “on a tragic error of vision” (Onega 218). Losing eyesight is also suggestive of the castrated state. As Freud argues, “the fear of going blind is quite often a substitute for the fear of castration” (“The Uncanny” 139). In connection with this, the “scored out” eyes might be interpreted as the fear caused by the abject. He imagines himself being blinded by Molly as the abject other.

Babel Dark’s trajectory of life displays his vacillation between the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases. As obvious, the reason why he flees from Molly in the beginning is because his autonomous self is under the threat of being engulfed by the material *chora*. Molly has both a healing and destructive effect on him. At their first meeting,

“the knife slipped, and he cut his ring finger, and straight away she had taken the knife from him, and chopped a ribbon from her dress to staunch the bleeding” (*Lighthousekeeping* 69). Metaphorically, Molly heals and soothes his tortured ego after castration. Molly is also a threat to Babel Dark as she functions as the death drive that threatens the *symbolic*. There is a tension between the two lives of Babel Dark; the *genotext* and the *phenotext*, death drive/life drive and the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. They become inextricably bound to each other.

Babel Dark cannot bear the heaviness of his new life and after his dreams, fantasies and nightmares, the repressed materials of his psyche, harass him, he decides to see Molly again. The title of the chapter is “The stranger in his own life”; he is estranged to himself and in parallel with the estrangement, the accretive patterns of verbal phrases and the associative ways in which he deals with his approach to love and himself multiply in a poetic style. Prior to this chapter, he encounters Molly during a visit to Crystal Palace where he sees his baby and learns that she is blind (*Lighthousekeeping* 79). Molly denies Babel the paternal role:

‘I will do anything you ask. Tell me. Anything.’
‘We have no wants’
‘Molly-am I the father?’
‘She has no father’. (*Lighthousekeeping* 81)

The repetitive pattern of blindness and fatherlessness is salient in the novel. These properties are common to Pew and Molly’s daughter. As the example of Oedipus shows, the fear of losing sight, the power of the gaze in Freudian theory is equal to the fear of castration. Irigaray focuses on the power of the gaze as a source of domination, as well. The male subject looks at the lack of the female and secures his position of mastery as “[a]ny theory of the subject has always been appropriated by the ‘masculine’” (*Speculum* 133). Winterson’s blind characters’ revolt against the male’s position of dominance. As they are blind from birth, they are not cast under the effect of the gaze. They belong to the realm before the *thetic*. Molly “spoke like someone far off. Someone who was a country where he [Babel] was born”. Then, Babel Dark touches the baby’s “tiny fingers, cogs, ratchets, a rubber horn that trumpeted when she

squeezed it in her tiny hands. Dark's hand over hers. He wanted to make for her a world of sounds that was as splendid as the world of sight" (*Lighthousekeeping* 83). The child in the *semiotic chora* inhabits a translinguistic space and expresses itself through sounds and gestures. Babel wants to connect with his daughter through "sounds" rather than "gaze". He enters the world of the infant and the mother; his diction changes when he touches the baby's finger; the sense of touch is translated to the reader as "a rubber horn that trumpeted". One sense is translated into another; intimacy acquired by touching finds poetic expression by the juxtaposition of two senses. With regards to such a relationship established between the infant and the maternal body, "[b]odily interdependence, shared smiles, crying [...] and touches of the symbiotic mother-child interaction set up and intimate a space, without exterior or interior" (Becker-Leckrone 28). Babel Dark is welcomed again in the *semiotic* domain by Molly and "some hours later, he saw Molly smile" (*Lighthousekeeping* 83). Rather than talking to Babel, Molly welcomes him by smiling; Babel partakes in the "symbiotic mother-child interaction" by means of "shared smiles".

Babel Dark is invited to the *semiotic* space twice; one with Molly's body, the other with her daughter's body. Contrary to the reader's expectation, he does not shift from one life to the new one. He divides his life into two; in April and November, "twice-yearly visits to Molly", he visits Molly "sixty days a year where life is, where love is, where his private planet tracked into the warmth of its sun" (*Lighthousekeeping* 88), he marries her and "went by the name of Lux, and spoke with a Welsh accent" (*Lighthousekeeping* 96). That Babel divides his life into two and chooses two specific months to go to Molly and certain durations to stay near her shows that he still has a foothold on the *symbolic* domain; his division of time is quite structuralist. He does not let the *semiotic* realm impinge on his life entirely. Later, Molly goes after him and learns about his other life. They meet in the lighthouse, the secrets are revealed, which culminates in Molly's desertion:

'What will you do now?'
 'I have not the least idea'
 'I love you,' he said
 The three most difficult words in the world. (*Lighthousekeeping* 100)

With these three words, their relationship ends but the image of Molly continues to haunt Babel Dark. With these same three words, Silver finds the spring of life whence she survives yet Babel Dark loses his beloved. The opening words of the novel “Remember you must die” and “Remember you must live” (*Lighthousekeeping* 1) overlap the choices of Babel and Silver respectively. The novel is framed at both ends with the choice of death and life. Both of the characters utter these words in the lighthouse, which strengthens the metaphorical meaning of the place as the domain of the material.

Molly is the abject for Babel Dark because he is rumoured to have killed her. In other words, he kills the maternal other in his life who disturbs the social order and reason. His murder can be explained by separation from the maternal bond which is necessary for the subject to construct a social identity. As the abject is a part of the person, the individual expels a part of himself/ herself when he abjects the maternal. The abjection of the mother “who gives life, but also death” (Lechte Julia Kristeva 165) is of paramount importance to de/ construct subjectivity. The maternal body must symbolically be murdered so that the child can enter the symbolic realm. Babel Dark symbolically kills Molly, too. Upon finding Molly’s “two emerald and ruby pins”, people spread rumours that Babel murdered her. The reader learns it through a conversation between Silver and Pew:

‘I tell you this-what do you think they found in his drawer, after he was dead?’
 ‘Tell me!’
 ‘Two emerald and ruby pins. Not one-two’
 ‘How did he get Molly O’ Rourke’s pin?’
 ‘Nobody knows’
 ‘Babel Dark killed her!’
 ‘That was the rumour, yes and more.’ (*Lighthousekeeping* 31)

Both emerald and ruby are dark coloured but transparent stones; they reflect the light through them. The threshold stance of the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* works through multiple images. The stones, the lighthouse, Silver’s mother all have a light and dark side. In the same vein, the notion of writing as opaque refers to the *semiotic* aspect of signification. The opaque language welcomes the indeterminate and obscure poetic diction as Winterson practises. She challenges the empiricist view of writing and distorts the correspondence between signifiers and signifieds. Therefore, most of the

images are equivocal. The lighthouse is “Pew-shaped, Pew-still, hatted by cloud” (*Lighthousekeeping* 95); similarly, Babel Dark takes the shape of Molly and the lighthouse: “The lighthouse. Babel. Babel, the lighthouse. She [Molly] would always find him, he would be there, and she would row back to him” (*Lighthousekeeping* 102). Babel knew that Molly was an inseparable part of him: “He was her navigation point. He was the coordinate of her position” (*Lighthousekeeping* 102). His religious life would be a smoke screen which shelters him from his own reality. He hid his attachment to the maternal and constructed another reality. He knew that “she [Molly] tried to absorb his anger and his uncertainty. She had used her body as a grounding rod. She had tried to earth him. Instead, she had split him” (*Lighthousekeeping* 101). The way that the narrator describes Babel corresponds to the ambiguity and uncertainty of the *semiotic* base of language. “Earthing” somebody has a double meaning. It may refer to both death and life; covering one’s body with earth or preparing the individual to life, to the earth. Death is closely associated with the abject; “[i]f dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel, ‘I’ is expelled” (*Powers* 4). Conjuring up death is unsettling; it reminds the individual of the fragility of his/her life. It disturbs the borders of the self. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud defines death as the ultimate object of desire: “the aim of all life is death; the lost unity with the mother is regained by means of “the instinct to return to the inorganic state” (38). Molly is both healing and macabre; she drags Babel Dark to asymbolia; the *symbolic* forms like religion are not the points of attention for him anymore. He regresses to the archaic state since Molly reminds him of the extreme sense of the loss of the maternal other. The wound of this lost manifests itself as the objectal depression. Babel suffers from the unsymbolizable narcissistic wound; he is captivated by the extreme desire to relapse into the imaginary Eden-like state. He is haunted by the abject “which is a way of denying the narcissistic identification with the mother” (Oliver *Kristeva* 60).

As Onega points out, “Dark tries to sublimate the passion he feels for Molly by transforming it into a perfectly innocent, prelapsarian relationship” (219).

Notwithstanding his wish to adopt the “other” in himself, he is rejected by Molly. His narcissistic relationship with Molly prevents him from considering himself and Molly as self and other. This feeling of sameness incites horror. To be able to articulate this fear in the *symbolic* realm, he needs a poetic voice which will enable him to symbolize his fear. However, “he does not dare to eat this Edenic fruit” (Onega 220). Until he encounters Molly again, he hides his passion; religion is a bulwark against the allure of the maternal other.

Thirdly, the novel’s engagement in the problem of otherness is demonstrated by Babel Dark’s meetings with Robert Louis Stevenson and Charles Darwin who help him recognize that the unified and transcendental self is an illusion. The routes of individuation work in reverse order for Silver and Babel Dark. Silver moves from the *semiotic* realm to the *symbolic* whereas Babel Dark’s journey is from the *symbolic* to the *semiotic*. Until Babel Dark decides to commit suicide as he comes to the point where he is unable to resist the enthrallment with the maternal other, his faith in religion and the unified, fixed subjectivity is shattered after having a tête-à-tête with Robert Louis Stevenson and finding a seahorse in a cave. Silver copes with social *abjection* after a series of events and in the end she manages to construct a distinct identity on the threshold where the social and the psychic interact in a dialectic process. On the contrary, Babel Dark holds on to his firm belief in religion; he assumes that he positions himself in safe and clearly defined boundaries. Silver manages to reconcile and relieve the conflict between the private/ public and stasis/ flux. Her stories to the unnamed woman, despite having no linear structure, demonstrate that the negative and positive sides of the *semiotic* can exist together.

The negative side of the *semiotic*, which causes the borders of the self and other to break down, is negated because she sublimates the abject by fictionalizing her own life through stories. In contrast, Babel Dark ends up in an emotional cul-de-sac as he cannot reconcile the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* realms. In the beginning, he shields himself against social *abjection* and ostracism to such an extent that he becomes “a stranger in his own life” (*Lighthousekeeping* 87). These oppositional life stories support the idea that the abject never completely recedes and continues to challenge

one's sense of self. The stranger is a part of one's fragile borders of the self and it needs to be signified through the *symbolic* element of signification. To overcome the fear of the abject (mother), one has two choices; "to worry or to smile; such is the choice when we are assailed by the strange; our decision depends on how familiar we are with our own ghosts (*Strangers* 191). Silver gravitates towards "smile"; she becomes "familiar with her own ghosts". She wards off the hostility of people without being a stranger to herself. The whole novel is the manifestation of how sublimation of the abject enables the individual to inscribe himself/herself into the *symbolic* realm without believing that s/he is a real outcast. One does not have to conform to the strict rules of society because the codes of morality in society are based on expelling the "strange" one. The outcast is always feared because s/he casts fear on the others; the socially *abjected* individual cannot strike a balance between the private and the public, s/he may tend to believe that he deserves to be treated as an outcast. Yet, if the individual realizes that the *symbolic* is also vulnerable to the *semiotic* rupture, it is easier for him/ her to reclaim the abject. Babel Dark cannot resolve the conflict between these two forces. He chooses a career which he thinks will let him be integrated in the *symbolic*. He is unable to re-build his own subjectivity because his body's urge to escape fixity is too tormenting for him.

Babel's conversations with Stevenson and Darwin act as a catalyst for change in his perception of the world and history. When his dog is stuck in a cliff, he abseils down there to save it. He notices that "the wall of the cave is made entirely of fossils. He traces out ferns and seahorses" (117). He is surprised to find out that the sea reached up to that point: "...how could the sea have reached here? Not since the flood. He knew the earth was 4.000 years old, according to the Bible" (117). This is one of the turning points of his life as he starts questioning the validity of religious teachings. The seahorse can be interpreted both as Lacan's *objet petit a* and the threshold between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic*. It mesmerizes Babel because "more than anything, he wanted to keep it" (118). Darwin arrives at the spot where Babel finds the seahorse "embarrassed by the lack of fossil evidence to support some of his theories" (*Lighthousekeeping* 119). Babel, who is a devoted religious person, changes the route

of history by helping Darwin find out more information about evolution. That is, Winterson, with her subversive reading of the Bible, lays bare the myth of origin. Like all grand narratives, religion is in the realm of the *symbolic*. The breakdown in the perception of religion thrusts Babel into questioning his identity and relation with the other /God: "He spent a lot of time listening to the excited voices talking about the beginnings of the world. He had always believed in a stable-state system, made by God...he didn't want a broken world. He wanted something splendid and glorious and constant" (*Lighthousekeeping* 120).

As Winterson argues in "Imagination and Reality", "to accept God was to accept Otherness" (136). God is the Law of the Father, the supreme example of the *symbolic* where one disassociates himself/herself from the other. The *semiotic* oneness does not recognize such a distinction of self and other. Babel Dark is a great example of Kristeva's definition of subject "in process/on trial" (*Revolution* 22). Being in uncertainties disconcerts a unified subjectivity. The dissolution of the self allows one to be mingled with the other. The dissolution of Babel's unified self when he realizes that "God or no God, there seemed to be nothing to hold onto" (*Lighthousekeeping* 120) shows his lack of faith in God as the other/ Symbolic father. His realization that there is no divine plan in the universe "leads Dark to existential angst and a vision of the void that he resolves by putting an end to his life" (Onega 220).

The other turning point in his life is his conversation with Robert Luis Stevenson. Stevenson encourages him to unravel his secret related to his secret life with Molly. At first, Babel reacts against Stevenson's theories about the possibility of having a double life violently:

'A man might be two men,' said Stevenson[...] One upright loyal, the other, perhaps not much better than ape [...] A man named Dr Henry Jekyll; an upright beacon, a shining example, a fellow of penetrating intellect and glowing humanity [...] The one is virtue and the other is all vice. But while they may seem to be entirely separate, the dreadful and disturbing part, is that they are the same person. (*Lighthousekeeping* 184-185)

What Babel Dark fails to understand is that his life in Salts and Bristol belong to the same person; his good and evil sides of him are inseparable. This idea suggests a composite self-fed by both vices and virtues. The intertextual reference to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is combined with Darwin's theories of evolution, implying Winterson's relativistic understanding of truth. Decentralization of the fixed identity by virtue of the novel's containment of historical and literary figures into the stories is what Winterson aims to do. The encounter with Stevenson awakens Babel to the fact that he needs to embrace "Edward Hyde" in himself.

Fourthly, the novel displays a subversive strategy to the subject/object opposition by juxtaposing melancholy and storytelling as two alternatives for survival. In accordance with melancholy, the thin line between life and death is laid bare. Death is a recurrent theme that hovers over the novel. Winterson shows us the fragile line between life and death by the life stories of Silver and Babel which go in reverse directions. Molly is rumoured to be killed, Pew never admits having died and in one form or another, he always exists in the lighthouse as the continuation of all Pews, and Babel is cast under the fear of being "earthed". He can never cast off the narcissistic union with Molly entirely. He keeps the jewellery belonging to her. He also keeps the seahorse in his pocket until he kills himself. "'My seahorse,' Molly had called him, when he swam towards her in their bed like an ocean of drowning and longing" (*Lighthousekeeping* 80). So, the jewellery and the seahorse metaphors are not spread through the narrative in a cursory fashion. They have more profound meaning than love tokens. The male seahorse can give birth and he is quite fertile as he can give birth to quite a large number of babies. Apart from shedding light on the diversity of roles attached to the male and female in the animal world and leading the reader to question the universality of biological roles, Winterson dwells on the feminine side of Babel. Babel "swam towards her in their bed like an ocean of drowning and longing" (*Lighthousekeeping* 80). The real account of the seahorses takes a literal turn in the novel. Winterson fuses the fact and fiction as a writer angling toward multiplicities and protean concepts of sex and gender. Babel's emotional turmoil results from "drowning" and "longing". Turning back to the pre-Oedipal realm, which precedes the *thetic* break, drowns him and causes his death in the end. He wanders off in untrodden ways when he is with Molly, but

longing for the desire of the maternal figure- being the seahorse- transports one back to the time before castration. As a seahorse, he turns to the realm where he is un-sexed and un-gendered. When the regulatory binary gender frame is marred, the heterosexual logic collapses, too. Therefore, at the end of the novel “he let the seahorse go” (*Lighthousekeeping* 223). The fluidity and life giving capacity of water is a common disposition of many writers to associate it with femininity. Cixous believes that feminine writing bears the imprint of the fluidity and mother’s womb. As Moi underlines, she believes in the power of myths the world of which “contains and reflects the comforting security of the mother’s womb”. It is within this space that Cixous’s speaking subject is free to move from one subject position to another, or to merge oceanically with the world” (*Sexual/Textual* 115). Although Winterson does not use a mythical story at this part of the novel, she uses the water imagery while Babel Dark is drowning but with a twist of diction:

He breathed in, wanting the cold night air, but it was salt water he breathed. His body was filled with salt water. He was drowned already. He no longer came up for air. He floated underneath the world and heard its voices strange and far-off...The water poured off his face, his hair streamed back. He wasn’t dying any more. She was there. She had come back. (*Lighthousekeeping* 222)

Like the other metaphors in the novel, the water is a floating signifier. The negative and positive properties of it fertilize each other. On the one hand, Babel is saturated in salty water; the adjective “salty” thwarts the healing and softening effect of water. It distances Babel from the world. He is imbued with the swallowing water. The sea devours his body. On the other hand, the appearance of “she” mellows the negative connotation of the water. As Lindenmayer suggests “the very fluidity and life-giving capacities of the female body become inextricably bound to mortality” (57), but the same body gives Babel life metaphorically. The meaning becomes blurred. Winterson employs the wholeness of the body/ sea, female/male, life/ death and child/ mother reinforcing the plurality of the signifier. Thus, she goes beyond Cixous’ allusion to the sea as the womb of the mother and Lindenmayer’s suggestion that female body is associated with death. From a broader Kristevan perspective, the sea can be read in a twofold way; it is both the *symbolic* and the *semiotic* embodiment of signification.

Babel's imaginary resurrection might be interpreted as the enactment of the subject in process. She replaces reality with the unfolding of possibilities and keeps the reader from grasping the real truth. She opens up another fissure in Babel's story "with a seemingly endless pileup of words, images and clauses, for a self-consciously dense and imagistic narrative style" (Cokal 17). So, the reader is left with the question whether melancholy must be felicitated or denigrated.

As for Silver, she is not engulfed by melancholy although "some of the light went out of me [her]" (*Lighthousekeeping* 24) after her mother's death. The melancholic is unable to express his/her sadness because s/he does not know what s/he has lost. There is no object for the melancholic; there is only an indeterminate, unnamed "Thing" (*Black Sun* 13). The black sun metaphor which is "bright and black at the same time" (13) is analogous to Silver's avoidance of the sunlight. Remembering that Silver is embittered by the loss of her mother and Pew (as the imaginary father), the black sun stands for the maternal other with whom she identifies herself before entering the *symbolic*. The trajectory of Silver's life and her unsuccessful attempts to communicate with people besides her oscillation between being objectified by the talking bird and forgetting her name shows that she has difficulty in separating self and other. She yearns for the maternal other but "she ran so fast that the sun can't make a shadow" (*Lighthousekeeping* 159). She has another pace, another rhythm in life that runs faster than the sun. She feels empty and forsaken in the world but she manages to survive by following her own path. If we regard the sun metaphor as her mother, or the *semiotic chora*, it can be stated that she avoids falling into madness and melancholy. Her life is "half miracle, half madness" (*Lighthousekeeping* 127). She is not entirely mad; to be utterly immersed in the *semiotic*; total withdrawal from the *symbolic* results in embracing melancholy. Melancholy is akin to death; one is detached from self-unity, unable to accommodate himself/ herself in language because language does not provide him/ her with enough material to articulate his/ her sadness. Nonetheless, it is possible to evade death if the subject welcomes her/ his sadness and benefits from it as a source of reconstruction. Melancholy is not entirely destructive as long as one can use his/ her sadness as a shield against the destructive power of it.

If one is stuck in his/her yearning for the maternal *chora*, her language is utterly lost in the *semiotic*. Every word is meaningless because nothing stands for the lack she/ he suffers from. The individual loses integration and commits suicide. However, it has a constructive side, too. The melancholic can disentangle herself/ himself from the destructive impact of melancholy if s/he embraces the affective signification. Language that cohabits both the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases in a dialectical oscillation can be the tool of the melancholic to evade death. Moving on now to analyse the sun metaphor, it can be argued that, by running away from the sun and not letting it cast a shadow on her, Silver shuns death. The pace of the sun lags behind her self-constructed pace in life. Silver is like a floating signifier defying the shadow of the sun. She is aware of the emotional deprivation after her mother's death and departure from the lighthouse, yet she reconstructs herself thanks to the language furnished with the affective power of the stories Pew told her. More importantly, she learned telling her own stories:

As I was no longer Making Progress, I let my mind drift where it would. I rowed my blue boat out to sea and collected stories like driftwood. Whenever I found something—a crate, a gull, a message in a bottle, a shark bloated belly-up, pecked and pitted, a pair of trousers, a box of tinned sardines, Pew asked me the story, and I had to find it, or invent it, as we sat through the sea-smashed nights of winter storms. (*Lighthousekeeping* 92)

So, there are two opposing directions in the novel; Silver continues living by accepting the brute truth that she has physically lost her connections with the maternal other (her mother and Pew) yet Babel Dark cannot bear being immersed in the *semiotic* and he commits suicide. He is in the throes of melancholic sadness which is “unsymbolizable, unnameable” (Kristeva *Black Sun* 12). Molly transfers him to the *semiotic* terrain on which he does not know what to do. He is intoxicated with the completeness and perfection he has been looking for. While Silver overcomes melancholy by telling stories making it possible for her to continue to signify, Babel Dark wishes to be entangled and enthralled by the *asymbolic* realm.

Although Molly detaches herself from him, he prefers to continue being swallowed by her shadow. Besides, he cannot return to the *symbolic* realm as he lost his faith in the paternal function. As Gambaudo states referring to Kristeva;

absence is being compensated by a multiplicity of socio-political measures attempting to provide the individual some paternal presence (State, education system, police, social workers etc). Like we have a multiplicity of paternal functions, we now have also a multiplicity of scenarios vis-a-vis the subject process, depending upon the paternal agency accorded to each individual[...] She is calling for a 're-connecting' of the symbolic subject to its archaic history, located at the point where this subject has now lost its biological roots. (127)

Accordingly, Babel Dark's suicide has two dimensions. Firstly, he loses his trust in the paternal presence, so the *symbolic* realm does not provide him with the sense of safety anymore. Secondly, he is trapped in the primordial realm of the maternal Thing and he cannot articulate his loss in art, story-telling or in any aestheticized way. The reader hears his story from Pew and Silver, the main story-tellers of the novel. His conversations with Molly, Pew, Stevenson and Darwin are embedded in the life story of Silver.

Lastly, the androgynous nature of Babel Dark is implicitly woven in the fabric of the narrative, which leads the reader to read it as a side story. The double personality of Babel Dark is highly associated with his androgynous nature but it is not the major theme of the novel. Its function in the novel is to point at the necessity of welcoming the maternal other in one's psyche instead of repressing it. Therefore, the novel is quite subversive in its approach to the issue of otherness because it does not present androgyny and heterosexuality as two opposing terms.

The double characters Babel Dark embodies like "Jekyll and Hyde" ("You understand me, Pew? I am Henry Jekyll [...] And I am Edward Hyde" (*Lighthousekeeping* 187)) are suggestive of his latent homosexuality. Possessing two "males" in one body, he cannot imagine "the sky as the sea and the stars as ships lit up at the mast" (147) as he used to do in his childhood. The sea and the sky interpenetrated in his mind when he was a child and he used to "amuse himself by lobbing stones at the star's reflections, hitting them and bursting them, watching them steady and return" (*Lighthousekeeping*

147). So, he was closer to the sensations stirred by the fusion of the sky and the sea; he was more intimate with the *semiotic* in his childhood. After falling in love with Molly, he tried to evade personal and public disgrace and attached himself to religion which “is based on the exclusion of the abject through certain taboos that serve to reinforce the Symbolic against any threads from the semiotic” (Oliver Kristeva 125). Thinking about the “catastrophes and mistakes” after reading from *On the Origin of Species*, the narrator states:

He had read it so many times, and seen in himself all the marks of gradual erosion. Well, perhaps he would be found later, unrecognizable but for his teeth—yes, his stubborn jaw would be the last thing to go. Words, all words, scattered by the waves [...] What Darwin called knowledge and progress, Dark understood as a baleful diary; a book that had been better left unread. There was so much in life that had been better left unread. (*Lighthousekeeping* 148)

Heterosexuality is coextensive with the Law of the Symbolic; as a subject who holds absolute alterity within himself, Babel cannot name the desire in “words”. Every desire is capable of calling into question the established rules of society, so Babel Dark’s penchant for leaving these desires “unread” and “unarticulated” hints at the dissolution of his stable ego. He goes through a new experience of truth and as a melancholic subject, has an uneasy relation with words. Because “homosexuality pluralizes the law” (Oliver Kristeva 137), he feels closer to the point where the law is nullified but he fears being absorbed in the *semiotic* realm. While he is explaining how he feels when Hyde dominates over his identity, he uses tactile senses and cites from the novel *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*:

The hand which I know saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bedclothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a smart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde [...] Listen to how Jekyll reasons to himself: If each, I told myself, could be but housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil. (*Lighthousekeeping* 185)

He hankers after doing the pleasurable thing without suffering from disgrace. The evil side of him transmutes his hand into the hand of Hyde; both hands are tied like the hands of the lovers. He cannot establish a rapport with the union of his male body with that of the other in his real life. As he is forced to choose one identity, he cannot enjoy the closeness with the “evil” other; the other hand is so close that he cannot possess it. The only way to possess the hand of the other is to let his hidden homosexuality be disclosed. In this respect, rather than interpret his relationship with Molly as “heterosexual” as Onega offers (219), the latent homosexuality can offer an insight into his penchant for suicide. The scenes where he sleeps with Molly echo his metaphoric castration by Molly “who had taken the knife from him, and chopped a ribbon from her dress to staunch the bleeding” (*Lighthousekeeping* 69). The reference to the mythological story of Psyche and Cupid is embedded in their love making scene.

‘Babel?’

‘Yes?’

His heart was beating. He was sweating. His groin was tight.

‘Put the candle on the chest’. (*Lighthousekeeping* 70)

In the Greek version of the story, Psyche breaks her oath to her husband Cupid upon the insistences of her sisters; she lights a candle and exposes the face of him, which causes him to wake up and flee from Psyche.

At this point, the role of Cupid (Eros) in Christian history and Western patriarchy can crystallize the reason why Babel Dark hides his androgynous nature and embraces religion and why he cannot cope with his submerged feelings. Winterson’s reference to the mythological Eros and Psyche reference in the love making scene of Babel and Molly is more meaningful if we read it in the light of the history of love mentioned in the theory part. Babel’s dual life, with his wife in Salts and with Molly in Bristol, can be interpreted as the psychic turmoil of an androgynous being. By replacing his desire to ascend towards God/ religion/ Good, Babel Dark (Eros) constructs his “Ideal Ego” as a sexualized being. He hoped his feathers to be swollen (just like Eros flying up to the celestial soul) by marrying his wife, who devoted herself to God and religion. Yet, he did not forsake his “other half” Molly (Diotima/ phallic mother figure / the abject);

namely, he wanted his soul to reach “oneness” with God while his body could not accommodate him through the upsurge of his soul. Frustrated by his wife who was “as dull as a day at sea with no wind” (*Lighthousekeeping* 54), he had to give up being “tumescant” (Kristeva *Love* 75) (as he “knocked himself into her in one swift move, like a wooden peg into the tap-hole of a barrel” (*Lighthousekeeping* 54)). In contrast to Eros whose wings got swollen as he reached God, Babel could not enjoy “a state of ebullition and effervescence (Kristeva *Love* 64)”. His other half Molly, on the other hand, wanted to see him naked in the lamplight by asking him to “put the candle on the chest” (*Lighthousekeeping* 70). Although he enjoyed the sexual intercourse with Molly, he felt disturbed by the sheer nakedness of his body; he wanted to make love in darkness. Molly reminds him of the *jouissance* he experienced in the *semiotic chora* where he could feel the joy of being with his other androgynous half. Molly has two functions; firstly, he reminds Babel Dark of his androgynous nature and also threatens him as a “Diotima” figure. Engulfing and enchanting, Molly castrates/emasculates Babel; when he cuts his finger and it bleeds, Molly staunches it (*Lighthousekeeping* 69). This is the reason why he is fascinated by her but he fears to continue living with her.

When Molly asks him to go to France, he writes on his notebook: “*Molly returned from Bristol. I would not accept her plan of our new life in France. I stood firm. I stood firm. I stood firm*” (*Lighthousekeeping* 188). His wish to “stand firm” can be read metaphorically as his desire to be “tumescant”. Molly exposes him to his feminine side “which is abyss and his night” (*Tales* 76). Molly is his dark side, she is the maternal other whom Pew calls “Mrs Tenebris (Darkness) and whose married name was Lux” (*Lighthousekeeping* 186).

If Molly is imagined as Diotima, as the maternal figure, who is supposed to educate Babel to “transpose his desire” (Kristeva *Tales* 75) by leading him to have the “detumescant penis” (75), Babel’s avoidance of her is more meaningful. Babel’s name stems from the story of the Tower of Babel which “was built as high as the moon, so that the people who built it could climb up and be like God” (*Lighthousekeeping* 64). He belongs to the realm of the moon, rather than the sun; therefore, he is overwhelmed

by the moon, which is always associated with insanity. Human beings tried to reach the “semiotic realm” of God by building a tower; they wanted to fly upwards like Eros and be one with God; yet God punished them and shattered the tower “to the ends of the earth, and they had no more understood each other’s language than they understood the language of fishes and birds” (*Lighthousekeeping* 64). The fault of Eros was to reach God and Heaven; he was totally immersed in the *semiotic* and very close to *jouissance* (tumescence form); however, the Biblical story does not let such proximity between God and men. God repelled the Babel Tower builders and caused them to speak different languages. Language, in this respect, is the *symbolic* base of signification which shatters the unity of men and unity of speech. Devoid of the same language, men were alienated from each other; they were castrated by God (religion/The *symbolic* realm) and had to yield to the “differentiation” inherent in language.

Religion is based on “the exclusion of the abject through certain taboos that serve to reinforce the *symbolic* against any threads from the semiotic [...] yet it is through semiotic drive force that religion has its power” (Oliver Kristeva 125), so the aim of the men who were constructing the Tower of Babel was to reach the *semiotic* realm; “an immediate transference to the nourishing, loving, protective maternal body become paternal sign” (Oliver Kristeva 126). The Moon and the Sun are frequently used in the novel. Babel describes Molly as his moon: “He loved the moon, did Babel Dark. My barren rock, he called her, and said sometimes that he would be happy there, pale tenant of the sun” (*Lighthousekeeping* 65). Molly is a substitute “Other” for Babel because his real desire is beyond his reach. He was dispatched from the Sun/ the real maternal other and only through Molly can he come closer to the *semiotic* realm:

They looked at each other and didn’t move at all. Dark was conscious of the sunlight in stenciled squares on the stone floor, and the brightness of the sun through the thick glass, and the sun in her eyes, flecking the pupils, and shining on her as though the sun were showing him a secret door [...] He knew it was an ordinary symptom and an ordinary cause, but he knew, too, that whenever he saw her, his desiccated, half-stilled body jerked forward the sun (*Lighthousekeeping* 69,88)

Molly reflects the lights of the Moon through her eye pupils and gives light to Babel. She enables him to be “the tenant of the sun” temporarily; Babel recognizes that it is ordinary to channel his desires to the “other” sex to be able to accommodate himself in culture. However, whenever she sees Molly, he is enthralled by the reflection of the Sun through her eyes and his body “jerks toward the sun” (*Lighthousekeeping* 88). The sexual connotation of “jerking” suggests that Babel (as the embodiment of Eros) wants to reach the unattainable other (the Sun); although Molly reminds him of his own abject state, she does not let his wings get swollen. She renders him “detumescent” after consummation and leaves him “desiccated and half-stilled” (*Lighthousekeeping* 88). The hidden side of Babel Dark (Lux/ Hyde) hankers after the place where he can reach the real abject. When Stevenson tells him that every individual has two halves (the same sexes looking for their other halves), Babel concedes that attaining the “abject other” is an impossibility: “Darwin said something to me once for which I was grateful. I had been trying to forget, trying to stop my mind reaching for a place where it can never be home” (*Lighthousekeeping* 167). Besides, upon being asked by Stevenson if he does not believe that “all men had atavistic qualities? Parts of themselves that lay like undeveloped negatives? Shadow-selves, unpictured but present?” (*Lighthousekeeping* 164), he refutes him by stating that Molly instilled the sense of “being one” into her; yet he also admits that he is still feels incomplete: “I was afraid of how she made me feel. You say we are not one, you say truly there are two of us. Yes, there were two of us, but we were one [...] I am a glass man, but there is no light in me that can shine across the sea. I shall lead no one home, save no lives, not even my own” (166). Stevenson also tells him that man has been enforced to forsake his Eros because culture praises such a sacrifice as “integrity”: “A man may know himself, but he prides himself on his character, his integrity-the word says it is all-integrity-we use it to mean virtue, but it means wholeness too, and which of us is that?” (*Lighthousekeeping* 164). In other words, a man may realize that he is made to believe a constructed integrity by directing his desire to the other sex and adapting himself to language and culture. Cognizant of this fact, Babel resists the temptation of Molly: “‘Keep me by you’, he said. It was almost a prayer, but like most of us he prayed for one thing, and set his life on course for elsewhere” (*Lighthousekeeping* 89).

Babel Dark feels “like a stranger” in his life because he disentangled his real androgynous nature from himself; first “to make an end of it Dark had decided to marry” (*Lighthousekeeping* 51) then rejected Molly’s offer to be together. The reader questions “to make an end of [what]?” he decided to marry? The answer is not certain whether he decided to marry because he feared his androgynous nature would be unveiled by Molly or he did not really trust Molly’s love. One way or another, he blocked “amatory idealization [which] is the encounter of an *other* that inscribes a rudimentary disposition of the subject in language” (Keltner *Thresholds* 105).

His hidden sexual orientation is also unveiled when he conjures the tightrope walkers up. His wife’s clumsiness while carrying the breakfast tray invokes the image of the tightrope walkers in his mind: “He thought, irritably, that a tightrope walker he had seen on the docks would have carried this tray with more grace and skill, even on a line strung between two masts” (*Lighthousekeeping* 52). Moreover, he visualizes himself in the role of his wife balancing the tray to arouse voluptuous pleasure: “when he wanted her, which was never as herself, but sometimes, because he was a young man, he trod slowly up the stairs to her room, imagining he was carrying a tray of greasy muffins and a pot of cold tea” (*Lighthousekeeping* 55). Babel’s interest in the tightrope walkers, who deny stability and order, implies that as a man, who holds alterity within himself, he is able to recognize the alterity of other people. The alterity of the others arouses his fascination. Remembering that tightrope walking in Winterson’s novels is commonly used to highlight the characters’ wish to “escape heterosexualism” and “to avoid falling into the abyss of shame” (Makinen 74), Babel Dark’s unruly emotions waiting to be articulated beyond the threshold of the *symbolic* are clear. His life is a borderline between Salts, where he imagines being a tightrope walker, and Bristol, where he speaks in “a Welsh accent, because his mother was Welsh, and he knew the lilt” (*Lighthousekeeping* 96). He even changes his accent, which hints that he is closer to the “maternal other” when he is with Molly. Similar to Eros who forbids Psyche to see his face, Babel Dark “gave no orders to her but one, that she should never follow him to Salts” (97). In both of the stories, the secrets of

Eros are unveiled. The impossibility of being “one” with Molly is also hidden in the scene where Molly turns round to look at Babel Dark.

The mythological allusion to the story of Orpheus and Eurydice is interwoven in the novel. When Babel Dark and Molly meet in the lighthouse years later: “he walked purposefully into the room. He faltered. He stopped. Molly was there, with her back to him, and as she turned round, he loved her. It was very simple; he loved her. Why had he made it so complicated? (*Lighthousekeeping* 99). As Orpheus turned back to see if Eurydice was following him while ascending from the underworld, Molly turns back and looks at Babel Dark in the lighthouse. The fact that the female and male roles are altered in the novel (Orpheus: Molly/ Eurydice: Babel Dark) points to Babel’s indecisiveness and fear to delve into the *semiotic* realm that Molly offers. He is the one who “faltered” and “stopped”. He does not want his love story to be articulated in the *symbolic* realm: “the story of Molly O’ Rourke and Babel Dark, a beginning, a middle, an end. But there was no such story, not that could be told, because it was made of a length of braid, an apple, a burning coal, a bear with a drum, a brass dial, his footsteps on the stone stairs coming closer and closer” (*Lighthousekeeping* 100). Their love is buried in the engulfing void of *abjection* where bits and pieces of materials enumerated above leave the story incomplete; all these materials pertinent to their love story belong to the musical and tactile side of language. McAfee explains that the *semiotic* “could be seen as the modes of expression that originate in the unconscious whereas the symbolic could be seen as the conscious way a person tries to express using a stable sign system (17). Accordingly, these modes of expressions do not facilitate the signifying process by which Babel Dark is able to bridge the rupture between self and other. The dispersed materials belonging to the realm of the *semiotic* (drum, brass dial, footstep) are the metaphors and interfusions of sensory perceptions pertaining to the infantile plenitude. Babel yearns to reach wholeness by dint of the musicality of these materials and he expects these sounds to carry him to the realm of the maternal other; but his fear to be “seen” by Molly (Psyche) is overwhelming.

Furthermore, Pew's association of Babel name with Samson bears significance to be able to understand his castration by Molly. In the Biblical version, Delilah cuts Samson's hair and vitiates his masculine power. The name of the inn "Razorbill" where he preaches the sermon "Remember the rock whence ye are hewn, and the pit whence ye are digged" (*Lighthousekeeping* 43) echoes that Babel Dark is obsessed with the fear of being shaved/ emasculated. One of the daily chores of Silver is to brew "a Full Strengthened Samson" (*Lighthousekeeping* 37) for Pew and at the end of the novel, when she visits the lighthouse, she prepares it for herself: "I grabbed the kettle as the condensation began to mist on it in the heat. I swilled it out with water, filled it up, and made myself a twenty-year-old pot of tea. Full strength Samson" (*Lighthousekeeping* 228). It might be suggested that Pew and Silver are the embodiments of Samson, who regained his power after being emasculated. While Babel Dark cannot hold his full strength after Molly transposes him to the *semiotic* terrain, Silver enriches and solidifies the *symbolic* by the interfusion of the *semiotic*. As Gambaudo highlights:

Although the stronger presence of the abject maternal "can have a positive effect in the case of emerging forms of art, the increasing enactment of destructive impulses is not acceptable when this destruction is geared towards the social fabric. For this reason, Kristeva is interested in finding new methods to restore the subject's capacity for 'imaginary matricide' over its actual enactment. (130)

Silver enacts the "imaginary matricide" and prevents herself from relapsing into the *semiotic*; she weaves her story in the "social fabric" to locate herself in the threshold between the social and the personal; the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* are in a dialectic process; the signification process is both bodily and social. As the narrator points out:

And yet, the human body is still the measure of all things. This is the scale we know best. This ridiculous six feet belts the globe and everything in it. We talk about feet, hands, spans, because that is what we know. We know the world by and through our bodies. This is our lab; we can't experiment without it. It is our home too. The only home we really possess. Home is where the heart is... (*Lighthousekeeping* 171)

Silver's voice is writing through the body; it departs from the paternal discourse and begets a multiplicity of voices. Her narrative voice generates the *semiotic* inscription

of the inscribable body. Her poetic language leads the signifiers to slide over the chain of signifieds yet she never loses her connection with the *symbolic* realm; her story has a recognizable structure, which accentuates the *symbolic* investment of the *semiotic*. As the reader learns, she turns back to the lighthouse with a group of visitors, which suggests that she has inscribed her existence in the public/ *symbolic* order. Her story is the defiance of melancholy. In short, in the whole novel, Silver is the one who can overcome the *abjection* without falling into melancholy or submitting to death while Babel Dark cannot save himself from the overwhelming fascination of the abject. At this point, it must be clarified that Winterson seems to have furnished her female narrator with the strength to overcome melancholy and make a pact with the public and the private. Within this context, the relation between homosexuality and the sublimation of the abject can be revalued in order to understand how Silver could nullify social *abjection* and turned story-telling and love into sublimation.

5.5. Stylistic Analysis: Is the Text the other?

This part will focus on the dialectic interaction between the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language in Silver's narrative and how she brings the maternal other into being by the act of writing. The stylistic and linguistic analyses of this part aim to demonstrate that writing her own life story, despite being mostly imaginary, thwarts her feeling like a "stranger" in public. Rather than seeing herself as the Other of society, which might have caused self-estrangement, she discovers that the private and the public realms can be incorporated; her solution to cope with the labels such as thief and psychosis is to turn *abjection* into positive signification. The novel lets the reader recognize how an outsider (the *abjected* one) can benefit from the recuperative power of writing (imaginative literature) and registers a new apprehension to the notion of "otherness" by creating a novel discourse. Silver resolves the self/ other crisis by re-appropriating the other (maternal Thing) as a site of possibility to overcome self-estrangement and melancholy. The text is the concrete manifestation of the recuperative power of love and story-telling, by which self and other dissolve into each other.

The juxtaposed life stories of Silver and Babel Dark are in tandem with Winterson's treatment of subjectivity. In contrast to Babel "who did not want a broken world" (*Lighthousekeeping* 119), Silver seeks new experiences of truth "breaking out, trying again, wondering why the past comes with us, wondering how to talk about the past at all" (*Lighthousekeeping* 133). Silver reminds the reader that there is no singular story: "His life. Pew. Babel Dark. All of us bound together" (*Lighthousekeeping* 134). They emerge in the novel intermittently like the lights of the lighthouse; once one of their story is told, it is fractured by the stories of the others: "Try and put your finger on the solid thing and it scattered into separate worlds" (*Lighthousekeeping* 95). The stories beget stories like a Russian doll and the McCloud Ship. What connects them is their alterity: "Pew is as old as a unicorn, and people are frightened of him because he isn't like them. Like and like go together. Likeness is liking, whatever they say about the opposites" (*Lighthousekeeping* 15). The layout of the narrative highlights this alternation. As Onega states, there is a "double-loop structure" (210) in the novel. It is divided into two sections. These sections have some chapters whose first lines are used as titles. In the first section, Silver tells the reader her life story and she retells the stories Pew told her in the lighthouse. These side stories include the stories about Babel Dark and the construction of the lighthouse. The first five dialogues of the first section are made up of the dialogues between Silver and Pew. In the other five dialogues, Silver becomes the storyteller and she is questioned by the nameless woman. The dialogue starts as "Tell me a story, Silver" (*Lighthousekeeping* 129). Onega states that there is a parallelism between these two sets of ten dialogues. They mirror each other and the stories suggest "the interdependence of the private and the public [...] and "Silver's individuation process" (210,211). Pew and Babel are the "others" within the self (Silver): Pew represents the life force and Babel represents the death force, two opposing but energizing powers of human psyche. The artifice of narrative is analogous to the construction of subjectivity by language which always includes "the other" (the *semiotic* aspect). In this respect, the novel straddles the "phenotext" and "genotext".

The irruptions of otherness are articulated by unfamiliar words in the novel. The *symbolic* base of language is perverted by coining new words. However, these coined words do not entirely nullify the meaning inherent in the *symbolic*. As language registered by the *symbolic* has limits to express the *semiotic* plenitude, it is poeticized by unusual enjambments as if they are uttered by a child. So, the dialogues repeated in the same style sound like a refrain and remind one of the beginning of childhood bedtime stories. For instance, “Cliff-perched, wind-cleft” (43) has an alliterative style and bears musicality. Also, the combination of words is unconventional because such use of combinations is rare in English. Similarly, “The door was his body” does not denote a linguistically meaningful comprehension. By the same token, “mercury of fact” would be more meaningful if it were “fact of mercury”. The impropriety of language, syntactical dislocations, the combination of the words that are at odds with normative grammar and syntax run counter to meaning proper of the *symbolic* mode of signification. Nonetheless, they all beget musicality and rhythm in the whole novel. Initially, they arouse curiosity as to the rest of the narration, sound like nursery rhymes, discard expression of clear and orderly meaning (the moon does not shine the night white), disobey the *symbolic* base of signification and render reference more or less impossible.

In the “Talking Bird” part, there is a parallelism between Silver and the bird. Silver goes to Capri and hears someone “calling my [her] name- ‘Bongiorno Silver!’” The bird calls her again “Bongiorno Silver” [...] The bird regarded me [her] ‘Pretty boy! Pretty boy!’ Who cares about gender at a time like this?” [...] “Bongiorno Silver” (*Lighthousekeeping* 158). The reiterations dispersed in the novel most of which are uttered by Silver seem to have a close affinity with the bird’s repetitions of the same word. The melodic and mellow voice of the bird and Silver attest to the *semiotic* dimension of language. The voice diminishes the fissure between the self and other. It stems from the maternal body and evokes the connection between the mother and the infant; it takes its source from the realm before the infant acquires language.

The abundance of figures of speech also points at the *semiotic* disposition of language in the novel. For instance, the first dichotomy between Silver and Babel Dark is their

names. Silver is shiny and translucent whereas dark is the opposite of light. Nonetheless, there is not a clear demarcation between what their names evoke because light and dark are given the same meaning by Winterson. She lost her mother, “some of the light went out of me [her]” (*Lighthousekeeping* 24). She learns to feel darkness and living without light in the lighthouse by touching the objects. She replaces seeing with touching; the tactile solidifies the sense of proximity and affinity pertaining to the *semiotic* infantile plenitude: “Try and put your finger on the solid thing and it scattered into separate worlds” (*Lighthousekeeping* 95). The *abjection* of the mother “who gives life, but also death” (Lechte *Julia Kristeva* 165) is of paramount importance to de/construct subjectivity. The maternal body must symbolically be murdered so that the child can enter the *symbolic* realm. The threshold stance of the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* works through multiple images. The stones, the lighthouse, Silver’s mother all have a light and dark side. In the same vein, the notion of writing as opaque refers to the *semiotic* aspect of signification. The opaque language welcomes the indeterminate and obscure poetic diction as Winterson practises. She challenges the empiricist view of writing and distorts the correspondence between signifiers and signifieds. Her writing style opens up a barely symbolizable terrain which challenges signification.

Neologism also points at the *semiotic* pulverization of the *symbolic*. The name of the inn where Babel Dark dwells in Cape Wrath is “The Razorbill” which “was an uncomfortable place; the wind screeched at the windows, a hammock was half the price a good night’s sleep” (*Lighthousekeeping* 13). Echoing Woolf’s *To The Lighthouse*, Babel Dark yearns for going to The Razorbill which he thought as “his beginning [...] and “one week at the Razorbill would surely have been enough for life” (*Lighthousekeeping* 30). His father never took Babel Dark to the Razorbill and he regrets that (*Lighthousekeeping* 30). Upon being a priest, he moves to Razorbill and preaches a sermon there: “Remember the rock whence ye are hewn, and the pit whence ye are digged” (*Lighthousekeeping* 43). The innkeeper at the Razorbill is impressed by Babel’s sermon so much that he changes the name of the inn as “The Rock and Pit” (*Lighthousekeeping* 30). The impact of names on one’s life is accentuated by

Winterson because the sailors in the town cannot get used to the new name: “sailors, being what they are, still called it by its former name for a good sixty years or more, but The Rock and Pit it was, and still is, with much the same low-beamed, inward-turned, net-hung, salt-dashed, sea-weed of forsakenness that it always had (*Lighthousekeeping* 44). The narrator’s description of the inn attests to the interconnection between the *semiotic* and the *symbolic* signification and the power of naming. The name of the inn changes but it does not suffice to alter its properties. It is still the same uncomfortable place exposed to the piercing wind. Similar to the lighthouse surrounded by the sea, the inn is enclosed by the sea. The violent oxymoron of salt-dashed and net-hung inn marks Winterson’s penchant for lexical sensation. The harsh, palpable, substantial adjectives “inward-turned” and “salt-dashed” inn mark a stark contrast to the softness and tenderness of “net-hung” “sea-weed” properties of the place. The very musicality of the words divorced from their signified referents profoundly affect the narrating voice, which suggests that the material sounds of language signify corporally dissolving the *symbolic* element of signification.

The alliterations are laden with the rhythmical sounds. “Razor”, “rock” and “pit” reverberate to a *semiotic* beat regardless of their stiffness. The inn is enclosed by its “inward-turned” shape but it is licked by the salt and “sea-weeds” of the sea. The stable and immutable edifice is ruptured by what the sea brings. Besides, the inn both stands for the *symbolic* and *semiotic* domain. It was imagined as an inaccessible destination in Babel Dark’s imagination when he was a child; it was beyond his reach. It echoes Mr. Ramsay’s “no” to Jim. It is like a razor which is used for removing hair with its sharp blade. Razor is quite a suggestive name because removing hair can be equated with castration. It is the Law of the father for Babel Dark; the ineffable, unreachable and prohibited destination. When he becomes a man of religion, he reiterates the Law of the Father. His sermon solidifies the idea that one must not forget where he comes from. He attaches great importance to patrimony. His religious advice to “remember the rock whence ye are hewn, and the pit whence ye are digged” (*Lighthousekeeping* 43) is a reference to God. Yet, the sermon wanders off into evasions because it can be

interpreted as the womb, as well. Besides, the womb imagery is bolstered by the inn. The metaphors resonate with Kristevan *semiotic chora*.

The liminal space between the rock and the pit is the threshold between the *semiotic* and the symbolic. The inn or the pit metaphors can also be explained with respect to the *semiotic chora* as capable of generating (not just receiving) energy – the energy which helps fuel the signifying process” (McAfee 20). The womb metaphor downgrades the discursive aspect of the aforementioned example. The maternal *chora* broadens the significance of the metaphor as it refers to “a deep anxiety over the possibility of losing one’s subjectivity” (McAfee 49). Babel’s fear of falling into the *semiotic chora*, losing his wield on words, being entrapped by the “inward-turned” inn propels him into attaching more solid and impenetrable meanings to the inn. He tries to compensate for the motility, softness and the danger of being devoured by the maternal *chora* as he embellishes his discourse with religious references. Considering that religion also embodies the *symbolic* overtones and it represents the Name of the Father, he instructs the listeners not to fall in the same pit again as it instils fear and ferments disorder. Winterson locates all the words on a slippery ground, therefore many of her examples are polysemic and ambiguous. She also has a cynical view of religion. Babel Dark is a hypocrite who lives a double life, and he does not practice what he preaches. He hides his affair with Molly secret from his wife and he betrays his religious beliefs. Unable to bear the heaviness of religious requirements such as helping the poor and preaching every day, he starts questioning himself. His encounter with Robert Stevenson and Darwin ignites his curiosity as to whether there is only one way of explanation for creation. He harbours suspicions of God’s omnipotence as the novel continues. Winterson does not criticize religion explicitly as it would be incongruous to use such a politically oriented language, but the way she weaves her metaphors into the fabric of the stories evinces that she heralds a departure from logocentrism. Though subtle, she questions the validity of language “which betrays us, tells the truth when we want to lie, and dissolves into formlessness when we would like to be precise” (in French, 245).

Taken together, the figures of speech, neologisms, syntactical dislocations and the multi-layered stories within stories in the novel can be accepted as the *semiotic* outburst on the *symbolic*. Turning back to the question whether the text is the other which helps the writer/ narrator to sublimate and poeticize the maternal Thing, I put forward the claim that writing unveils the repressed maternal residue which does not come from the outside. This residue of the maternal bond is already inherent in the speaking subject, yet only the novel discourse and poetic language of the artist can generate it in the act of writing. Writing is the outpouring of the desire to unite with the other; it is the attempt to articulate what is unfamiliar by familiar words. Literature compensates for the negative side of *abjection* and *melancholia*; it transforms them into positive signification as French feminism and Kristeva put forward.

In conclusion, *Lighthousekeeping* is a very subversive and revolutionary novel; firstly, it lays bare how society is based on the hierarchy between self and Other and how the one who does not conform to the ethical codes is easily labelled. The novel does not reproduce the dichotomy between self and Other but explicitly shows that the working mechanism behind social *abjection* is merely based on the futile effort to draw a boundary between self and Other. Secondly, by foregrounding love and story-telling as two fundamental solutions for identity construction, Winterson tries to show that the social antagonisms cannot be solved unless the individual probes her own subjectivity construction. Identity construction is always an ongoing process and if the process is valued more than production, the enclosed system of selfhood and society can be eradicated. Thirdly, rather than trying to topple down any existing system, hegemony can be overcome if the individual struggles to overcome her own limitations, writes her own story and approaches love from a broader approach. Given that Silver's lesbian love story is not the major theme of the novel and Babel's latent pre-Oedipal narcissistic attraction to the same sex is only hinted at in between the lines, Winterson's aim is not to singularize homosexual love but to treat it as an ongoing part of the whole narrative. She does not depict Silver as an outsider in society due to her lesbianism. Nor does she present Babel's suicide as a result of his latent homosexuality. What Winterson highlights is that if the individual cannot adopt her/his

own strangeness by adopting the maternal abject inside her/his psyche, s/he is bound to be trapped in the supposedly clear borders of society, either as a homosexual or heterosexual. Therefore, by foregrounding the importance of one's quest for individuality and the necessity of overstepping the boundaries of *symbolic* and patriarchal language, she manifests her political stance clearly and brings a broader perspective to queer politics without restraining it to the hierarchy between homosexuality and heteronormativity.

As a leitmotif in all the novels of Winterson, gender construction and sexual orientation are the most problematic issues in this novel. However, Winterson enlarges the scope of these issues and lays bare the signification and individuation processes of the main characters in the novel. The sexual orientations of the characters are woven in the novel as sub stories. Yet, these sub stories are made more visible in the way Winterson lays bare the *symbolic* thinking pattern of society and language. Winterson never presents queer love and heterosexual love as binary oppositions; rather she interrogates how "love" is shaped in accordance with the *symbolic* pattern of society. She presents different alternatives of love but never makes them the core of the novel. Silver's stories turn out to be the means by which self and other dissolve their existences into each other. Literature, in this context, storytelling narrows down the gap between the subject and the object. Therefore, *Lighthousekeeping* enables the reader to re-evaluate what queer politics is or in other words how a novel can be political. Winterson demonstrates her political consciousness by refraining from turning the lesbian narrative into a metanarrative and dominant discourse. Her subversive strategy is to write from an intermediary space between the opposites which has been explained by the *semiotic* base of signification and the sublimation of the abject. By marking the significance of human subjectivity and avoiding the schism between homosexuality and heterosexuality, she renders the political preoccupations of the novel more visible and forceful.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed J.M. Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country*, Latife Tekin's *Night Lessons* and Jeanette Winterson's *Lighthousekeeping* with respect to their approach to the problem of otherness. Although the social and political textures of the novels analyzed in this study show no overlapping similarities, the way that they write without falling into the trap of the subject/object hierarchy and the poetization of the maternal Thing bear resemblances. Although Coetzee and Tekin have been criticized for not reflecting the social and political realities of their time and Winterson has been negatively criticized for derailing from her lesbian narrative framework and not writing politically enough, this thesis suggests that all these writers render their political consciousness more visible by tampering with language and trying to write outside *symbolic* language. Their main occupation is to emphasize how the hierarchy between subject/object (I/other) is already inherent in language and therefore unless a new approach is brought to language and narrativity, the writer is likely to be caught up in the same binary system. The theoretical background of this chapter has entailed Kristeva's opinions on *abjection*, the dialectic between the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language, *melancholia*, love and being a stranger.

The first novel which has been studied is Coetzee's *In the Heart of the Country* (1977). This chapter has analyzed how Coetzee manages to create an in-between space between I and other. Before tackling the main argument, some background information about Coetzee and his place in postcolonial literature have been given mentioned. While J.M.Coetzee is considered as one of the writers belonging to the "cream of the White South African literary establishment" (Parker 9), his novels have embarked upon crossing the border of Western dichotomies to hold a balance between delicate and conflicting opinions. Especially *In the Heart of the Country* sets him apart from his contemporaries. His novels enable the readers to conceive one more possible

way to evaluate the situation of the other in South African literary context where the hierarchy between the colonizer and the colonized is very visible.

Since this chapter on Coetzee has primarily been an exploration of *In the Heart of the Country* in the light of Kristeva's ideas, my intention has firstly been to analyze the novel within the framework of *abjection*. *Abjection* can be one of the ways of writing from the third space because the abject is in between the subject and the object. It is one of the most fundamental processes of the subject "in process/on trial" (Kristeva *Revolution* 22). Although the theories of Kristeva and Bhabha may seem to be separate, Coetzee's writing from an ambivalent position between the subject and the object can be explained by both of them. Coetzee brings a new perspective to postcolonial literature without falling into the trap of the self/other binary. In this respect, he manages to write from the *third space* Bhabha mentions. As the *third space* is an elusive term, Kristevan abject has been helpful to understand how it is possible to consider otherness not as a totally separate place but as a product expelled by the self.

This dissertation has attempted to show that a meta-criticism can be brought to the critical studies of Coetzee's novels in terms of his political stance. The novel ploughs through many problems such as history and racism implicitly and opens the path for a new understanding in South African postcolonial writing. The principal foci of Coetzee's fiction have always been the individual reflection on the macrocosmic events and the alterity problem. His resolution to the alterity problem has always been writing without an authoritative tone. By the same token, he avoids taking any political sides but it does not alleviate the political tune of his novels. He deals with the tightrope of language and discourse; he allows the dialectical encounter between the reader and the text by unveiling the possibility of writing through an altered discourse. He deviates from other white South African writers in terms of writing from an in-between position. This study has tried to show that his ambivalent position as a novelist who is familiar with both South African and European literature lends itself to an analysis of his novels as negotiations between ideas rather than negations. *In the Heart of the Country* dissects the ideological aspects of racism and reality from a microcosmic

point of view. The problem of otherness is presented without falling in the trap of self and other binary opposition.

The other novel studied in this dissertation is *Night Lessons* by Latife Tekin. This study has tried to bring a new perspective to the novel by exploring the mother-daughter relationship from a Kristevan angle. Among contemporary Turkish writers, Tekin stands out as the one who can really put a new language into practice. Her novels provide myriad ways in terms of their content and technique to be analyzed within the framework of Kristeva. My purpose has been to analyze how a writer's cry for turning back to the mother on a contextual basis is in compliance with a specific writing technique that enables the writer to write in the mother's language. Tekin manages to deconstruct the so-called traditional language but she does so through language. She stands against the discourse by writing inside the discourse because she knows that forsaking the language, discourse or the culture is impossible. She manages to objectify herself as a writer as she can evaluate her writing style from the outside. This dissertation has looked for whys and hows of this process, and to be able to do that, Kristeva's ideas have been the theoretical background.

The third space between the subject and the object as the transfiguration of the *abject* in poetic language is what underpins the main concern of this study. Gülfidan's voice manifests the corporeal side of language and inscription of the primordial attachment with her mother. While the poetic language of the novel brings a new dimension to the binarism between self and other, this new discourse brings forward a new understanding of what the writer's political and ethical stance is. Like the other two novels of this thesis, *Night Lessons* propels the reader to conceptualize the meaning of politics along with ethics. Before reaching this meta-criticism, this chapter has demonstrated how Gülfidan tries to draw a certain and impenetrable line between herself and her family particularly her mother. Although she makes herself believe that she expels and jettisons her mother as the other, her poetic diction, which is inevitably immersed in her psychic realm, puts her on a perpetual encounter with the shadow of her dead mother. In her attempt to redraw her boundaries as separate from her mother, she comes closer to her own body and sexuality, at the end of which she can overcome

the hegemony of the *symbolic* language and obtains her freedom. During this process in which she measures and re-measures her own corporeal boundaries, her identity process continues as a never ending continuation. Both her body and the novel challenge stability, unity and enclosure.

The problem of otherness is the main core of this novel and the way that Tekin deals with this issue is similar to those of Coetzee and Winterson. All the writers write from a position where the *abject* figure is foregrounded and given voice. In *Night Lessons*, Tekin presents this problematic issue by adopting a new apprehension to otherness like the other writers mentioned in this study. Remembering that the *abject* is neither the subject nor the object and it is the blurred space between them and Tekin is interested in writing outside the limits of conventional language, it can be stated that the contextual fabric of the novel is congruent with the subversive language it enacts. Like the main characters in *In the Heart of the Country* and *Lighthousekeeping*, Gülfidan cannot adapt herself to the existing patriarchal system and the *symbolic* language as the concomitant part of it. She valorizes her body as the agent of her traumatic experiences and language. The way that Gülfidan foregrounds her body and her female identity vis-à-vis the hierarchical thinking patterns of her family and the political movement serve to affirm the notion that she rejects being the victim of somebody else's language. She resists the patriarchal/*symbolic* system and she preserves her alterior status by adopting the maternal other and reflecting herself as a product of a textual work. Like Magda, she is both the teller and the tale. Interrogating her alterity through the lens of Kristevan *abject* enables us to understand how the social and political texture of society in the 1980s of Turkey is woven by the domination of the *symbolic* parameters. Even though the clash between Gülfidan her family and the political organization is never presented as two opposing forces explicitly, her feeling of estrangement hints that who is unfamiliar or who does not conform to the rules of the hierarchical order is seen as the other to be expelled because she threatens the unified and fixed boundaries of society. Kristeva's *abjection* is not only an individual notion; it also refers to a collective phenomenon. Gülfidan disrupts the *symbolic* order on a larger scale as she threatens the stability of political, social and sexual codes of

society. She is a subversive subject and a misfit due to her non-conformity. However, she can construct her own identity and evade self-effacement by embracing her *abject* other, who is literally her mother in the novel. Such an embracement enables her to get rid of the binaries between self/ other, normal/ abnormal, masculine/ feminine which are inherent in the society she lives in. Furthermore, Tekin presents to us the possibility of an alternative order which celebrates differences and otherness. This alternative order does not negate the *symbolic* but presents a middle ground between the *symbolic* and the *semiotic*. As for the realistic and political dealings of the novel, it can be stated that Tekin abstains from the Cartesian dualism of separating subject from the object and renders the political message of the novel more forceful by trying to write beyond the conventional language order.

Night Lessons shows that as long as the dialectic thinking is not left, the phallogentric social order will continue to expel others. Tekin shows the reader that reality and history can be constructed by focusing on the relation of otherness to language, culture and knowledge. Her handling of the contextual and formal properties to explore otherness makes the novel more realistic. In this regard, literature serves as a performative event where the extreme physical and emotional suffering of a character is conveyed to the reader, which cannot be articulated by merely the *symbolic* structure of language.

Although Coetzee deals with the issue of racism and Tekin tackles the political atmosphere of the 1980s of Turkey, both of the authors challenge the conventional language and push the limits of *symbolic* language while displacing the trauma of their main characters. Another common point between these two writers is that they have received a lot of negative criticisms as they have been thought not to depict the political events realistically enough and not to have a certain political stance. This study has tried to show that direct references to the historical events or verisimilitude do not have to be the only means of representation in literature. These two works represent the other without reducing it to the status of the object and they show the impossibility of exact historical and realistic representations of the events without tampering with the narrative tools of the patriarchal and dominant discourse. Thus, they do not create a

counter discourse to history and they do not deny the historical reality; instead they show that there does not have to be only one way to write about historical events. This thesis argues that the writer's attempt to go beyond the limits of the *symbolic* signification and to derive their aesthetic stimulation from the *semiotic* which "roughly refers to the affective, corporeal elements that contribute to meaning" (Keltner "Introduction" 2-3) is quite a revolutionary, subversive and political act in writing. They destabilize the readers' expectations of ascribing any status to consistent notions of "the truth" by challenging the certitude of language. They do not deliver a moral condemnation of what they see as erroneous in society and intentionally break the conventions of realism. Lack of realistic detail and the obscurity of language, however, should not cause these novels to be regarded as unrealistic or the writers cannot be thought of as evading a political stance. As this thesis tries to put forward, these authors foreground their political consciousness more strenuously because they believe that if *symbolic* language is not altered and challenged, the narrative is bound to be stuck in the same binary system.

The last chapter has interrogated *Lighthousekeeping* by Winterson with regard to its approach to the problem of otherness. Firstly, the contextual framework of the novel has been studied in the light of the Kristevan *semiotic/symbolic* and *abjection*. Since *abjection* and the sublimation of the *abject* are projected on writing as the interconnection between the *semiotic* and *symbolic* bases of language, these terms have been used as reference points both in the contextual and the linguistic (narrative) analyses. Later, *melancholia* has been studied as the indivisible alterity of love. Both Silver and Babel Dark experience melancholy in the novel. It can even be claimed that the whole novel is the artistic recovery of melancholy. While Silver recuperates from the loss of her mother and Pew, being left by Molly excruciates Babel Dark. Both characters suffer from the inexplicable loss of something; they assume that this "thing" is a person; however, their agony stems from the detachment from the maternal other. The unbearable emotional weight of melancholy causes Babel to end his life whereas the sublimation of the *Thing* enables Silver to overcome the self-other/subject-object dialectic. From this standpoint, melancholy has a productive and revitalizing effect as

it has a capacity to deconstruct the hierarchy between life and death, which is another normative binary in Western culture.

Lastly, the textual aspect of the novel has been studied because the text acts as an intermediary between the subject and the object. The text with its syntactical and lexical (dis) arrangement is congruent with the fragmented stories in the novel. Writing itself crops up as a process of *abjection*; Winterson's subversive and inventive act of writing brings the other into being. Writing emerges as a passion and the *abject* through which the narrator assumes a position as the outsider. Writing, as an absence signifier, enables the subject (writer/ narrator) to encounter the object (the text/the other). Therefore, Winterson deals with the text as a 'stranger' similar to Coetzee and Tekin. Writing challenges the 'I' of the utterance while also challenging the other in the embodiment of the text. Writing becomes the reflection of desire and love which are never achieved and seized.

The basic quality of desire, according to Lacan and Kristeva, is its inaccessibility. As desire is the futile action of the individual who recognizes that the desired is always the absent, writing emerges as a process where the subject is always put on trial. In other words, the text is the absence signifier where the subject tries to catch the object and territorialize it but to no avail. Only after the writer (subject) positions the text as the other, or the stranger which is to be dealt with from the outside, can the hierarchy between the writer/narrator and the text be abolished. This is the common ground where Coetzee, Tekin and Winterson meet, as well.

The contribution of this study to the overall studies related to the problem of otherness is firstly to demonstrate that literature provides a fertile ground for the alterity problem as much as other disciplines. In the contemporary world where many groups exclude the others on the grounds of differences between races, skin colours, classes or the political reasons, otherness has cropped up as a very major concern of many people and areas of study. Although the novels analyzed in this study do not directly touch upon the alterity problem in a mimetic or documentary fashion, they lay bare how literature can be used as a means to shed light on the chasms between groups and the

emotional aporia of the characters who are trapped in the hegemony of the *symbolic* language. Secondly, this study contributes to the studies of otherness problem in literature in terms of tackling this issue from a psychoanalytic perspective. Although the psychoanalytic approach does not seem to be directly related to the political self awareness of any writer, especially the Kristevan theories connect psychoanalytical theory with politics. The idea that the body is foregrounded in the discourse and the speech is shaped in accordance with the drive affects has a lot to do with the politics indirectly but forcefully. That is, the body cannot be disassociated from the politics because the hierarchical quality of language is inherent in any signifying system and politics is no exception. Lastly, Kristevan theories provide viable sources for further interdisciplinary studies because her arguments about the body and language can be utilized in any area that dwells on alterity problem. Thus, further studies can be shaped around the historical or socio-political background of these novels by their pertinence to psychoanalytical theory.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Bulut, Bilge

Nationality: Turkish (TC)

Date and Place of Birth: 28 August 1984 , Denizli

Marital Status: Single

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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	METU English Literature	2009
BA	Hacettepe Uni. English Language and Literature	2006
High School	Anafartalar High School, Denizli	2002

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2011- Present	Gazi University	Instructor of English

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Beginner Spanish

B. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

J.M. Coetzee'nin *In the Heart of the Country*, Latife Tekin'in *Gece Dersleri* ve Jeanette

Winterson'ın *Lighthousekeeping* Romanlarındaki tekilik Problemi

Bu doktora tezi, J.M. Coetzee'nin *In the Heart of the Country*, Latife Tekin'in *Night Lessons* (*Gece Dersleri*) ve Jeanette Winterson'ın *Lighthousekeeping* adlı romanlarını tekilik kavramı aısından incelemektedir. Bu alıřmadaki romanların sosyal ve politik dokuları benzerlik gstermese de, zne ve nesne arasındaki hiyerarřıye dřmemeleri ve řeyin řiirselleřtirilmesi aısından yazmaları ortak noktalarıdır. Coetzee ve Tekin dnemlerinin ve yařadıkları toplumun sosyal ve politik sorunlarını yeteri kadar gereki bir dille yazmıyor olmalarından dolayı ve Winterson da benzer řekilde lezbiyen anlatıdan sapıp yeterince politik bir dil kullanmıyor diye eleřtirilmiř olsa da bu tez bu  yazarın bahsedilen romanlarda dille uęrařarak ve semiyotik dilin sınırlarını zorlayarak yazmaları aısından politik duruřlarını olduka grnr kıldıklarını savunmaktadır. Bu yazarların asıl uęrařı zne ve nesne ya da ben ve teki arasındaki dilin doęasında var olan hiyerarřının altını oymaktır. nk dildeki bu sıralı dzen deęiřtirilmedike ve dile alıřılmıřın dıřında olan bir bakıř aısı getirilmedike yazar kendini tekrar eden kapalı bir dil ve anlatım sisteminde hapsolacaktır. Yazarların dille olan bu uęrařları n olana alınarak bu tezin teorik erevesi Julia Kristeva'nın dilin semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınımı, ięren/ięrenme (abjekt/ abjeksiyon), melankoli (karaduygu), ařk ve yabancı olma durumu zerine fikirleri zerine kurulmuřtur.

Bu tezde incelenen ilk roman J.M.Coetzee'nin *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) romanıdır. Bu ilk blm Coetzee'nin ben ve teki arasında nasıl bir ara alan oluřturduęuna yoęunlařmaktadır. Ana argmana gemeden nce Coetzee'nin romanlarını nasıl yazdıęı ve ikili karřıtlıkları nasıl yıktıęı konularına deęinerek onun

Güney Afrika hakkında yazan diğer yazarlardan nasıl ayrıldığına değinilmiştir. Kendini ne Avrupalı ne de Güney Afrikalı olarak tanımlayan Coetzee, bir Boer (Hollanda asıllı Güney Afrikalı) olarak ve Avrupa’da eğitim görmüş bir beyaz olarak, Güney Afrika hakkında net ve eleştirel yorumlar yapmaktan özellikle kaçınmaktadır. Bu yüzden kendi vatanından kopmuş sürgünde bir yazar mı yoksa üçüncü dünya ülkeleri hakkında dışarıdan konuşan beyaz bir entelektüel mi sorusu her zaman okuyucuların aklını meşgul etmiştir. Coetzee kendini hiç bir gruba dahil etmemektedir. Bunun iki sebebi vardır. İlk olarak iki dilli bir yazar olması, yani hem İngilizceyi hem de Afrikancayı çok iyi biliyor olması onu hem sömürgeleştiren hem de sömürgeleştirilmiş olan iki kültürü de bağlamaktadır. Bu yüzden Güney Afrika ve onun edebiyatına hem içeriden hem de dışarıdan bakabilmektedir. Dilsel ve kültürel anlamda bu melez yapısı onun Avrupa ve Güney Afrika kültürleri arasında gri bir bölgeden yazabilmesini mümkün kılmıştır. Bu sebeple *In the Heart of the Country* dahil tüm eserlerinde sömürgeci/sömürgeleştirilen, yazar/anlatıcı, yazar/okuyucu, anlatıcı/okuyucu gibi bir çok ikili karşıtlık alanına eleştirel bir gözle bakmaktadır ve bu karşıtlıkları oluşturan söylemsel, etik ve politik sorgulamaları ona Güney Afrika ve dünya edebiyatında kendine has bir yer oluşturmaktadır. Coetzee bir yabancıyı tamamen tanımanın asla mümkün olmadığını çünkü insanın kendi hakkında dahi bilgi verirken kendine yabancılaştığını söylemektedir. İnsanın hem kendi hem de karşıdındaki yabancı hakkında her zaman şüpheleri olacaktır ya da kendini kandıracaktır. Bu yüzden bireyin kendini tamamen tanıyamadığı gibi yabancı olanı da tam olarak tanıyamayacağını düşünür.

Coetzee’nin bu fikirleri Kristeva’nın özne tanımıyla paralellik gösterir. Kristeva özneyi her zaman süreç içinde değişen, sürekli yeni deneyimlerle karşılaşarak kendini şekillendiren ve bu yüzden dinamikliğini hiç kaybetmeyen bir yapı olarak tanımlar. Özne bir yapıdır çünkü hem hem semiyotik aracılığıyla yaşayıp nefes alır ve bedensel uyarıcılarıyla hareket eder hem de sembolik dilin etkisi altındadır. Bundan dolayı konuşan özne etrafındaki sosyal, politik ve kültürel uyarıcılarla da şekillenmektedir. Konuştuğu dil hem sembolik düzlemde kullanılan bedensel ritmik salınımlarla dışarıya çıkar hem de semiyotik alandan gelen ritmik ve bedensel dürtülerle bezenmiş bir

aygıttır. Konuşan öznenin bedenli oluşu ve dilin bu bedenli oluştan beslenmesi, Kristeva'ya göre şiirsel bir yapı ortaya çıkarır. Kristeva dilin ötekiliğine yani simgesel ve iletişimsel dilin ötekisi olan semiyotik dile uzanan şiirsel dile devrimci dil adını vermektedir. Dilin bu diyalektik yapısı ve öznenin sürekli dinamik oluşu *In the Heart of the Country* romanında açıkça görülmektedir.

Bu bilgiler ışığında roman dört ana başlık altında çalışılmıştır. İlk bölüm Kristeva'nın özne ve nesne arasında iğrenç olan (abjekt) diye tanımladığı ara bölgeden yola çıkarak romanın kadın anlatıcısının babasıyla ve annesiyle olan ilişkisi üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Anlatıcının ailesiyle olan ilişkisi özdeşleşme ve reddetme arasında gidip gelmektedir. Hem annesi hem de babası anlatıcı için hem dışarıya atıp kurtulmak istediği birer yabancı hem de kendini özdeşleşmekten alıkoyamadığı kendi bedeninin ve ruhunun parçalarıdır. Bu ailesel ilişki anlatıcının roman boyunca özne ve nesne arasında bir yerde hayatını sürdürmesine ve bu arada kalmışlıktan dolayı yaşadığı ruhsal bunalımlarla roman sonunda asıl yabancı olanın kendisi olduğunu keşfetmesine yol açacaktır. Elbette sömürge sonrası bir roman olduğu için bu bölümde siyah ve beyaz tenliler arasındaki ayrımcılığın aslında sadece renk ya da ırkla şekillenmediğini bunun yanı sıra dilin ve onun sağladığı bedensel gücün renk farketmeden aile bireyleri arasında dahi güç dengelerini şekillendirdiğini görmekteyiz. Anlatıcının kendisinin aslında öteki olduğunu keşfetmesi hem babanın yasasından ve dilinden çıkmayaşısıyla hem de babasına duyduğu nefretle ortaya çıkmaktadır. Kristeva'ya göre iğrenç olan özellikle kirlenme ve ölüm aracılığıyla özneye kendini hatırlatır. Kirli olan şey hem bedene aittir hem de birey olup dil düzenine geçmek için bedenden atılması gerektir. Anlatıcının babasını öldürüp ortaya çıkan kirlilikten tiksinişi ama aynı zamanda bu kirliliğin onda garip bir büyülenme yaratması tam olarak abjekt kavramıyla özdeşleşmektedir. Onu doğurduktan hemen sonra ölen annesiyle de arasında hem tiksineye hem de büyülenmeye dayalı bir bağ vardır. Annesinden kalan aynaya baktıkça kendi yabaniliğini görmektedir. Bu yabanilik ona annesi ile aynı kaderi yaşama olasılığını hatırlatır. He ne kadar anne ve ölüm bir kaçış gibi görünse ve büyüleyici bir etki yaratsa da, annesiyle aynı kaderi paylaşıp ölüp gitmek ve unutulmak Anlatıcıyı sembolik düzene daha çok bağlamaktadır. Dolayısıyla Coetzee

anlatıcısını ben ve öteki arasında bocalayan ve öznel bütünlüğe ulaşmamış, yabancı'nın kim olduğunu sorgulayan bir karakter olarak önümüze sunmaktadır. Anlatıcı, Kristeva'nın sürekli dinamik olan ve süreç içinde değişen, stabil olmayı reddeden özne kavramıyla örtüşmektedir. Ben ve yabancı arasında gelgitler yaşayan karakterin dil ile olan çatışması da önem arz etmektedir. Baba dilini benimseyen ve çiftlikte kendine atfedilen sömürgeci kimliğini kabul etmekte zorlanan anlatıcı, babası ve annesi ile olan iç hesaplaşmasında aslında sömürgeci dilin etkisi altında kaldığını ve kendi bedeniyle uzlaşmadığı sürece bu dilin etkisinden çıkamayacağını da zamanla anlar.

Tezin ilk bölümünün ikinci kısmı anlatıcının çiftlikte beraber yaşadığı siyahi karakterlerle olan ilişkisini yine iğrenç/iğrenme (abjekt/ abjeksiyon) kavramları üzerinden incelemektedir. Bu bölümde anlatıcının siyahi erkek karakter tarafından tecavüz edilmesi onun bedeniyle olan ilişkisini şekillendirecektir. Coetzee okuyucunun taraf tutmaması için tecavüz sahnesini dört değişik şekilde ve birbirine benzemeyen anlatılar olarak yazmıştır. Çok travmatik ve şiddet içeren bir anlatıdan daha yumuşak ve rıza gösterilen bir tecavüzdür bahsedilen. Anlatıcının babasını öldürdüğü zaman hissettiği iğrenme ve büyülenme duyguları tecavüz sahnelerinde de tekrarlanmaktadır. Tecavüzün bedeninde yarattığı travma kendi bedenine daha çok yabancılaşmasına ve kendinden tiksinesine yol açmaktadır. Bu yüzden erkek siyahi karakter onun için abjekt bir figürdür. Bununla beraber, takip eden tecavüz anlatılarının gittikçe yumuşaması, anlatıcının tecavüzcüsünün bedenine merakla ve ilgiyle yaklaşması, ve hatta ona duyduğu duygusal yakınlaşma abjekt olanın diğer yüzünü ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Tecavüz hem yabancı'nın bedenini tanımaya başladığı hem de kendi bedenine yakınlaştığı bir deneyim olarak da anlatılmıştır. Bu sahneden sonra anlatıcının dili gittikçe semiyotik düzene kaymaktadır çünkü simgesel düzenin ona sağladığı bilinen ve tanıdık olanın sınırlarının ötesine geçiş yapmış, hem bedensel hem de ruhsal olan değişimi dilini daha bedensel hale getirmiştir. Bu sahne anlatıcının daha belirsiz, müphem ve sabit olmayana doğru ve değişken varoluş hallerine duyduğu merakı da ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Tecavüz sahnesi Kristeva'nın teorileri ile bağlantılı olarak Bhabha'nın fetiş obje yorumları ile de incelenmiştir. Siyahi erkek karakter anlatıcı için fetiş bir objedir fakat fetiş obje hem reddetme hem de adlandırma arasında

ortaya çıkan bir özdeşleşmedir. Yani fetişi yaratan öteki kişi öznenin hem reddettiğidir hem de ben ve öteki arasındaki ayrımı ortadan kaldırandır. Özne, fetiş olarak gördüğü nesne ile aslında kısmi bir mütakabiliyet esası üzerinde ilişkilendirilmiştir. Bhabha bu reddetme ve özdeşleşme halini dil üzerinden de anlatır. Nasıl ben ve öteki aslında birbirinin yansıması ise dilde simge ve imlem arasındaki görünürlük ile ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu görünürlük aslında imleyen ve imlenen arasındaki sonsuz devreden bağı ortaya çıkarır. İmleyenin farklılığı, yani kelimedeki harflerin farklılığı dil ile ortaya çıkar. Bu da görünürlük imleyen ile imlenen arasındaki ilişkinin sabit bir nokta gibi algılanmasına yol açsa da Bhabha'nın dediği gibi bu önerme eksiktir çünkü adlandırma her zaman yanında reddetmeyi getirir. Diğer bir deyişle, ne imleyen ile imlenen arasındaki bağ stabildir ne de özne ile fetiş obje arasında.

Anlatıcının siyahi kadın ile olan ilişkisi de ben ve öteki arasındaki bağın aslında çok narin olduğunu göstermektedir. Anlatıcının siyahi kadına duyduğu Ödip öncesi narsist arzu, onu kendi bedeniyle ve annesinin bedeni ile daha da yakınlaştırmıştır. Bu yakınlaşma anlatıcının sürekli olarak kendisinin sömürgeci tarafta olduğunu kadına hatırlatması ile baltalanmaktadır. Bu bedensel yakın olma ihtiyacı, romanda Anlatıcının ağzından siyahi kadının bedenine girip onun sırlarını keşfetme merakı olarak anlatılır. Bu duygusal yaklaşmayı engelleyen sebep ise siyahi kadının aynı zamanda babasının metresi olması ve anlatıcıda babasına duyduğu arzudan dolayı kıskançlık yaratmasıdır. Anlatıcı evde güç dengelerinin değişeceğinden ve eğer siyahi kadın sömürgeci konumuna geçerse kendisinin sömürgeleştirilen olacağından korkmakta bu yüzden bedensel arzularını sürekli engellemeye çalışmaktadır. Kristeva'ya göre bu eşcinsel yakınlık iğrenç olanın en fazla ortaya çıktığı durumlardan biridir ve kadın bedenini özgürleştirmektedir. İki kadın bedeni arasındaki yakınlık öznenin dil ile simgesel alana girmediği ve anne bedenine en yakın olduğu semiyotik alana geçişi kolaylaştırır. Bu yüzden siyahi kadın da anlatıcı için abjekt bir figürdür ve ben ve öteki arasındaki üçüncü alanı ortaya çıkaran ve öznenin aşkın sandığı bütünlüğünü sarsan bir karakterdir.

Bu bölümün üçüncü kısmı anlatıcının aslında yabancı olanın kendisi olduğu keşfine odaklanmaktadır. Babasını öldürdükten ve siyahi karakterler çiftliği terk ettikten sonra

doğayla baş başa kalan anlatıcı sürekli devam eden bir iç monolog ile hayata tutunmaya çalışır. Doğadaki sessizlik ve yabanilik ona kendi yabaniliğini hatırlatır ve bu yüzden kendini çoğu kez durağan taşlara ve böceklerle benzetir. Doğanın acımasızlığı ile dilden ve kültürden iyice soyutlandığında, içinde tiksinti ve korku yaratan ve ölümü hatırlatan bu sessizlikte yitip gitmek istemediğini anlayan anlatıcı, kendi içindeki *unheimlich* (korkunç) ile yüzleşir. Bu noktadan sonra özgürlüğünü bu korkunç olanı benimseyerek sağlar.

Son bölümde romanda gözlenen sembolik dilden semiyotik dile geçiş çalışılmıştır. Kristeva'ya göre iğrenç olanın dışı vurumu dilin de semiyotik alanın etkisine girmesiyle ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu bölümde anlatıcının başta daha sembolik olan dili gitgide semiyotikleşmiştir. Gökyüzündeki uçaklarla iletişim kurmaya çalışan anlatıcı önce anlaşılmayan bir İspanyolca ile konuşur daha sonra etraftan topladığı taşlarla bacakları açık bir kadın figürü çizer ve kendini pilotları etkilemeye çalışan mitolojik “Circe” figürüne benzetir. Romanın sonunda eve dönüp yaşlı ve kendini bile doyurmaktan aciz babasını doyurur ve ona bir çocukmuş gibi bakar. Anlatıcının bedenini iletişim için kullanması ve konuşmak için dil dışı yöntemler kullanması aslında tüm roman boyu şikâyet ettiği sömürgeci dilinden ya da başka bir deyişle babanın dilinden nasıl kendini kurtardığını gösterir. Bu bölüm ayrıntılı bir şekilde semiyotik dil üzerine odaklanmakla birlikte, aslında babanın dilinin hiç bir zaman yok edilemeyeceğine de işaret eder. Çünkü Kristeva teorisinde dilde devrim tamamen sembolik olanı bırakıp semiyotik alana geçmekle değil, ikisini diyalektik bir şekilde harmanlayıp anne bedeniyle olan ilişkiden beslenerek ortaya çıkmaktadır. Romanın içeriksel ve dilsel/biçimsel incelemeleri okuyucuyu daha kapsayıcı bir soruya yönlendirir. Coetzee gerçekten eleştirildiği gibi politik olmayan bir yazar mıdır yoksa politik anlayışı satır aralarında mı gizlidir? Bu bölümün sonunda şu sonuca varılmıştır. Güney Afrika gibi beyaz ve siyah arasındaki ikili karşıtlığın çok keskin olduğu bir ülkede, Coetzee bu karşıtlığı yumuşatarak ve ana karakterini sürekli üçüncü bir bölgede tutarak kendi etik ve politik tutumunu çok keskin bir şekilde ortaya koymaktadır. Romanın Kristeva teorilerine göre analizi, okuyucuya aslında politik yazım denilen şeyin illaki tarihi ya da mimetik olmak zorunda olmadığını; dil ve beden

üzerinden de ikili karşıtlıkların devrimci bir şekilde altının oyulabileceğini göstermiştir.

Bu tezin ikinci kısmı Latife Tekin'in *Gece Dersleri* romanını Kristeva'nın abjeksiyon ve semiyotik dili açısından çalışılmaktadır. Tekin roman türüne anne ve kız ilişkisini irdeleyerek yeni bir bakış açısı getirmiştir. Çağdaş Türk romancıları arasında Tekin mimetik olmayan yeni bir dili kullanma açısından dikkat çeker. Romanları içerik ve teknik açısından Kristeva teorileri çerçevesinde incelendiğinde yeni ve alışılmadık bir dilin habercisidir. Bu tezde anlatıcının annesine dönüşü, 12 Eylül 1980 askeri darbesi öncesi ve sonrası etrafında incelenmiştir. Özel bir anlatım tekniğine sahip olan Tekin, dilde anneye ve anne bedenine dönüş ve abjekt olanın anlatıda yüceltilmesi açısından Kristeva teorileri ile çalışılmıştır. Tekin geleneksel dili yine dili kullanarak yıkabilmektedir. Geleneksel dil, bu çalışmanın bahsettiği gerçeği olduğu gibi mimetik bir şekilde yasınan ve semiyotik salınımın az olduğu ya da neredeyse olmadığı dildir. Tekin söyleme(diskur) yine söylemin içinden karşı gelerek ama söylemi tamamen yıkmamanın da imkansızlığını bilerek yazdığı *Gece Dersleri* romanında dile, dışarıdan bakmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu bölüm özne ile nesne arasındaki üçüncü alan abjeksiyonun başkalaşımı ve dilde yüceltilmesi olarak çalışılmıştır. Kadın anlatıcının sesi dilin bedensel tarafını ve anne ile olan primordiyal bağlılığı öne çıkarmakta ve bunun sonucunda oluşan şiirsel dil anlatıcının hegemonyadan kurtulmasını sağlamaktadır. Bu noktada hegemonyadan kurtulmak var olan sistemin dışına çıkmak değil anlatıcının kendi bedenini ve dilini sınırlandıran zincirlerini koparması olarak anlaşılmalıdır. Ben ve öteki arasındaki keskin sınırların kalktığı bu anlatıda, Tekin masalsı ve şiirsel bir dille gerçeğin direkt temsilinden kaçınmıştır. Fakat Tekin'in kendine özgü bu yazım şekli ne tartışıldığı gibi onu ne daha az gerçekçi ne de politik meselelerden kaçınan bir yazar haline getirmektedir. Aksine, oluşturduğu bu yeni dil okuyucuyu etik ve politik olan nedir sorusunu tekrar sordurmaktadır. Tezin amacı öncelikle romanın ötekilik kavramına nasıl yenilikçi bir bakış açısı getirdiği ve sonrasında bu alışılmışın dışında olan dilin okuyucunun kafasındaki fosilleşmiş politik dil kavramını alt üst ettiğini bir üst eleştiri olarak getirmektir.

Bu bilgi ışığı altında, *Gece Dersleri* ile ilgili olan ilk kısımda anne ile kızı arasındaki diyadik bağın kopuşu, anlatıcının evi ve anneyi terkedip solcu bir örgüte yazılmasını inceler. Anlatıcı ailede yabancı bir karakter olarak görülmektedir. Bunun sebebi köyden kente göç etmiş ailesi kadar dinsel inançlarının olmaması ve geleneksel kadın rollerinden beklentileri yerine getirmemesidir. Annesi babasını krive ile aldattığında annesini yakalamış olmasına rağmen bu sırrı kimseye vermez ve annesi ile arasında gizli bir suç ortaklığı oluşur. Anlatıcının politik harekete katılma sebebi hem annesinin arzu nesnesi olarak başkasına yönelip aradaki diyadik bağı koparması hem de sırta ortak olmanın yarattığı psikolojik baskıdır. Bu bölümde anlatıcının bedene ve cinselliğe sırtını dönüp annesini abjekt olarak konumlandırması Kristeva açısından incelenmiştir.

Bu bölümün ikinci kısmında anlatıcının annesinden ve evinden kopuşu semiyotik alandan sembolik alana geçiş olarak incelenmiştir. Abjekt olan ve öteki olarak konumlandırılan annesinin gölgesi anlatıcıyı hiç bırakmayacaktır. Annesi bir yandan kopmak istediği bir yandan da tutunduğu bir karaktere bürünecektir. Anlatıcının politik hareket içinde zamanla aslında hem annesini ve fakirliği hem de bedensel arzularını geride bırakmış olduğunu sanarak tamamen sembolik bir düzene geçişi, duygusal ve fiziksel travmalara yol açacaktır. Tekin anlatıcı ve politik hareket arasındaki dil farkını satır aralarında anne kız ilişkisine yoğunlaşarak vermektedir. Politik organizasyonun dili ve inançları, hem cinsiyet ayırımına dayalı hem de işçi sınıfına kendileri adına konuşmak için alan bırakmayacak şekilde üstten bakan bir tavidir. Bu özellikler aslında organizasyonun ne kadar sembolik düzenin etkisi altında olduğunu ve savundukları özgürlük anlayışına ne kadar ters hareket ettiklerini göstermektedir. İşçi sınıfının haklarını korumaya çalışırken ve onların özgürlük mücadelesi için çabalarken aslında onları sessizleştirmekte ve konuşma haklarını ellerinden almaktadırlar. İşçiler sol aktivistlerin konuştuğu dili anlamamakta ve bu anlaşılabilirlik iki grubun arasını açmaktadır. Bu tezin sembolik dil olarak çalıştığı ikili karşıtlıklardan kopmamış olan dil, Tekin tarafından romanda bir çatışma olarak anlatılmaz. Eğer anlatıcı ve politik hareket arasındaki bu çatışma keskin bir şekilde ifade edilseydi, yazar kaçmaya çalıştığı ikili sistemin tuzağına düşmüş olurdu. Bunun yerine, anlatıcı işkence ve ölüm

ile karşılaştığında, çocuk doğurmaya karar verdiğinde, evlenip annesi ile rüyalarında kavga ettiğinde hem bedeni ile tekrar bir bütün olacak hem de susturmaya çalıştığı anne sesine kavuşacaktır. Annesi hem kızdığı ve kurtulmaya çalıştığı bir karakter hem de ona iyileştirici etkisi olan öteki konumundadır. *In the Heart of the Country* romanındaki tecavüz sahnesine benzer bir şekilde, anlatıcı işkence ve ölüm sahneleri ile karşılaştıkça gitgide travmatik deneyimler yaşayacak ve bu deneyimler bedeninden yabancılaşmasına neden olacaktır. Hatta öldürülen bir arkadaşının ölümünü anlattığı sahnede kendini küçük bir böceğe benzetecek ve varlığının ölüm karşısında ne kadar küçüldüğünden bahsedecektir. Bedeni ile tekrar birleşmesi ise annesini öteki olarak görmeyi bırakıp kendi psişesinin bir parçası olarak görmeye adım adım başladığında gerçekleşecektir. Bu analizde anlatıcı ve bir kadın arkadaşı ile olan ödip öncesi narsist yaklaşma onu annesine ve bedenine daha da kenetleyecektir. Anlatıcının kadın arkadaşına yazdığı mektuplarda ona bazen annesi gibi seslenmesi ve mektupların içeriğinin erotik bir tarza sahip olması ve hatta mektuplarda bahsedildiği gibi iki kadın arasındaki fiziksel yaklaşmanın toplum tarafından hoş görülmeceği bu fikri desteklemektedir.

Gece Dersleri analizinin son bölümü yazımsal açıdan abjekt olanın dilde nasıl yüceltildiğine odaklanmıştır. Romandaki semiyotik dil unsurları yıkıcı bir etkiye sahiptir ve anlatıcı ile annesi arasındaki kırılmanın nasıl tamir edildiğine dikkat çeker. Romanda bedenin öne çıkarılması, metaforlar, folklorik dil, zaman ve mekanın parçalanması, özne konumlarının sürekli değişimi, mitolojik ve dini göndermeler ve anlatıcının birden fazla olması dilin semiyotik ve sembolik düzen arasında nasıl salınımda olduğunu gösterir. Bu noktada dikkat edilmesi gereken şey, bahsedilen tüm bu öğelerin içerik anlamında hep anne ve politik hareket arasındaki çatışmadan beslenmesidir. Tekin bu çatışmayı çok incelikli bir şekilde üslubuna yedirerek çatışmayı beslemekten ziyade beden ve psişeyi yanyana getirerek ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Dildeki bu semiyotik ağırlıklı öğeler mimetik temsilin ötesine geçmekte ve salt sembolik olan dilin aslında içinde babaerki düzeni yeniden ürettiğini göstermektedir. Sembolik dili püskürten semiyotik öğeler, romanın dilini daha opak hale getirerek dilin ampirist yapısının sınırlarını zorlamaktadır. Romanın müziksel

yapısı, ritmi, melodisi ve anlamsal çok değerliliği Kristeva'nın şiirsel dil tanımına uygundur. Bu öğeler yardımıyla geride bırakılan anne, semiyotik alanın içinden süzerek yüceltilmekte ve özne ile nesne arasındaki boşluğun doldurulmasını sağlamaktadır. Tüm roman anlatıcının anne bedeni ile tekrar birleşme arzusunun manifestosu şeklini alır. Tekin'in dille olan bu uğraşı ve romanı özne ve nesne arasındaki ara bölge üzerinden yazması, ötekilik meselesine ilişkin özgün bakışını ortaya koymaktadır. Dilin katiyetine meydan okuyarak okuyucunun beklentilerini alt üst etmekte ve gerçek ve politik olan nedir sorularını sorgulatmaktadır. Gerçekçi ve dökümanter bilginin azlığı ve üstü kapalı anlatım yazarın politik bir duruş sergilemekten kaçındığı anlamına gelmemeldir. Aksine, roman okuyucuya politik olanı anlatmanın birden fazla şekli olabileceğini ve babaerki ya da sembolik olan dilin ayarlarıyla oynanmadıkça Kristeva'nın devrimsel olarak adlandırdığı dilin ortaya çıkamayacağını ortaya koymaktadır.

Bu tezin son romanı olan Jeanette Winterson'un *Lighthousekeeping* romanı, diğer romanlara paralel olarak ötekilik kavramı üzerinden çalışılmıştır. Roman heteronormatif aşkın sınırlarını zorlayan kuir bir estetikle yazılmıştır. Romanın bu çalışma için seçilme amacı Winterson'ın diğer romanlarında olduğu kadar görünür bir lezbiyen kahramana sahip olmamasıdır. Winterson'ın çoğu romanı, açılma romanı olarak kabul edilmesine ve çoğu cinsiyet ve kuir açısından çalışılmış olmasına rağmen, *Lighthousekeeping* romanı bu alanda çok fazla çalışılmamıştır çünkü lezbiyen hikayesi satır aralarında verilmiştir. Bu çalışmada romanda örtülü bir şekilde verilen lezbiyenlik deneyimi, romanı teorik açıdan lezbiyen feminist çalışmaları sınırları içinde kategorize ederek çalışılmaktan kurtarmaktadır. Winterson'un romanları, onların içinde lezbiyen bir aşk hikayesi uman okuyucular ve eleştirmenler tarafından beklentileri karşılanmadığı zaman çok sert eleştirilere maruz kalmıştır. Bu eleştiriler aslında lezbiyen feminist edebiyatın kesin ve tutarlı bir tanımı olmamasından ve seneler içinde sürekli değişim göstermesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Lezbiyenliği baz alan roman türleri tanımı her zaman çelişkili olmuştur çünkü terim zamanla lezbiyen duyarlılığı, lezbiyen feminist kurgu ve kuir edebiyat gibi terimleri de doğurmuştur. Bu terimlerin yelpazesinin genişliği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Winterson romanlarını daha

geniş bir bakış açısıyla çalışmak gerektiği görülür. Bu daha geniş bakış açısı *Lighthousekeeping* romanında Winterson'un aşk ve hikaye anlatımının romanın temel öğeleri olarak öne çıkarması ile gerçekleşmektedir. Bu öğeler kişiliğin yaratılmasının en önemli iki unsuru olarak romana yedirilmiştir. Kristeva'nın dile ve aşkın tarihine değinen teorileri bu noktada çalışmaya yardımcı olmaktadır çünkü Kristeva aşkın aslında birden fazla türü olduğunu, ister homoseksüel ister heteroseksüel olsun, iki kişi arasındaki duygusal bağdan fazlası olduğunu anlatmaktadır. Özellikle imgesel babaya duyulan sevgi romanda tüm aşk tanımlarına yeni bir bakış açısından bakmamızı sağlayacaktır. Ayrıca, bireyin kendi hikayesini anlatmasını öğrenmesinin önemi ana bedenini benimseme ve öznelliğin sürekli bir devinim içinde olması açısından da Kristeva teorileri ile açıklanmıştır.

Bu tezdeki diğer iki romanla uyumlu olarak, *Lighthousekeeping* ben ve öteki ayrımına yeni bir boyut getirmektedir. Özne ve nesne arasındaki boşluk, bireyin öteki diye adlandırmış olduğu anneyi psişesinde kabulü ve bu kabulü dilin semiyotik alanında yüceltmesi ile doldurulmaktadır. Romanın dili bu yüceltme ile bedene daha da yakınlaşmaktadır. Beden ve akıl ikili karşıtlığı romanda seyreltilmiş; anlatıcı karakter bedensel enerjiler ve duygulanımlarla abjekt olan anneyi dil aracılığıyla kucaklanmıştır. Romanda bahsedilen erkek karakter ise beden ve akıl arasında bir uzlaşma sağlayamamış ve melankoliye düşerek intihar etmiş ve sembolik düzenden kendini tamamen koparmıştır. Winterson aşk ve melankoli arasındaki ince çizgiyi göstererek başka bir söylem benimsenmedikçe sembolik dilden kurtulamayacağını bu iki karakter üzerinden göstermektedir. Ötekilik kavramına getirdiği bu yenilik *Lighthousekeeping* romanının aslında çok politik olan bir mesaj verdiğini göstermektedir. Bu tez, romanı tümleyici bir lezbiyen ya da kuir teorisi sınırlandırmasına düşmeden aşk, melankoli ve hikaye anlatımı açısından çalışmıştır. Bu bağlamda, ilk bölüm ufak bir kız çocuğu olarak roman boyunca büyüyen kadın anlatıcı ile annesi arasındaki diyadik ilişkiden bahseder. İkinci bölümde hikaye anlatımının ve aşkın abjekt olanı yüceleştiren iki unsur oluşundan, üçüncü bölümde kadın karakterin halka açık alanlarda karşısına çıkan *tetik* deneyimlerden, diğer bölüm

erkek karakterin melankoliye düşüşünden ve son bölümde romanın dilsel ve biçimsel anlamda semiyotik dili nasıl ortaya çıkardığından bahsetmektedir.

İlk bölümde üstünde durulan anne ve kız ilişkisi özne ve öteki arasındaki gri alanı göstermesi ve anne bedeni ile olan semiyotik bağın vurgulanması açısından önemlidir. Annesi ile kasaba sınırlarının dışında yer çekimsiz alanda yaşayan karakter, iple bağlı olduğu annesinin bedeninden yere uçar ve annesi onu kurtarmak için ölür. Bu romandaki ilk *tetik* andır. Karakter daha sonra başka insanlarla karşılatıkça ve kendi hayat hikayesini anlatarak şekillendirdikçe birçok *tetik* anı yaşayacaktır. Bu arkaik ve Ödip öncesi anne bedeni ile olan beraberlik iki açıdan önemlidir. İlk olarak, bu düşüş anı karakterin bireyleşme sürecini başlatacak ve anne bedeninden kopma anını melankoliye düşmeden yüceltme olarak devam edecektir. Bu yüceltme Winterson'un okuyucuya anne bedenini tamamen dışarıya atmadan bir özbenlik yaratılmasının önemini gösterdiği bölümdür. İkinci olarak romanda baba karakterinin eksikliği ve karakterin annesi ile yaşadığı yerin yer çekimsiz bir ortam olması romanda sembolige ve fallik sisteme karşı bir savaş değil fallik-öncesinin vurgulanması açısından açıklanmıştır.

Çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde değinilen aşk ve hikaye anlatımının önemi, özellikle imgesel baba ile anlatıcı arasındaki ilişki vurgulanarak analiz edilmiştir. Kristeva'nın Freud'dan etkilenecek tanımladığı imgesel baba, semiyotik ve sembolik düzlem arasında yer alan ve çocuğun sembolik düzene geçişini kolaylatıran bir figürdür. Bu baba imgesi hem anne hem de baba karışımıdır çünkü anne çoktan sembolik düzene geçtiği için ve kastre edildiği için hem baba gibi anılır hem de Ödip öncesi dönemde çocukla olan semiyotik bağından dolayı anne olarak anılır. Anne bedeni semiyotik ile sembolğin kesişme alanıdır fakat üstlendiği görev çocuğu dile hazırlamak olduğu için baba gibi de görülür. Romandaki imgesel baba rolünde analiz edilen deniz fenerinin yüzyıllardır bakımını üstlenen ve üstelenecek olan kör bir erkek karakterdir. Anlatıcı annesini kaybettikten sonra deniz fenerinde feneri yakma işini ve günlük işleri ona öğretecektir. Asıl rolü ise anlatıcıya her gün hikayeler anlatmak ve kendi hikayelerini anlatmanın yolunu öğretmektir. Hem anlatıcının hem de deniz feneri bakıcısının hayatlarında bir baba figürü olmaması romanda biyolojik ya da “ Lacancı Baba”nın

adını temsil eden bir baba figürünün kültürlenme ve dile geçme için ön şart olmadığını vurgulamaktadır. Bu açıdan Winterson baba yokluğuna farklı bir bakış açısı getirmektedir. Bununla beraber biyolojik annenin de rolü genişletilmiştir çünkü anlatıcının annesi çocuğa cennet vaat eden ve hep iyi olarak anılan bir kadın değil, kızına kendi bedeninden ayrılması ve kültürlenmesi gerektiğini hatırlatan bir figürdür. Daha geniş anlamda, Winterson geleneksel aile kavramını alt üst etmiş, anne ve baba rollerini biyolojik tanımlarından kurtarmıştır.

İkinci bölümde aşk ve hikaye anlatımı kapalı bir öznelliği sarsan ve özneyi bir kriz eşiğinden geçirip şekillendiren unsurlar olarak çalışılmıştır. Aşk bu noktada Kristeva'nın deyimiyle bireyin narssizmi sağlıklı bir şekilde atlatıp kültürlenmeye ve annesi yerine diğer insanları arzu nesnesi olarak seçebilme başarısıdır. Romanda imgesel babanın anlatıcıya anlattığı hikayelkerin başı, sonu ve kesinliği yoktur. Anlatıcı bu noktada hikaye anlatımı ile bireyselleşme sürecini bağdaştıracak ve özne ile nesen arasındaki çizginin çok kesin çizilmediğini anlayacaktır.

Üçüncü bölüm anlatıcıya kütüphane ve otel gibi halka açık alanlarda diğer kişilerle iletişimde bir yabancı gibi davranılması üzerine yoğunlaşır. Kütüphanede, sabit adresini deniz feneri olarak verdiğinde ve kimliğini yasal olarak kanıtlayamadığında anlatıcının kütüphaneye kaydına izin verilmez. Otelde ise yine kıyafetlerinden ve kendine has konuşma tarzından dolayı bir yabancı gibi hissettirilecek ve dışlanacaktır. Kütüphaneden kitap çaldığında, aslında ödünç almış olduğunu söyler ve bu yüzden bir psikiyatrist ile görüştürülür. Psikiyatrist, kendisine psikoz hastası teşhisi koyar ve anlatıcının gerçekte fantastik olanı ayıramadığını söyler. Bu deneyimlerin hepsi bu çalışmada tetik noktalar olarak yorumlanmıştır. Kristeva'nın semiyotikten sembolige geçiş noktası yani bir kırılma noktası olarak adlandırdığı tetik birey için acı verici ve zor bir deneyimdir. Anlatıcı halka açık yerlerde diğer kişilerle olan ilişkilerinde kendine yabancılaşmak ya da hasta olduğunu kabul etmek yerine, imgesel babanın ona öğrettiği hikaye anlatma becerisi sayesinde anne bedeni ile olan bağı kuvvetlendirmeyi öğrenir ve kendine has bir yaşam tarzı oluşturur. Bu hikayeler onun özel ile genel olan alanları birleştirebilmesine ve kişiliğini inşa etmesine yardımcı olacaktır. Bu bölümde ayrıca anlatıcının misk kedisi ile kuytu bir alanda karşılaşması

kendi psişesindeki *uncanny* (esrarengiz) ile olan karşılaşmasını sağlayacak ve kendine yabancığını azaltacaktır. Daha sonra konuşan ve ona erkek diye hitap eden bir kuşla karşılaştığında ilk defa cinsiyeti dillendirilecektir. Konuşan kuş onu cinsiyetini kabul etmeye ve kültürlenmeye davet eden diğer bir tetik deneyimidir. Daha sonra başka bir kadınla sevgili olacak ve fiziksel temasları anlatıcıyı anne bedenine daha da yakınlaştıracaktır. Bu bölüm tamamen bedensel imgelerle anlatılmıştır ve romanda bir haz etkisi etkisi yaratır.

Dördüncü bölümün analizi kadın anlatıcıdan romanda bahsedilen erkek figüre yoğunlaşır. Bu bölüm erkek karaktere yoğunlaşmasına rağmen aslında roman hikâye içinde hikâye şeklinde tasarlandığından ve erkek karakterin hikâyesi kadın anlatıcın tarafından dillendirildiği için aslında iki karakter birbirine bağlıdır. Erkek karakter içindeki yabancıyı yani öteki olarak dışa attığı anneyi sembolik dilde yüceltmediği için melankoliye düşer ve intihar eder. Hayatındaki ikili karşıtlıkları birleştirmede çok zorlanan bu erkek karakter için din ve bedensel arzu başta taban tabana zıt olgulardır. Din adamı kimliği ile eski sevgilisine duyduğu bedensel arzuyu birleştirememekte ve bu yüzden iki ayrı hayat yaşamaktadır. Burada Kristeva'nın din üzerine yorumlarına başvurarak aslında dinin tamamen sembolik alana değil aynı zamanda semiyotik düzleme de ait olduğu anlatılmıştır. Tanrıyı en ulu öteki olarak kodlayan karakter bedensel arzularına yenildikçe semiyotik alana kayacak, özellikle Darwin ve Robert Louis Stevenson ile olan konuşmalarından sonra Tanrının yüceliği ve sabitliği hakkında kafasında soru işaretleri oluşacaktır. Eski sevgilisi ve kızıyla karşılaşmalarında semiyotik *khora* ya daha da yakınlaşacak ve içinden çıkamadığı bu durumun son ucunda hayatından vazgeçecek, diğer bir deyişle semiyotik alana tamamen geçiş yapacaktır. Kristeva'nın aşkın tarihi ve Eros'un tensel bir figürden dinsel bir figüre dönüştürülmesi Plato ve Sokrates'in Eros tanımıyla açıklanmaktadır. Hristiyanlıkta Eros Tanrıya ulaşmaya çalışan bir figürken, Plato ve Sokrates'in eserlerinde Tanrıya ve dolayısıyla doğru ve güzele göğhe uçarak ulaşmaya çalışan bir filozofun sembolüdür. Kristeva aslında Eros'un bedensel tarafı olduğunu anlatır ve Diotima adlı kadın figürden de bahsederek insan doğasının androjenliğine değinir. Bu açıklamalar tezde erkek karaktere ve hayatına hem bir anne temsili hem de Diotima

karakteri olarak giren eski sevgilisine değinir ve karakterin dışarıdan heteroseksüel görünen ilişkisinin aslında gizli bir androjenlik olduğuna değinir. Benzer bir şekilde romandaki “Cupid ve Psyche” miti yapı sökücü bir şekilde verilmiştir. Mitteki cinsiyetler romanda yer değiştirilerek erkek karakterin içinde feminen bir psişe olduğu vurgulanmıştır.

Lighthousekeeping analizinin son bölümü romanın dilsel öğeleri üzerine yoğunlaşır. Kadın anlatıcının dilindeki semiyotik ve sembolik arasındaki salınım romandaki alışılmışın dışında kullanılan kelimeler, mecazi anlam içeren sözcükler, ritmik bir akış yaratan söz öbekleri ve Winterson’un kendi ürettiği kelimeler üzerinden çalışılmış ve tüm metnin aslında hiç ulaşılabilen bir arzu nesnesi gibi öteki konumunda olduğundan bu yüzden de romandaki semiyotik dilin bir anlam ertelemesi yarattığından bahsedilmiştir. Tüm bu çalışmalar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda romanın yıkıcı ve politik tarafı ortaya çıkmaktadır. Romanın politik bir dili olduğunu söylememizin sebebi öncelikle toplumun ben ve öteki ikili karşıtlığı üzerine inşa edilmiş olduğunu ve kendi etik kodlarına uygun davranmayan bireyleri kolaylıkla öteki diye adlandırdığını incelikte satır aralarında göstermesidir. İkinci olarak roman aşk ve hikaye anlatımını ön plana alarak toplumsal uzlaşmazlığın eğer birey kendi özündeki yabancıya dönmezse ve kendi öznelliğini kurmazsa çözülemeyeceğini göstermektedir. Son olarak roman varolan sistemi ve dili devirmeye çalışmaktansa, kişisel çabanın bireyin kendi sınırlarını aşmasına yardımcı olarak bireysel bir devrim yarattığını göstermektedir. Satır aralarındaki lezbiyen aşk hikayesi ve erkek karakterin androjen doğası ise romanın akışında verilmiş ve çok fazla göz önüne serilmemiştir.

Sonuç olarak bu üç romanı bir araya getiren bu çalışma, öteki denilenin kim olduğuna ve olmadığına dair soruları incelemekte ve asıl öteki diye atılanın bireyin kendi içindeki yabancı olduğunu ve bu yabancı birey tarafından benimsenmediği sürece kişisel bir devrimden söz edilemeyeceğini vurgular. Bu üç romanın bir araya getirilmesindeki en büyük etken öteki kimdir sorusu ile ortaya çıkmıştır. Toplumdaki öteki diye adlandırılan arketipler en çok din, ırk, renk, cinsel yönelim ve politik anlayışları farklı olan insan grupları arasında ortaya çıkmaktadır. *In the Heart of the Country* romanında toplumsal ben ve öteki problemi ırkçılık açısından çalışılmış, *Gece*

Dersleri romanında darbe sonucunda oluşan toplumsal deęişim ve politik sonuçları alıřılmış, *Lighthousekeeping* romanında ise toplumsal cinsiyet üzerine analiz yapılmıştır. Toplumda baba figürleri hep olacaktır ve sembolik dil kökünden ürütülemez fakat bu alıřmadaki romanların gösterdiği ve Kristeva'nın bahsettiğı gibi kişisel devrimler mümkündür ve bireyi içinde bulunduğu sistemin hegemonyasından kurtarabilir. Bu üç romana getirilen üst eleřtiri ise her bir yazarın ok belirgin ve keskin politik ve etik tutumları olduėudur. Kristeva, politikadan bahsederken politik kurumlardan, parti ya da sınıf mücadelelerinden bahsetmez. Bireyleri politik gruplar içine hapseden politik yorumlamaları reddeder; bu yüzden alıřmaları sınıf ya da gruplardan ziyade bireyler üzerinedir. Bireysel farklılıklar üzerine yoğunlařarak teorik genellemelerden kaçınır ünkü birey grup içinde zaten stereotip bir tanımın kurbanı olur. Halbu ki her bireyin dil ve kültür içinde kendi yerini bulması ve dille deneyimi o kadar farklıdır ki, bu farklılıklar herhangi bir politik grup ile sınırlandırılmaz. Kristeva ayrıca her şeyi politik olup olmayışı ile yargılamanın kendisinin de sınırlandırıcı ve köktenci bir tavır olduėunu, asıl politik bilincin teoride değıl pratikte yazarın ideolojilerin nasıl kurulduėunu göstermesi ile mümkün olacağıını iddia eder. Etik olan da anlam ve özne bütünlüğünü özen ve bu bütünlüğün inşa edilmiş bir kurgu olduėunu ve ideolojilerin de bu inşa edilen simgesel sistemlerden olduėunu söyler. Her sosyal pratik dildeki hiyerarşik sistemnden beslenir. İmleyen ve imlenen arasındaki bu inşa edilmiş sistem toplumda karřıt gruplar arasında da derin yarıklar açmaktadır. Öteki diye atılan ya da dışlanan ile bir araya gelmenin yöntemi ise bireylerin kendi psişelerinin zaten bölünmüş ve bütün olmayan bir yapıda olduėunu kabul etmeleri ile gerekleřecektir. Kristeva dil ile meřgul olan ve ideolojilerin ve grupların aslında içi boş inşaalar olduėunu gösteren avangard metinlerin devrimsel bir niteliğı olduėunu vurgular. Fakat her avangard metin bireyin paralı psişik yapısına değınecek ya da bu yüzden etik sayılacak diye bir kaide yoktur. Bir metnin politik ya da etik olması için normatif olana karřı ıkması ve egonun aşkınsal olmadıėını göstermesi gerekir. Bu alıřmadaki üç roman da bedensel ve psişik paralanmayı göz önüne sermekte ve ideolojik yapıların inşa edilmiş yapılarını göz önüne semektedir. Bu yüzden hem politik olanın ne olduėuna ve olmadıėına dair okuyucunun algısını değıřtirir hem de kişisel anlamda şiirsel ve devrimci bir tarafları vardır. Bu alıřmanın

alana katkısı ötekilik kavramının psikoanalitik yönünü göz önünde bulundurup, gruplar arası çatışma yaratan yabancı kimdir sorusuna değişik bir bakış açısı getirmiş olmasıdır. Ötekilik kavramı edebiyat ve bir çok disipliner alanda çalışılmış olmasına rağmen ve günümüze ait en sıcak gündem maddelerinden biri olmasına rağmen, bireyin kendi içindeki yabancıyı keşfetmesi, onunla barışması ve bu barışmanın kişisel bir özgürlük alanı yaratıyor olması çok fazla çalışılmamış konulardan biridir. Her ne kadar Kristeva kişiselden toplumsala bir başarı hikayesi anlatmasa da, bahsettiği devrim ulusal ya da makrokozmetik bir etkiden ziyade birey bazında olsa da, bu bireysel özgürlük hikâyelerinin umut verici olduğu kaçınılmazdır. Bu çalışmadaki üç romanda da aslında çok büyük toplumsal bir eleştiri vardır ve anlatıcıların üçü de toplumun semiyotik kanalları kapattığı, herkesin bireyselleştiği ve hatta Sarah Beardsworth'un deyişiyle sınırda kişilik bozukluğu yaratacak kadar insanların içine kapandığı alanlarda kendi dil, beden ve özgürlük mücadelelerini vermektedir.

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