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**Language, Women and Feminine Writing's  
Evolvement from Medieval Ages and  
Eighteenth Century to Twenty-First Century**

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the Requirements for the Masters Degree**

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## **Declaration**

This dissertation is our genuine achievement, and it is examined by and submitted only to

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## **Dedications**

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May this be the end and the beginning of great things, great journey!

## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the feminine writing's evolution (*écriture féminine's*) through British literary history, from Medieval Ages and Eighteenth Century to Twenty-First Century. In addition, it investigates the strategies employed by the female authors to refute the phallus domination over language use. The study's analysis is chiefly manifested in the works of Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and Mary Beard's *Women & Power: A Manifesto*. The dissertation provides an overview about the concept of feminine writing and exhibits gender injustices and patriarchy's subjugation of women on the level of language use. Thereupon, to achieve the thesis's aims and objectives, the Feminist Theory and a Deconstructive Reading are employed as means to deconstruct the evolvement of feminine writing through British literary history.

**Key Words:** Feminine Writing, Woman's Language, Language, Writing's Evolvement, Medieval Age, Eighteenth Century, Twenty-first Century.

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# General Introduction



## General Introduction

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The impact of feminism on literary criticism has transformed the academic study of literary texts, fundamentally altering the canon of what is taught and setting a new agenda for analysis, as well as radically influencing the parallel processes of publishing, reviewing and literary reception. Loads of related disciplines have been affected by feminist literary enquiry, including linguistics, philosophy, history, religious studies, sociology, anthropology, film and media studies, cultural studies, musicology, geography, economics and law. In linguistics, feminist literary critics reach its culmination from self-conscious of centuries of women's writing, of women's writing about women's writing, and of women and men write about women's minds, bodies, art, and ideas (Plain and Sellers 1-2).

Crucially, the publication of Robin Lakoff's article *Language and Women's Place* in 1972 has launched studies of Language and Gender. Lakoff argues that women have a distinctive way of speaking that differs from men. She asserts that women's speech is powerless, trivial, and emotional; therefore it renders them in powerless positions in community because language mirrors the way people think, to the ways construct identities, to the way they perceive the world and organize social relationships and political system (Eckert and McConnell 1; Sellers 2).

The majority of women have suffered oppression, subjugation politically, socially and economically through history. Emancipation has been negotiated with the emergence of British suffragettes movement in the early 20th-Century across the globe. French Feminists, for instance, *Hélèn Cixous*, *Simone De Beauvoir*, *Julia Kristeva* and *Lucy Irigaray* have contributed to the fields of Feminist Literary Criticism, and Language and Gender. However; female writers, particularly, have joined the debate of gender equality, and anti-misogynist society employing the power of language. *Hélèn Cixous's* notion of *Patriarchy Binary Thought* divides the language system into two opposite meanings: the superior one ascribes to man and inferior to woman. Cixous and other French psychoanalytic feminists have asserted that the

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need for women's psychological freedom lies in language liberation; where women must use language to deteriorate patriarchal subjugation, and to attain a world where women's thoughts do exist because the phallus, over time, has built and mold women's character. Therefore, women must create *écriture féminine* (literally: Feminine writing, or women's writing. However, the terms are used interchangeably) which undermines and eliminates the patriarchy binary thought that oppresses and silences women. That is, *écriture féminine* resists patriarchal modes of thinking and writing (Tyson 100-101).

Woman, over history, are perceived as inferior subjects to patriarchy while he strengthens his superiority and norms by mean of language. Women are disempowered and subjugated. Nonetheless, women who speak for their rights are accused of "Penis Envy". By the same means of language, however, they gain emancipation. *Écriture féminine*, thus, has been evolving treating gender inequality, patriarchy's oppression, phallogocentrism politics, family, sensation, war, arts, and science. In the process, it corrects patriarchy's ideas; reinforces women's potentials and existence. Women have proved their abilities to be tantamount to men through access to the same system men use, "language". Due to the lack of researches which have not yet tackled the subject, it is, thus, crucial to investigate, analyze, and discover how "feminine writing" has developed over time, starting from Medieval ages to the 21st Century, and how women writers challenge Phallogocentrism.

The study aims to discuss the notion of feminine writing or women's writing in the works of Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and Mary beard's *Women & Power: A Manifesto* (2017); in order to depict the course by which these authors' writing developed from Medieval Ages to Eighteenth Century, and Twenty-First Century. In addition, it aims to analyze the strategies of these women writers to refute the domination of Phallogocentrism.

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It is important to mention that the works used in this study are non-fictional. Thus, the study's results cannot be generalized over all genres. Moreover, the study treats the work of Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*, which is written in French in 1405 and translated to English in 1982. Therefore, the book is included in the range of British literature legacy because according to the scholar Catherine Clarke the Britishness notion before 15<sup>th</sup> Century is all questioned, and the Medieval Ages is considered multicultural and multilingual. Thus, it is safe to state, on the one hand, that Christine Pizan's work is part of the history of British Literature. On the other hand, the thesis's objective of tracing the evolvement of feminine writing is adequately and reliably achieved.

This study entails the subsequent questions:

1. How has women's writing evolved through Medieval age, and 18th Century, to 21st Century in the British literature history?
2. What are the strategies employed by Female authors to refute and to rebel over Phallogocentrism?

There are few researches that tackle or investigate the subject of feminine writing's hierarchical evolvement. Due to the topic significance, therefore, it is important to pay attention to the way women's writing developed from Medieval times to Twenty-First year century. Moreover, female authors have been contributing to the cause of gender equality and struggle to reduce the influence of Patriarchy or phallogocentrism over the world. Significantly, it is claimed that the period of Medieval Ages lacks women writers, and their influence on medieval literature is rare, if ever exists. Thus, this study's worth is manifested in shedding light on women's writing and its applications during the very period.

The study aims to conduct an analysis of women's writing or feminine writing evolvement in British literature. As a result, the Feminist Criticism is the main methodology

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applied in the study. In addition, women's writing is associated with the use of language; that is, language is the essence core of the study, therefore a Derridean approach is applied to deconstruct the three authors' writing.

Rarely researches have tackled the feminine writing and the application of Hélène Cixous's theory of 'écriture Feminine'. One research is tackled by Tonya Rae Chrystian, *Medusa (Re)CUT: CUT and Cixous as Contemporary Écriture Féminine*. Her PhD thesis is an analysis of Emmanuelle Marie's play *Cut* (2003), it applies the theory of Hélène Cixous's 'écriture féminine' primarily by means of application of her essays 'The Laugh of the Medusa' (1975). Her PhD paper presents an overview to feminine writing along with a defense of Cixous and all feminine texts against their historical critiques. In addressing both the written text and its corporeality through the locus of *Cut*, the research sought to find location for Marie's play in the landscape of contemporary feminine writing and theatre, maintaining the status of the written text while interrogating the psycho-social representations of feminine subjectivity in contemporary feminist theatre.

The dissertation is divided into two chapters: the first chapter is devoted to discuss, on the one hand, the theoretical Foundations of the study, presenting theory of feminine writing, sexism in English language, Jacques Derrida's and Friedrich Nietzsche's treatments of women, Feminist and Deconstructive theories, and how patriarchy judged women's writing. On the other hand, the Socio-Historical Context discusses women's accounts of writing in three periods, Medieval Ages, Eighteenth Century and Twenty-first Century. In addition, it provides definition of the key terms that frequently appear in the study. The second chapter, on the one hand, focuses on analyzing the evolvement of feminine writing through deconstructing the three works using Derridean approach. On the other hand, it presents the methods used by three female authors in their works that aim to refute and rebel against Phallogocentrism



## **CHAPTER ONE**

**Laying the Foundations:**

**Theoretical and Socio-Historical Context**

## **Chapter One: Laying the foundations: Theoretical and Socio-Historical Context**

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### **Chapter's Introduction:**

The running chapter is divided into two parts: on the one hand, the first part focuses on presenting the theoretical foundations of the study; it involves discussing the concept of feminine writing by major French feminists: Hélène Cixous, Lucy Irigaray, Virginia Woolf, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. It, also, examines sexism in English language, the relation between language that a woman uses and the place she takes in society, the views of Jacques Derrida and Friedrich Nietzsche concerning woman, the principles of the two theories, and patriarchy's views and perceptions of women's writing

The second part, however, define the major concepts that repeatedly appear in the study, Logocentrism, Phallogocentrism, and Phallogocentrism. In addition, it presents accounts of women's writing in three periods: Medieval Ages, Eighteenth-Century and Twenty-First Century. The aim is to trace women's engagement and contribution to the world of writing, the characteristics of their writing, how their literature reflects their positions and treatments by their fellowmen writers, how they bring themselves into writing and finally to identify the major genres and subjects they tackled in their writing. **Too much** (if you imply to the chapter as a whole, I have eliminate the trivial details that can impose confusion)

### 1. Theoretical Basics: Language and Woman

#### 1.1. The Concept of Feminine Writing " Women's Writing"

*"I write to woman: woman must write woman, and man, man."*

Hélèn Cixous, *the Laugh of the Medusa*

*"Now, I-woman am going to blow up the law: an explosion henceforth possible and ineluctable; let it be done, right now, in language"*

Hélèn Cixous, *the Laugh of the Medusa*

Hélèn Cixous underscores the importance of writing for women's emancipation especially the psychological liberation. She informs women how to seek language for psychological autonomy, and to break the everlasting codes of male-made language. "What I say has at least," Hélèn asserts, "two sides and two aims: to break, to destroy; and to foresee the unforeseeable, to project" (Cixous 875). *She argues that woman must write herself, about women and brings women to writing. That is, she stresses the significance of writing because it is the only space where woman can dispose of the past habits.*

However, writing has been one with the phallogocentric traditions, where women must bring themselves forth. She asserts that writing offers the possibility to change the hierarchy. Therefore, women's place shall be elevated transferred, socially and culturally (Cixous 879). Cixous asserts that feminine writing invents 'new insurgent' that allows them to rupture and transform their history. She lays her polemics on two grounds: a) women must write body, in other words, they must write about their sexualities and bodies, she asserts ones' body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth. b) She underscores the act of writing as a woman's seizing the occasion to speak, throughout she will break the glass of history when it is based on her repression, Women's embracement of writing

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makes each other meets in a realm of voice rather in silence. Thus, they break out the *locos* where they are marginalized (Cixous 879,880-881).

Worth noting that feminine practice of writing is impossible to define or theorize, not because the notion does not exist, rather it surpasses the discourse that regulates the phallogentric. Thus, it has place in areas other than of subordinated to philosophico-theoretical grounds, and only those women who are potential, autonomous, peripheral figures cannot be repressed by authority (Cixous 883). In other words, Feminine Writing is for women who write with their bodies. Cixous admires in women a sexuality that is remarkably constant and almost mystically superior to the phallic (Jones 251). Moreover, the revolutionary potential of language is linked to writing, therefore she urges women to ascribe to their knowledge of the body (Sellers 119). The impregnable language that destroys classes, rhetoric, regulations and codes in which women submerge, cut through, and got beyond the ultimate reserved-discourse, but only a woman that empowers her sexuality, her body that sweeps man aside (Cixous 886).

French Feminist, Lucy Irigaray asserts that creation of language allows woman's differences to emerge to the surface. In other words, the phallus dominates every subject and discourse, women must aims at the institution of an order—*language*—in which women can rise. Moreover, Irigaray urges women to re-interpret the whole relationship between Subject—*woman*—and discourse, Subject and the world, Subject and the cosmic. Thus, she suggests that the new order will be counted with the other—*woman*—which is no longer based on 'seizing, possessing, or subduing' the other as an Object However, Irigaray warns women from speaking the language of the phallus, the very language that prisons women (Irigaray 113,114-116). Thus, she suggests a language that refuses the strict distinction between man and woman that is woven by the phallogentrism, hence to create a non hierarchical articulation that is spoken by mankind, as one. This new Language proclaims neither kind of possession of the other nor

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subversion of the other's identity (117). Irigaray defines the Feminine Writing or what she calls "Syntax":

... "Oneness" would no longer be privileged, there would no longer be proper meaning, proper names, "proper" attributes... Instead, that "syntax" [new Language] would involve nearness, proximity, but in such an extreme form that it would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation. (Irigaray 134)

The function of "syntax" is to cast away the Phallogocentrism and Phallogocentrism, so that it is unable to define, subdue and circumscribe the properties of anything and everything (Sellers 117). Irigaray's analysis of Feminine Writing is bound up with what she calls *Le Parler Femme*—*Womanspeak*—which born when woman speak to each other and disappears as soon as man is present. Irigaray stresses, consequently, the group as a step toward liberation, therefore women must consolidate together to underscore their presence and light up (Moi 143-144).

Even Virginia Woolf, on the one hand, has what to say about the feminine writing. Essentially, she is the first to lay down the notion of "The Female Sentence" (Mills 33), Woolf states:

it is still true that before a woman can write exactly as she wishes to write, she has many difficulties to face. To begin with, there is the technical difficulty—so simple apparently; in reality, so baffling—that the very form of the sentence does not fit her. It is a sentence made by men; it is too loose, too heavy and too pompous for a woman's use. Yet in a novel, it covers so wide a stretch of ground, an ordinary and usual type of sentence has to be found to carry the reader on easily and naturally from one end of the book to the other. And this a woman must make for herself, altering and adapting the

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current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought without crushing or distorting it. (qtd. in Mills 35) **comment**

**(The comment)** Woolf presents her concept of gendered sentence where she argues that women should construct their type of sentence that allows them to use language in a way that serves their linguistic needs, and to express themselves in free and limitless methods because male sentence, on other side, is not constructed to take in consideration women's psychological and cognitive features. However, the Female Sentence is supposed to eliminate any features that male sentence holds. Despite her call for constructing a feminine sentence, she, like Hélène Cixous, does not provide a clear and straight definition of her thought.

However, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, on the other hand, offer the notion of "Female Affiliation Complex". They argue that there are three possibilities for women to write. Women can write as male authors write, that is neglect their feminine character and think like a man would think to use language, or adopt the feminine stereotypes of female writers, in other words women write in subjects associated with women only like domestic duties, family... so forth, or write as feminists whereas their writing addresses certain type of readers(Mills 44). Their notion, though is logically understandable, does not provide a full arguments to sustain whether a woman can consciously uses one of the possibilities or she finds herself, unconsciously, in the middle of the one of the possibilities.

### 1.2. Sexism in English Language

*"If our language leads to misunderstandings or offends people we are trying to reach, it fails to do what we want it to do; it ceases to be an effective tool for communication. Language that is sexist has this effect."*

Margaret Doyle, the Feminist Critique of Language a Reader, 149

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The theory of linguistic determinism offers two profound stages: that the distinctive in the structure of language is exclusively determined by the people's different perspectives of the world. That is to say, the components of language decide the distinctive view societies have of the world. On the other hand, language of a particular culture molds speakers' ways for seeing the world. The key words are the language's structure and culture (Mills 63). If a language is a powerful medium through which the world is reflected and constructed, then it is important that sexism in language should critically examined and questioned (Tilosseliti 13-14). The debate of studying language, sexism and society have divided between feminists who advocate language reform because producing such sexist meaning reinforces sexism in society, others contend that " language reforms are in essence pointless, because as long as society is sexist, sexist meanings will reappear,..."(Mills 63). Nevertheless, sexism in language can be an important feminist strategy to engender social change (Weatherall 10).

The term "sexism", however, is coined in 1960s to describe discrimination within a social system on the basis of sexual membership. Furthermore, in western culture, it means that there are two sexes in binary opposition to each other: female and male. The relationship between these two categories is not an equal or egalitarian one but a hierarchical one, where the category 'man' or 'male' is the norm and the category 'woman' or 'female' represents the 'other' and the 'abnormal', that is the 'marked version'. (Wodak 7)

For Margaret Doyle, Sexist language refers to terms and usages that exclude or discriminate against women. This includes presuming that phallus is standard, the norm, and that female is non-standard, or the exception (Doyle 149). Mary Vetterling-Braggin defines a "[statement] is sexist if its use constitutes, promotes, and exploits an unfair or irrelevant or impertinent distinction between the sexes" (qtd. in Mills 62). Doyle justifies the reason for avoiding sexist language, that through discrimination against women—not only through

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reinforcing harmful stereotypes but also by render their presence and achievements invisible (Doyle 150).

Supportingly, Sara Mills advocates Doyle's stand that the sexist language-use does not only alienate females, but it leads to the establishment of an environment which is not conducive to communication and effective social interaction (Mills 64). However, the generic pronoun "he" is, on the one hand, well-known pronoun that alludes in readers' mind a male figure, it is frequently referred as "he-man" language. Mills cites a research on visualization and generic pronoun which supports that people tend to visualize male participants when the supposed generic pronoun is used (66).

Further, '*He*' is the standard norm and '*female*' is the deviant. It prevents woman from expressing and raising consciousness about their experience, and perpetuating man's dominance and exploitative behavior (Tiltosseliti 14). On the other hand, sexist language manifests the male-oriented expressions, connotations and meanings; the use of terms 'mankind' and 'man' to represent generalization covers both sexes (Mills 66). That is to say, 'man' is used as a prefix or suffix in terms cannot be recognized unless they are contextualized; they are, though, hard to recognize them as genderless, such as 'man-power', 'man-hours', 'craftsman', 'seaman', 'policeman', 'fireman', 'postman', 'dustman', 'fisherman', or as verb 'to man'. However, some of these terms, already, have alternatives 'craft worker', 'angler', 'police officer', 'firefighter', 'refuse collector' (Mills 67).

The context where a term or word is used deems significant to signal the sexist use of language. For instance, the word 'girl' is not sexist when it describes a female under 16 years old, but it does when it addresses a woman above the very age (Mills 74). Or, when addresses a man, 'do not be such a girl' than the words is sexist. Notwithstanding, it is almost extremely difficult to identify a sexist phrase or sentence. Ultimately, terms of gender-specific in English

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language carry semantic derogation and demeaning toward woman in contrast to man. For instance 'courtier' and 'courtesan', 'master' and 'mistress', 'adventurer' and 'adventuress', these terms are etymologically connected, but the semantic scoop of female-specific terms refer to a lower state and encumber with sexual connotations; 'courtier' and 'master' retain their meanings of someone attached to court and hold a significant position, respectively. 'Courtesan' and 'mistress' hold meanings of a sexual servant or prostitute, and woman in an extramarital relationship, respectively<sup>1</sup>. 'Adventuress', on other hand, means a woman who gains position or power by questionable means (83-84).

### **1.3. Language and Woman's Place**

Robin Tolmach Lakoff's assertion of relation-identification of selfhood and language intimates to theory of Linguistic determinism or precisely to Sapir-Whorf theory, in some sense of mutual influence. However, Lakoff argues that language one speaks and one's place is intertwined or rather overlapped. One's use of particular terms mirrors the unconscious or the subjectivity, as consequence of it renders one in class, state, place or position. In other words, it determines the locus of the one, either in society or other situation. Precisely in her prominent work *Language and Woman's Place* (1975), is particularly woman's place that is decided by language she uses, woman's language (Lakoff 39).

Lakoff conditions if a girl speaks like a boy/man, she is normally "ostracized, scolded, or made fun of", and the society keeps the girls in lower place. Thus, the girl-grown up-is radicalized if she speaks woman's Language because no one is rendering her importance, moreover she is trivialized or mocked if she speaks a man's language. Lakoff accentually argues that that girl is doomed whatever language she speaks (Lakoff and Bucholtz 40-41).

Succinctly, Lakoff characterizes woman's language as more hesitant, less fluent, less logical, less assertive, thus more silent, interrupted less frequently than man, use tag-questions

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and model verbs more than men, use c-operative strategies in conversations ... (Mills 34). The argument of Lakoff, that language use shapes women's place, calls for Michael Foucault's notion of knowledge and Power. That is to say, the knowledge–language use–wields by a patriarchy limits and imposes certain uses and applications of women's language, therefore decides their place in society (Tyson 284-285). Thus, women's language is, ultimately about power, not gender; where certain styles of speaking come to be associated with power (Hall 172). The ultimate effect of women speak their language is that they are systematically denied to hold any kind of power or maintain it as their counterparts because of their linguistic behaviors are unable to possess a major control and mighty position, *but* which is labelled to them to do (Lakoff and Bucholtz 42).

Nonetheless, Robin Lakoff contends that women's place is located in respect for the language they speak. Lakoff labels and analyzes features, styles, and linguistics elements of women use of language. she indicates women have a large stock of words to their specific interest, for instance the various terms indicating colors, the use of tag questions, hedges of various kinds, and intensive use of 'so', in addition to hyper correct of grammar. Woman is, however, attentive to the perfect use of language unlike man. Significantly, women tend to use super polite forms rather than telling jokes. To draw up, These features render women weak, unqualified to possess power or exert it, rather she is stated below man (Lakoff 78,79,80-81).

### **1.4. Feminist Criticism and Derridean Deconstruction**

#### **1.4.1. Feminist Criticism**

Feminism is complicated to formulate into plain and well-framed picture because of many different kinds of feminism which have been existed and shall. Most feminists hold a belief that women are treated oppressively and differently from men, besides they find themselves subjected to personal and institutional discrimination. In addition, society is

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organized in such a way that functions in favor to man (Mills 2). Therefore, feminism tends to shed light on women issues and patriarchy oppression through criticism and analysis. No feminist or expert has managed to provide an exact definition of the theory, but when it is applied to the study of literature, it is employed to variety of contexts to veil a large-scale of activities, including:

- (1) Any criticism written by woman, no matter what the subject;
- (2) any criticism written by a woman about a man's book which treats that from a "political" or "feminist" perspective; and
- (3) any criticism written by a woman about a woman's book or about female authors in general. (Kolodny 75)

In addition, its concern is with phallus discourses that treated women or female characters, such as Friedrich Nietzsche misogynistic writing about women. Therefore, this kind of investigation allow feminists to define the portrayal of and attitudes toward female characters and help them to expose the ways, in which sexist bias or stereotypes are coded and systemized in society (75).

It is, however, crucial to declare that the fundamental concerns of feminism and feminist is society, thus it is much of concern to such criticism because society has greater influence on the construction of woman's reputation and character, and man alike. What feminist calls *social deconstructionism*. Rather, these gender categories are constructed by society. Elaborately, Feminists do not decline biological essentialism—the biological difference between woman and man. However, they do not confirm that man born as rational, strong, protective and decisive, and, woman is emotional—irrational, weak and submissive. Therefore, these *traditional gender roles* are attacked and criticized by feminists (Tyson 85). Another concern for Feminist Criticism is manifested by phallogentrism, the belief that phallus is the center, the dominant and the superior which has been employed to justify and maintain the

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male monopoly position of politics, culture, economy and in society (Tyson 86) because patriarchic programming, Feminists see their duty to raise awareness of phallus oppression to woman, in order to go beyond patriarchy.

Thus, Feminists question the method and the way to subdue patriarchic programming, constructing society and healthier environment for women's needs to be fulfilled. On way of the process is their trust that nothing in the world is perfect. In other words, "no ideology succeeds in fully programming all of the people all of the time", every ideology, thus, has weaknesses that permeate one to understand how it operates and functions (Tyson 93). Illustratively, Feminist lay a method getting beyond the patriarchy on to resist it is embodies in writing, such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Sémone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Lucy Irigaray's *The Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), even in times of Medieval Ages there are women who question man authority such as Christine Pizan's *A Book of the City of Ladies* (1405). Writing and language is deemed the most negotiated means to defy patriarchy in very walks of life.

### **1.4.1.1. French Feminism**

French Feminism is a major contribution to resisting patriarchy. Mainly, it is more diversified than other forms of feminism, British or American Feminism, because it underscores the political and social activism in order to attain equal opportunities and equal access to justice for woman, and because accentuates and treats philosophical dimension of woman's issues. However, French Feminism is shaped to two models of resisting the patriarchy: Materialist feminism is interested in social and economic oppression of women. Psychoanalytical Feminism is the particular concern of this study, interested in psychological experience (Tyson 95-96).

### 1.4.1.2. French Psychoanalytic Theory

The very theory is attentive and engages in patriarchy's influence on woman's psychological experience and creativity. In other words, it involves in the psychological repression at the position of conscious. For French Feminists psychoanalytic theory, such as Hélène Cixous, the way to liberate and to discard patriarchal programming at the level of unconscious is by the same means that causes them psychological repression—language. Within the latter, patriarchy determines, shapes, constructs and defines woman; and continuously wields his influence. Hélène Cixous, for instance, argues that the cure for woman is *language*, therefore writing. Hélène negotiates what she calls *Patriarchy Binary Thought* (99-100)

By dual, ... superior/inferior. Myths, legends, books. Philosophical systems. Whether an ordering intervenes, a law organizes the thinkable by ... oppositions. And all the couples of oppositions are *couples*. Does this mean something? Is the fact that logocentrism subjects thought ... to a two-term system, related to 'the' couple man/woman? (Cixous 264)

Furthermore, Cixous emphasizes a kind of language that "is called *écriture féminine* (feminine writing), through this unique language woman can set herself free of the phallus. Similarly, Lucy Irigaray believes that much of patriarchy's oppression is grounded on the psychology, exactly by means of language (Tyson 100-101). She argues woman breaks the chain by the vehicle man's use—language. She theorizes which she calls 'Womanspeak'. It works through groups of women (102). However, psychological methods or theories of these French Feminists are largely based on two French Thinkers who are influenced by Jacques Derrida, precisely his theory of Deconstruction (105).

### 1.4.2. Derridean Deconstruction

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"Concerning the institution that is the university put in question ... the term 'deconstruction' is most often presumed to refer to a theory, a method, a school, perhaps even a doctrine, in any case, ..."

Peggy Kamuf

"Does this mean that so-called 'deconstruction' is what Hegel said art in his time, 'a thing of the past'? Some people certainly think so or wish that it might be so. To say so has almost become an *idée reçue* ..."

J. Hillis Miller

The above epigraphs treat deconstruction in two ways. Peggy Kamuf, both quoted from Julian Wolfreys's *Deconstruction • Derrida* (1998), tackles the notion of deconstruction within the field of the University, which is considered as "a theory, a method, a school, perhaps even a doctrine". To misperceive 'deconstruction' as a superficial analysis of texts or word play destroys the appreciation of literature and the ability to interpret it meaningfully. However, 'deconstruction' improves the ability to think critically and to see people's experiences that are shaped by ideologies that people are unaware of (Tyson 250).

According to Derrida, language is not the reliable tool for communication but rather a fluid, ambiguous domain of complex experience (Tyson 249) in which multiple meaning—rather a sole, stable one—wonder in a text. Christopher Norris, however, proclaims:

Deconstruction is avowedly 'post-structuralist' in its refusal to accept the idea of structure as in any sense given or objectively 'there' is a text. Above all, it questions the assumption... that structures of meaning correspond to some deep-laid mental 'set' or pattern of response which determines the limits of intelligibility. (Norris 3)

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Deconstruction theory of language, however, is based on the trust that a language is slippery and ambiguous. For instance, *Tree* does not allude to a single signifier but to chains of signifiers in the speaker's mind and other chains of signifiers in hearer's mind. And, each signifier in those chains constitutes of chains of signifiers, and so forth. What is taking to be a meaning is the mental *trace* which is left behind by play of signifiers. And, the trace is built by differences through which a word is defined, for instance: a *red* is red because it is *different* from yellow, green, blue or a shape (Tyson 252-253).

### 1.4.2.1. The Concept of *Différance*

Many early Structuralists assert that meaning is present in oppositions. Derrida criticizes the binary thought of Western philosophy, accentuating the signification is produced in a 'free play of signifiers', thus *Différance* (Moi 104). The term '*Différance*' is spelt with an 'a', in spoken manner, the hearer cannot recognize the difference, unless the speaker clarifies his articulation, but in writing the difference is clear. Derrida's use—or invention—of the concept implies to his prioritizing writing over voice, speaking. The concept does not exist in any language, as if it is meaningless. Yet, the verb 'defférer' means 'to differ' in English and 'to defer'—to postpone. That is to imply, the presence of meaning is, a play of signifiers, different and deferred. In other word, meaning is neither active nor passive (Belsey 105). To illustrate Derrida's concept of *Différance*, Toril Moi eloquently explains

The phoneme can in no way be said to achieve signification through binary opposition alone. In itself the phoneme /b/ does not signify anything at all. If we had only one phoneme, there would be no meaning and no language. /b/ only signifies in so far as it perceived to be *different* from any/k/ or /h/. Thus /but/: /kat/: /hat/: are all perceives to be different words with different meanings in English. (Moi 104)

### 1.4.2.2. Derrida: Writing Over Speech

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Derrida's criticism of meaning production alludes to his criticism of the whole Western Philosophical tradition which is based on the Metaphysics of presence which rejects meaning as substantially or fully present in the Logos (word). In other words, the western metaphysics prioritizes speech over writing because, allegedly, meaning and sense exist with the speaker, the latter is, thus, authentically, the controller and the author of meaning. Moreover, a written text is authentic only if its author is present (Moi 105). Derrida, yet, contradicts the western disclosures and prioritizes Writing as prominent creativity. Christopher Norris eloquently provides a synopsis for Derrida's views of the Western Philosophy:

*Voice* becomes a metaphor of truth and authenticity, a source of self-present 'living' speech as opposed to the secondary lifeless emanations of writing. In speaking one is able to experience (supposedly) an intimate link between sound and sense, an inward and immediate realization of meaning which yields itself up without reserve to perfect, transparent understanding. Writing, on the contrary, destroys this ideal of pure self-presence. It obtrudes an alien; depersonalized medium, a deceiving shadow which falls between intent and meaning, between utterance and understanding. It occupies a promiscuous public realm where authority is sacrificed to the vagaries and whims of textual 'dissemination'. Writing, in short, is a threat to the deeply traditional view that associates truth with self-presence and the 'natural' language wherein it finds expression. (Norris 28)

Derrida's differentiation between writing and speech alludes to the co-relation between writing and *Différance* (Moi 105-106). Consequently, Norris states that writing is the "endless displacement of meaning which both governs language and places it forever beyond the reach of a stable self-authenticating knowledge". Thus, writing is vehemently condemned because it continues to bring meanings from the absence of an author. Therefore, moreover, it

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demonstrates that meaning does not rely on the present of its topic, or author's ideas, or authors themselves (Norris 29).

### 1.5. The Patriarchy Judgment of Feminine Writing.

Women's Writing is evoked as a method of resisting the patriarchy, liberating them from social subjugation. The vehicle that women use to seek independent character is through employing the same vehicle the phallus uses—language. However, men still criticizing, judging and reticulating their writing. The patriarchy tends to exclude women from either writing or using language by belittling, demeaning, underestimating their use of language because, allegedly, does not match their standards and the quality of male writing, William Gass declares:

Until women can find an openly lustful, quick, impatient, feral hunger in themselves, they will never be liberated and their writing... in pallid imitation of the master, will lack that blood-congested drive which energizes every great style (qtd. in Mills 47)

Gass, vehemently, argues that if a woman must write, she should be a male, has a male attributes of lust and hunger for desires because male writing is a great style and need great character. Therefore, a woman to write well must write as if she is sexually male. In addition, Grass suggests that woman, till find the man inside her; all she writes is imitations, his declarations emphasis the phallus' intention to maintain Phallogocentrism (Mills 47).

Patriarchy judgment of woman's writing appears as an obvious reaction from the phallus. Since ever, women are considered as a fallacy of man, thus any outcome born from her is a fallacy and wrong. Consequently, **it thrusts** women to write in pseudonym, for instance Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* which has published under Currer Bell, a genderless name. Her work under Bell's name is praised as strong and forceful work, after it is revealed that the

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novelist by Bronte, a strong waves of criticism launched, judging her style in a negative way (Mills 48). However, to sum up, men still have difficulty in admitting or empowering female authoritative works, their strong internalizing of phallogocentrism undermines, judges and belittles woman's writing. Unfortunately, the disease does not appear to be cured soon.

### **2. Socio-Historical Context: Phallogocentrism and Accounts of Women's Writing**

#### **2.1. Phallogocentrism: Phallus and Logos**

##### **2.1.1. Logocentrism**

Derrida's concept of Logocentrism is overlapped with Western Philosophy of metaphysics of presence (Derrida 49). As discussed earlier, metaphysics of presences prioritizes presence of speech over the absence of writing. Therefore, Derrida's concept of 'logocentrism' can be referred to the bias in Western meta-physical thinking in favor of the linguistic "presence" of speech (logos) over the linguistic 'absence' of 'writing'. Derrida deconstructs the tradition opposition between speech and writing; he concludes that both speech and writing are based on the same linguistic structures (Brunk 155). However, Derrida emphasizes writing over speech, albeit his term eludes the bias of Western meta-physics. The concept, basically, suggests that the logos or the words are prior to speech. That is to say, the originality of signification is already centered in a word. Moreover, Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1976) is based on the concept of logocentrism, and criticizing the west meta-physics. Therefore, he defines it as

The belief that the first and the last things are the logos, the word, the Divine Mind, the infinite understanding of God, an infinitely creative subjectivity, and, closer to our time, the self-presence of full self-consciousness. (Derrida lxviii)

Derrida underscores the significance of Logos as the center, where everything returns to. Thus, he appreciates writing. That is to say, a written sign [word] is therefore a mark which remains,

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which is not exhausted in the present of its inscription, and which can raise interpretation both in the absence of and beyond the presence of author (Kamuf 92). For the written to be written, it must to act *even if* authors are no longer there to provide clarifications and answers about their writings, *even if* they do not support their meanings anymore (91). In brief, Derrida's concept implies to the presence of meaning in the word—logos—and everything in it returns back to it, thus it is the center.

### **2.1.2. Phallogentrism**

The central term, phallus, can be perceived as an idealized, ideology and symbolic archetype that is founded upon a particular image of penis. **However, the phallus symbolic is extended to the foundations of language, meanings and perception** (Nithiyendran 1). The term acquires its significance as a concept in feminist psychoanalytic theory through the work of Jacques Lacan. Lacan argues that 'Phallus' is not a fantasy, nor an organ. Rather, it is a signifier (Carpenter 435). Furthermore, he argues that phallus produces the penis as an object of signification, rather than a biological organ. It represents what some "possess" and others have lost (Grosz 117). Of what some have lost suggests his trust of phallus is both a signifier which distinguished sexes, and a signifier that erase female lack, therefore emphasis difference (Carpenter 435).

It is the term with respect to which the two sexes are defined as different, and the term which functions to bring them together, the term of their union. (Grosz 177)

Lacan extends to define phallus as not merely a signifier of difference, it is a signifier of the other object of the other's desire. Moreover, phallus lexical scope is a symbol for power and the privilege of phallus.

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... the phallus is not a 'neutral' term functioning equally for both sexes, ... it is a term privileging masculinity, or rather, the penis. ... a socio-political system that also enables the phallus to function as the 'signifier or signifiers', giving the child access to a (sexual) identity and speaking position within culture. (Grosz 122)

Lacan's reliance on a male metaphor in discussions of desire, power, identity and differences termed a Phallogocentrism (Rees 432). Lucy Irigaray, on the other hand, indirectly, defines phallogocentrism as the masculine is everything that all by its self defines, circumvents, and circumscribes the properties of anything and everything (Irigaray 80).

### **2.1.3. Phallogocentrism**

The term, Phallogocentrism, is formed by combining phallogocentrism and logocentrism. In Phallogocentrism, it is the phallus that in return controls the logos; it is at the center of western metaphysical thought. Logos reflects patriarchal justification of its own power, as a system of thought. However, Western Culture traditionally views the rest of the world only in terms of its relation to the phallus. Jonathan Culler points to Derrida's relating the Western symbol of truth and subjectivity to the phallus. Derrida, yet, illustrates Freudian psychoanalysis that defines the female psyche in terms of lacking the penis and suffers penis-envy, as a good explaining of Phallogocentrism. That is to say, the phallus can be regarded as the norm, the standard, the center, the point of return of all objects and ideas that are all defined by it and in relation to it (Rees 434).

## **2.2. Accounts of Women's Writing**

### **2.2.1. Medieval Ages Juncture**

The Middle Ages is often marginalized in accounts of women's writing. It is widely accepted that only two prominent women writers are familiar in the field of literature, Julian

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of Norwiche (1342/3- after 1416) and Margery Kempe (1373 – after 1439). Thus, there is little to be said concerned the women's writing of the very juncture (McAvoy and Watt 1). In the period before 1500, Britishness notion, Catherine Clarke proclaims, is all questioned (Clarke 41). In the Medieval Ages, the political, linguistic and cultural boundaries—what in the present labelled as Britishness—is the outcome of far times before 1500. Britain at that time, as much as now, is multicultural and multilingual. French, Latin, Scots of Scotland, Welsh of Wales are often deemed a language of literature and religious, including cultures of Ireland, Scandinavian and continental Europe in general. Essentially, by involving these languages and cultures, the scope of the juncture is opened for other prominent and crucial women's writers, such as Clemence of Barking (1163-1200), Marie de France (1180). Further, Britain closely approaches the continent, in the Middle Ages, by Fifteenth-Century, a numerous members of women's writing, their works and lives are translated to English or circulated in England, such as Christine Pizan (1365-1430), Marie d'Oiguiques (1177-1213), Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) and Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) (McAvoy and Watt 2). However, in the process of translating works, their female authorship is overlooked, or re-ascribes to male writers, For instance, translating Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405) into English by Brian Ainsley and published by Henry Pepwell in 1521 (3).

A debate rises over the claim of Women's writing contribution to Medieval literature, where the half of the sex render invisible, exception of Julian of Norwiche and Margrey Kempe. While traditional accounts of Medieval literature underscore men's writing presence. Illustratively, David Wallace's *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (1999), whose aim is to lay out the male authorship works of the very period, except for female authorship (McAvoy and Watt 4). Wallace defends the absence of any chapter on women's writing, saying that "a single chapter on medieval women writers might be disproportionately brief, since nothing by a female ... survives in Middle English" (Wallace xx).

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Despite Wallace's claim, the period from 1066 to 1500 in Medieval Britain is rich of women writers especially subjects that treat solitary and anchoresses—a female who thoroughly devotes her life solely to the contemplation of God. As one of the earliest accounts of an English Women's experience of the religious life, the *Vita*—a Latin word means *Life*—by Christina of Markyate. It occupies a significant place in Medieval literature, her work accounts the extraordinary obstacles that *she* overcomes in order to pursue a contemplative life (McAvoy and Watt 151). In addition, Julian of Norwich's account of her visions is embedded in a literary and religious network. Her work is deemed one of few autobiographical accounts of a woman's spiritual visions in English (155-156).

Women's writing and the Medieval Literature are intertwined, women contribution is through either writing or deeds are of crucial influence. Their writing, thus, are not restricted to religious field, they treat subjects in various genres of literature. The connection between women and Romance is intimate. Medieval Romance engages in the use of vernacular languages. Its purpose, thus, is entertainment rather than teaching, additionally it treats popular and county cultures (Saunders 85). However, one of the famous writers of the very juncture whose names survived is Marie de France, shaped the genre of courtly Romance (86). She is important because she seems to have written in various genres: Saint's legends, romances, fables and erotic poetry (McAvoy and Watt 3). Diana Watt remarks that Marie de France's *Lias*, a twelve related stories told by Bretons in form of poem, is intersexual work (86). Marie's *Lias* treats pains, forbidden love in the context of arranged marriage. Her noble stories transform the power of love and generosity, which is her stories repeatedly brings accounts of arranged marriage, religious, so forth (McAvoy and Watt 87).

In addition to Romance, Letter Writing presents one of the prevailing forms of women's writing that allows exploring the lives and experiences of a range of women, such as royals, aristocratic (Daybell 178). The Fifteenth-Century witnesses an explosion in women's letter-

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writing, coinciding with the rise of the vernacular English letter. However, it is argued that women's letter-writing is ordinarily penned by female secretaries (McAvoy 160).

Women's contribution to Medieval Literature is exhibited in texts that treats other points; in case of Reform Literature and Femininity-in-Writing women are present. Some movements, on the one hand, occur in the Medieval period manifest religious upheavals and reforms are accounted by women's writing (Winston-Allen 65). As participants in the Reform, women receive authorization to write history, record and document the reform (97). On the other hand, a frequently question is evoked about the characteristics of feminine writing of women literature in Medieval period. Early Feminist critics compare that man's rational, logical, hierarchical, and line language to woman's irrational, contra-logical, circular, or non-hierarchical self-expression language use. Moreover, women's writing reveals aspects of affective, emotional, intuitive, subjective, and spontaneous, in addition to her focus on bodily sensation and images (216).

The pervasive misogyny encounters in Medieval Writing have its roots in the influencer philosophers, Aristotle (384-322 BCE) and Ovid (43 BCE- 18CE) and others. Marbod of Rennes sums it up: "woman the unhappy source, evil root, and corrupt offshoot, who brings to birth every sort of outrage throughout the world" (qtd. in McAvory and Watt 72). Feminist writing emerges to depict the nature of patriarchy subjugation to women. Christine Pizan, the prominent proto-feminist of Medieval Ages, she challenges the Western traditions of sustaining the male's writing. She is qualified not only to challenge the Western Phallogocentrism, but to revise their misogynistic writing, too. She born in Venice in 1364, and then moved with her family to France. Her famous feminist work *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1404-1405) a prose allegory that defends women, she focuses especially on the gendered nature of history and culture (Schaus 134).

### **2.2.2. Eighteenth Century Juncture**

It has been persuasively contended that gender becomes a significant subject and autonomous category in the first half of the Eighteenth Century (1790-1750), where the relations between gender and literature become bright and apparent (Ballaster 4). Gender is presented both by woman and man, therefore it is merely apparent when the marker of different—that is, woman—is present (5). The two developed areas, however, that are important to the literary scene change for women in the very period are: first, the development of print culture which facilitates the circulation of literary works provides opportunities for both woman and man. Second, the development of Cartesian philosophy and Baconian empirical science which influence women's perspectives of the customary traditions and gender roles of the society at the time, and more evenly promoting the capacity of subjects to reason as a human being (6).

The eighteenth century witnesses growth of print culture which gives women, however it is not absolute to proclaim that women use the press, they still write in manuscripts. Yet, women who opt for publishing, they are more likely to write pamphlet, petitions then drama and novels. A number of women, moreover, take the advantage of press to submit individual poems under classical and other pseudonyms, such as Elizabeth Cater whose poems appear under the name of 'Eliza'. Notwithstanding, the verity of women's writing appears in forms of memoirs, diaries, spiritual autobiographies and so forth. Their writing, additionally, involves in, mostly, genres of novels, drama and religious writing (Ballaster 6-7).

Woman's writing emerges, on the one hand, with the raise of the novel and drama. Writers such as Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Charlotte Smith, Eiza Haywood, Penelope Aubin, Mary Davys and Elizabeth Rower are, on the one hand, ascribed with the prominent female novelists of the century (Williams 113). Haywood has Published works between (1721-

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1730) *Secret Histories, Novels* and poems in 1725, and Rowe's *Friendship in Death* in 1728, and *Letters Morals and Entertaining* in 1729 (114). Haywood and Rowe use a sensitive language that captures the physical and psychological Sensations of sexual desire; they draw a line between feminine writing and male writing (115).

On the other hand, women take a great part in the flowering of drama and theater writing. Illustratively, Susanna Centivre the prominent playwright of the century and her play *The Busie Body* (1709), in addition to another nineteen plays, most of them Comedy (Spencer 151-152). Other female playwright is Catherine Trotter and her play *The Revolution of Sweden* (1706), her tragedy play depicts the accession of the character Gustave Vasa to the Swedish throne. Significantly, Trotter's Constantia, a female character, defends Swedish rebellion in a voice echoes Lock's Social Contract Theory. Her play is the dramatic expression of feminism (Spencer 149-150). On other track, Religious writing takes a major care in women's writing. Through their writing they express a religious love, feeling and morals. For instance, Anne Dutton is completely biblical theologian. In her *A Narration of the Wonders of Grace* (1734) traces the nature of God, Salvation and second coming of Christ (Shaw 192).

The second development, yet, influences women's venture into literature. The rationalist and empirical philosophies which make women wonder around and question the social constructionsim, demanding right of reasoning therefore question their inferiority to men. The century explores the emergence of discourses by women who are recognized a proto-feminists such as Mary Astell, Mary Lasy Chudleyh, Elizabeth Thomas. A unique language born from the influence of Cartesian Revolution—I think therefore I am. These women defend their right for reason as any other human being, and the right for equal education (Ballaster 8). Astell and the other proto-feminists argue more for the relationship between wife and husband, than political rights. Mary Astell in her *Reflections Upon Marriage* (1700) examines the issue of wife-husband Contract, demanding the right of sovereignty like the liberty of the state (9)

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...if Absolute Sovereignty be not necessary in a State, how comes it to be so in a Family? or if in a Family why not in a State; since no Reason can be alledg'd for the one that will not hold more strongly for the other? If the Authority of the Husband so far as it extends, is sacred and inalienable, why not of the Prince?...If Arbitrary Power is evil in itself, and an improper Method of Governing Rational and Free Agents, it ought not to be Practis'd anywhere; Nor is it less, but rather more mischievous in Families than in Kingdoms... If all Men are born free, how is it that all Women are born slaves?<sup>2</sup>

Additionally to these proto-feminists, Mary Wollstonecraft, and her friends Mary Hays, May Anne Redcliffe foreground what is Feminism. They, however, advocate women ability of reasoning, and their political and economical rights. Their writing shapes the second half of the Eighteenth-Century Literature. Wollstonecraft in her *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* (1792) throws a challenge not only to men but crucially to women. The book stresses 'equality' and 'liberty'. She grounds it on universal human rights, embraced by Eighteenth Century thinkers as Voltaire, Rousseau and Locke. She argues that women have the faculty of reason, even physical potentials (Mellor 141). Her close fellow Mary Hays springs to defend Wollstonecraft's proto-feminist program. Hays bases her novels *Emma Courtney* (1796) and *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799) on Wollstonecraft's program for social reform. *Emma Courtney* emphasizes the importance of sensibility, of women's capacity for strong emotions and enduring love (143). *Emma* provides feminist criticism of her society, attacking slave trade and enslavement of women.

However, the most radical work of Hays is *Appeal to the Men of Great Britain in Behalf of Woman* (1798), she is more criticizing for men than Wollstonecraft, she accentuates the equality and the natural right by God, but men defy God by refusing to educate women and keeping them surrender position (144). It is safe, thus, to assert that the second half of the Eighteenth-Century witnesses the first full flowering of women's writing in Britain (Labbe 1).

### 2.2.3. Twenty-First Century Juncture

Preoccupation thoughts and features of the new two decades of Twenty-First Century is reflected in women's writing. The latter examines multiculturalism, treatment of ageing population in Britain, the impact of technology change. (Chambers and Watkins 247).

Britain is multiculturalism and multilingual country that encompasses a great deal of cultures, races, religions and languages. Women's writing attempts to draw a clear picture of multiculturalists Britain, precisely British women of different heritages. Yet, much of their works—novels or plays—are born from their lives, subjugation, and oppression of multiculturalism (Chambers and Watkins 247). Monica Ali, Bangladeshi-British writer, treats in her novel *Brick Lane* (2003) identity, religion and culture. The novel is about a housewife, does seamstress, who married older man, Chanu, in an arranged marriage. Ali takes the housewife out of her religious-cultural milieu, by an affair with younger British Muslim overseas, Karim. (249). Moreover, refugee, asylum seekers and modern form of slavery are of significant subjects in women's writing. Significantly, one of Ali's characters describes the multiculturalism in the kitchen:

Every corner of the earth was here: Hispanic, Asian, African, Baltic and most places in between ... It was touching, really, to watch them all, every race, every color, every creed. (sic) (qtd. In Chambers and Watkins 250)

In addition to other writers such as Rukhsana Ahmad's *Letting Go* (2008). *Letting Go* by a British-Pakistani writer, her play is set in impoverished and punitive locations where the characters of Africa and the South Asia asylum seekers live and die, detentions, advice centers, and spaces for multiculturalism gathering (250).

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The literary preoccupation with Ageing is a way to respond to issues and events that occur in mid-age women or old women. Such issues are presented in tendency to love, body and sexuality, rising children ... so forth. For a Feminist perspective, it is frustrating and depressing for mid and/or older women because they find themselves expelled, marginalized, ignored, invisible more than when they were younger (Chambers and Watkins 252; McGlynn et al 3-4). Jane Fonda, in an interview with the telegraph in 2015, expresses her experience of invisibility:

We are the fastest-growing demography in the world, and yet we have no face in the mass media. It is ok for men to get older, because men become more desirable by being powerful. With women, it's all about how we look. (ptd. in McGlynn et al 3)

Most Feminists were and are contending that women are valued for their physical appearances. Sexual desire as a beauty is there only attribute woman has. Resultantly, British women writers' publishers since the beginning of the millennium suggest a significant shift. The mid-age is often brought by women in their works, treating variety of subjects, love, and marriage. The protagonists of Alison Fell's *Tricks of the Light* (2004), and Michèle Robert's *Reader, I Married Him* (2005) illustrate the latter subject. Broom, the Fell's protagonist, expresses her body, saying her body is wise and knows a lot (Chambers and Watkins 253).

The writing of women in their older years calls for Edward Said's notion of "Late Style" (Chambers and Watkins 254). The "Late Style" would reflect a life of learning, the wisdom and comes from experience, the sadness that comes from wisdom and a mastery of crafty that has nothing left to prove. It might recapitulate a life's themes.

We want to feel that in a final confrontation with mortality, something profound takes place. When the end is near, we want there to be a sign of this in the work itself, some proof of accumulated insight. (Rothstein)

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However, women's writing is result of their own experiences. Women bring themselves into writing and use writing to their needs and sakes. British women of the new millennium have treated themes varied in multiculturalism grounds. "Late Style" offers woman a unique style of writing to bring their wisdoms, subjectivity and so forth to surface. However, women's writing tackle subjects of technology or use it in their works as digital publishing, use of Social Media, Blogs and so forth, therefore to interact and to have a clear access to readers.

Chapters' Notes:

1. "Mistress." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mistress>. Accessed 31 Mar. 2021.
2. Mary Astell, 'Preface' to *Reflections upon Marriage*, 3rd (1706)
3. "Sikh." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Sikh>. Accessed 30 Mar. 2021.
4. Rothstein, Edward. "'ON LATE STYLE,' BY EDWARD W. SAID". The New York Times, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/16/books/review/16rothstein.html>. Accessed 20 Mar 2021.



**Chapter Two:**  
**Feminine Writing Evolvement and Rebellion**  
**over Patriarchy**

## **Chapter Two: Feminine Writing Evolvement and Rebellion over Phallogocentrism**

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### **Chapter's Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two parts. On the first part, it presents the deconstructive reading of feminine writing evolvement of the three female writers: Christine Pizan, Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Beard, from the contexts of Medieval period and Eighteenth Century period to Twenty-First century, in treating the subjects of gender injustices and equality. On the second part, it answers the second question of the thesis, thus to examine the methods that women use to refute Phallogocentrism. We shall investigate how Christine Pizan uses re-writing and re-making myths, while Mary Wollstonecraft tends to raise social reforms, particularly an educational reform and in marriage and slavery.

### 1. Feminine Writing Evolvement: A Deconstructive Reading

#### 1.1. *The Book of the City of Ladies Turns upon its Thesis: (I reformulated the title)*

##### 1.1.1. Proto-Feminism Treatise

Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*<sup>1</sup> manifests a Proto-Feminist<sup>2</sup> work of Medieval period to criticize Phallogocentrism and phallogocentrism. Pizan seeks to demonstrate that women possess natural affinities for all areas of culture, society, military, religion, knowledge and morals (Pizan xxi). Briefly, Pizan is overcome by her memories of the many prominent male authors who disparage women (Fisher et al 50). She, therefore, dedicates *Book* to sustain women's character, supporting their virtues, reason, morals, potentials, citing up from ancient great myths and religious lessons, and to liberate women from men's claims, clichés. She draws a pure and colorful painting of women. At the same time, she criticizes male's inclination to ill writing for women from the past to her present—however, it provides a universal history in the contemporary times.

Prior to Christine Pizan, however, no woman dared to speak out in favor of women. Therefore, *Book* is profoundly feminist in nature that it involves a complete dedication to the betterment of woman's lives and alleviation of their suffering (Pizan xxviii). Within the context of her time, her thoughts are revolutionary. Thus, she expands her defense of women of the past in order to expose the falseness of "masculine myths". Moreover, she seeks through Lady Reason, Lady Rectitude and Lady Justice to criticize the transmitted claims by the tradition—she implies to the patriarchy's clichés—which women have inherited, cultivated (xxvix). However, she is aware of the medieval class structure. She does not call for women to rebellion rather to accept it. Thus, she constructs the City for women. Noteworthy, Pizan's acceptance of medieval hierarchies is not antithetically constructed. In other words, she idealizes women and presents them in Goddess figure, proving men's clichés, claims, stereotypes, charges wrong

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not by means of direct contradiction. She, rather, provides explanations to men's clichés then illustrates by myths and moral lessons about idealized women. Illustratively, Pizan's discussion of men's charges of women greediness, she prefers to explain that what appears as greed is in fact (female) prudence in the face of (male) profligacy that what men announcing is a camouflage for their own greediness(xxxiii). Significantly, women are idealized, manifested in perfect picturesque through various subjects. Thus, Pizan negotiates "woman question" in terms of political and military accomplishments, knowledge and skills, prudence and constancy, devotion and faithfulness, integrity and generosity (McKinley 353). *Thus, The Book's ideological project is to idealize women in perfect character.*

Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction, however, emphasizes criticism of the Western Metaphysics. The latter is based on the presence and the emphasis of the binary opposition of the language use. These polar opposites, yet, are not mutually exclusive. The operating structure is that of a superior term belonging to the logos versus an inferior term indicating a decline as a negation, complication, derivation, or degradation (C. Florensten 70-71). For this ideological project, thus, is deconstructed by text's orientation toward the negotiation between power/ weakness , chastity/ corruption which is demonstrated through myths and religious morals about women who prove that the female sex is of equal significance and unique as the male sex. Nonetheless, Pizan's ideological project is turned upon its thesis, despite that she overcomes Western traditions of these binary oppositions. Yet, idealization of women, elimination of patriarchal traditions, and refutation of Medieval patriarchy's clichés are elevated by illegitimizing the side of binary which is ascribed to women as inferior, therefore she reverses the hierarchy to make the superior polar ascribed to women.

### **1.1.2. Idealized Woman as Physically Powerful and Authoritative**

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Pizan asks why women do not plead law cases in the court of justice, are unfamiliar with legal disputes, and do not hand down judgment? Lady Reason answers her by asking her, why God does not ordain that men fulfill the offices of women, and women the offices of men?. It seems she advocates men's claims instead of rationalizing her advocacy for women. However Lady Reason continuously argues that God's nature blesses men of physical power and stiffness to lay commands and wield punishments (Pizan 31). Yet, God, also, blesses women of professional potential to run offices, execute laws and judgment in government (32).

The idealized Amazonians who govern their own country called Synthia—unoccupied by men—run judgment, and exercise military practices. These Amazonians courageously assemble and take counsel among themselves who govern professionally and wisely without being subject to men. They arm themselves, qualified by physical strength. Under the commands of the two queens Lanpheto and Marpasia, they extend their dominance to cover kingdom in Europe and Asia (Pizan 40). Furthermore, Lady Reason portrays queen of Thamaris—one of the idealized queens of Amazonians—, who captures King Cyrus, credited to her subtle faculty and wise thinking. She makes a set for his troops in her lands, ensuing a dead end to his knights (42). Hence, the myth stresses the quality of sharp intelligence of warrior's women. Pizan breaks the hierarchy of medievalist patriarchy elevating women's supremacy in the binary power/weakness.

### **1.1.3. Idealized Woman as Chaste**

Chastity is a significant quality in women's nature that elevates other virtuous and goodness in them. Medievalist patriarchy, however, charges women of lacking any chastity, that they proclaim women enjoy being raped, and attract men through their "coquettishness". On the one hand, Lady Rectitude cites of Susanna, a valiant and chaste lady who is threatened by two "false priests" to sin with them. Lady Susanna refuses them crying that it is far better for her to die than to incur the wrath of God because of sin (Pizan 156). On the other hand,

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Lady Rectitude argues that “chaste ladies who live honestly take absolutely no pleasure in being raped. Indeed, rape is the greatest possible sorrow for them. Many upright women have demonstrated that this is true with their own credible example,”... (Pizan 161). **For Example,** the queen Galatians with her husband are captured in a war. One of the officers who capture them, feels passion to queen Galatians, and rapes her. Consequently, she avenges by setting a trap for the officer and beheads him, presenting his head to her husband. (162-163).

Moreover, women are accused for enjoying being pretty in both their clothes and ornaments in order to attract men to their love (Pizan 204). Women's chastity is questioned because of their clothes, behaviors ... so forth. Assumingly, their purpose is to attract men's sights. Nonetheless, Lady Rectitude argues that wise and worthwhile men are never attracted to pretty and vain women, rather of honest, virtuous, and simple women. Queen of Blanche, the mother of Saint Louis whose intellect prudence, virtue, and goodness attracts Thibaulte, the Count of Champagne, though she passes her youth (Pizan 206-207). Women's nature is to be beautiful, and taking care of their appearance and fragment do not necessarily mean that she is corrupted or seeking attention of men.

Deductively, the belief of the idealization of women is at the core of Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies*. The work strengthens and elevates the ideology by answering men's questions, doubts, clichés and claims. Thus, the ideology is proved through the treated subjects and the presence of mythological and historical evidences that are profoundly manifested in the debate between the binary oppositions: power and weakness, chastity and corruption. The ideology is presented in the building the City for Ladies, a world that is only constructed for virtuous women to inhabit, and women who ultimately seek cover from men's charges and clichés.

According to Derrida, writing is the aspect of indecision or 'free play' that exists within any method of communication. Its operations are precisely those that elude speech's self-

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consciousness and delusory sense of idea superiority over written-expression. Writing is the never-ending displacement of meaning that governs language. Language is often encoded in a network of differential 'traces' that the individual speaker will never comprehend (Norris 28). Therefore, the very deconstructive reading of *The Book of the City of Ladies* does not eliminate other significations. That is, Pizan's *Book*, in major parts, subjugates women more often to patriarchy. In her task to prove her proto-feminist arguments and to raise awareness, she elevates men's claims for the perfect character in women to satisfy their judgments and sights. Therefore, to sustain her proto-feminist arguments, she enforces her female characters to endure men's stiffness, harshness. Lady Griselda, for instance, has stripped naked in front of her husband, knights, barons and other subjects to prove to her husband, when he divorces her, that she never desires valuable materials, but his love (Pizan 173). Moreover, lady Lecrutia who is the noblest Roman maiden, known by all chaste Roman ladies, has to kill herself in front of her husband, her family and public to prove her innocence (160, 161-162). Is she not enough chaste to be believed without murdering herself? Additionally, women of Amazonians burn their right or left chests as mark of their physical strength to hold arms, shields and arrows, yet a way to resemble men physical appearance, elevating and praising their physical nature (41). Pizan, unconsciously, turns upon her ideological project. However, as the very deconstructive reading of *The Book of the City of Ladies* manifests, language, nonetheless, does not reflect the worlds as it is, rather it still reflects the worlds as the author views it where absolute truth does not exist.

### **1.2. "Rational Women Make Good Mothers and Wives" in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman***

French Revolution in 1789 stimulates Mary Wollstonecraft to conceive that rights should be extended to women because women are eliminated from major of natural rights. In addition, the French diplomat Talleyrand's proposal for a free national system of education

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excludes women to domesticate education to learn merely matter of her duty: housekeeping matter triggers. However, Wollstonecraft writes a political treatise vindicating women's human right, producing it in duration of six weeks; she begins by addressing M. Tallyrand-Périgord urging him to reconsider women exclusion from national education (Wollstonecraft and Rowbotham, Introduction).

She dedicates the treatise to demand women's natural rights, and to clean their reputations from Eighteenth Century patriarchy's claims and clichés. *Vindication* is thoroughly discussed as a text in which its 'proto-feminist' arguments and its rhetorical tactics become dyad means to analyze it (Volkova 892). *Vindication* treats variety of subjects concerned to women issues in the very period: education, marriage, parental affection, women's slavery, sensibility, and maternity ... so forth. Unexpectedly, Wollstonecraft's core element of her *Vindication* is education. She presents her work not as a defense treatise of women's natural rights, but more particularly as a proposal for educational reform. Thus, education is the core ideology of the text that promotes its signification (Berges 19). She stresses the ideology of rational and educated women, and employs sophisticated arguments to prove her ideology.

The very ideology, apparently, is Wollstonecraft's intentional and deliberated signification she tends to reach. However, according to Derrida's term of *Différance*, there is no sole and stable signification, rather it is achieved through the 'free play of signifier' (Moi 104). As a result, Mary Wollstonecraft's signification deflects, complicates and undermines her ideological project. That is, deconstructing Wollstonecraft's text means to search for the blindness under her insight. In other words, her insight—intentional signification—is to call for women's right for national education, but the blindness—unintentional signification—emerges unconsciously in her text<sup>3</sup>. The blindness of Wollstonecraft is analyzed through deconstructive reading of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Wollstonecraft's insight sustains women's right to excess an equal education, providing arguments to stress her

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disposition. She loses, however, her path, subjugating and instilling women's traditional place that is granted by eighteenth century Patriarchy.

The ideological project of *Vindication* is negotiated through of Reason/ Ignorance, Right/ Duty, Tradition/ Nature. According to Hélèn Cixous, language always works by oppositions, by dual opposition (Cixous 264). That is, the ideological project of preparing rational and educated women is undermined by the emphasis on the patriarchy's superiority of the oppositions, his tradition that stresses women's duty—even educated and rational—is to be good wives, and mothers (Wollstonecraft et al 209), therefore privileging patriarchy supremacy. It seems rather clear that the binary opposition constructing the text can be manifested in the inconsistency between Wollstonecraft's insight and blindness—unintentional signification. In other words, Wollstonecraft's intention insight advocates women's natural rights for reason, while her blindness exhibits to instill women's place as patriarchy renders them: women's traditional place as mothers and wives doing their duty, and education sustain them to fulfill that.

### **1.2.1. "Educate Women to be Better Mothers and Wives": Strengthening Women's Domesticated Place.**

It is safe to deduce that Wollstonecraft's aim in her treatise is nothing but the pragmatism that incur from educating women, to fulfill flawlessly their duties as mother to raise carefully and adequately their children, and wives to satisfy husband's expectations and their elevated statue of reason. Hence, Wollstonecraft asserts that through education, it makes them properly attentive to their *domestic duties* (Wollstonecraft et al 200-20). Nonetheless, she

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underscores the domestic role for women, advocating—though indeliberately—patriarchy's claim of women roles next to them. However, the ideology project of rational and educated women is inconsistency in *Vindication*, her arguments, thus, venture in contradicted oppositions. A moment Wollstonecraft calls for sex's equality by means of halting women's proudness of their weakness, portraying it as the illegitimate power, which they obtain, by degrading themselves (48), therefore they must demand equality of natural rights that are granted by God, she says:

Make them free, and they will quickly become wise and virtuous, ... for improvement must be mutual, or the injustice which one half of the human race are obliged to submit to, ... the virtue of man will be worm-eaten by the insect whom he keeps under his feet.  
(Wollstonecraft et al 206)

For another instance, she demands the inherent rights of humankind for women in order to subjugate them to patriarchy claim that women's place is at home—with blessing of being educated to do their duties in a sophisticated manner. Thus, if women are taught and educated as their counterparts to various disciplines and subjects, Wollstonecraft underscores the elements of anatomy and medicine, women are “Not only to enable them to make proper care of their own health, but to make them *rational nurses of their infants, parents, and husbands*”.  
(Wollstonecraft et al 208; emphasis added)

Women's education seemed to be of useless benefits for women as being, or to be educated to satisfied their own reason and hunger for knowledge. Wollstonecraft suggests that they do not need to be educated if they do not use it to accomplish their 'natural' duties.

Wollstonecraft strengthens the view of domestic place for women. She restricts the value of women only as mother who raises and nurses their siblings. The emphasis on the upbringing of children is of great task for women who should not spoil them with over-

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affections and feminine sensibilities. She asserts that women of sensibility are the most unfit for this task because they will infallibly, carried away by their feelings, spoil a child's temper. The latter is the first and most significant branch of education; thus necessitates a sober steady eye of reason, that uneducated, irrational and sensible mothers cannot fulfill (Wollstonecraft et al 95). She believes that domesticity is the 'natural' occupation for women, and that their ultimate responsibilities should be to care for their children and manage their households. Therefore, women should be granted the rights—restrictedly education—in order to help them be better mothers and to prepare them to assert domestic authority (A. Finke 121). Later she declares that one of the grand duties annexed to the female character by nature is to care for children, if properly considered, this duty provides many compelling reasons for improving female understanding (Wollstonecraft et al 181). These declarations are characteristic of most of her arguments. Women belong in some essential way in the family. The care of children is given to women by 'nature'.

*Vindication's* ideology is undermined and condemned by the inconsistency and the disagreement of Wollstonecraft's arguments to sustain her ideology: prepare women as rational and educated. Her attentive and intentional meaning for calling to women's natural rights for education, and their natural capacity for reasoning is blurred by the elusive meaning that indicates subjugating women to their oppressor: Eighteenth century patriarchy. Her blindness is shaped the conflict between women's right to be educated, as a result the right becomes a means to subjugate women, and a tool for them to attain and to fulfill their duties as mothers and wives, Mary Wollstonecraft plainly concludes: “The conclusion which I wish to draw, is obvious, make women rational creative, and free citizens, and they will quickly become good wives, and mothers;...” (Wollstonecraft et al 209)

The statement negotiates the ideology that reason—bless of the Creator—contributes to fulfill their natural duties. However, the very deconstructive reading of *A Vindication of the*

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*Rights of Woman* is not the merely ideology Wollstonecraft alludes, or the texts intimates. Derrida advocates writing because it demonstrates that signification does not depend on the presence of its topic or the writer's ideas of the topic (Belsey 103); the title in the case of Mary Wollstonecraft and her ideology. In other words, Mary Wollstonecraft writes a field where a free play of signification can emerge. For instance, the very deconstructive reading of Wollstonecraft's blindness, accentuates the faculty of reason, criticizing feminine sensibilities. She, however, raises her polemic based on reason, she at times slips into the very sentimental modes she tends to critique. Moreover, *Vindication* shows another textual tension or signification that appears to unresolved or subjected to distinctive interpretations; a dilemma of either entering a male-dominated public by appropriating masculine logical discourse rhetoric or attempting to forge a feminine rational discourse by inevitably reverting to feminized, sensible and irrational writing that desire to avoid, while the former eliminate her as a women writer (Volkova 892). According to Derrida, Mary Wollstonecraft's text or any other use of language, however, signification is different and numerous, emerges either as intentional or not.

### **1.3. Power and Silencing of Women's Voice in *Women & Power: A Manifesto***

*Women and Power* travels from ancient to the present day, exposing the masculine power structures that govern women's public silence and alienation from positions of authority. Mary Beard calls out that she has experienced her own voice being silenced before, especially on social media. Beard draws on her own perspective to identify trends in folklore, literature, current politics, and social media to show that as a woman if you venture into traditional male territory, the abuse comes anyway. The manifesto calls for a full re-evaluation of power, as well as a self-aware examination of the perceptions about power and women's silence

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(McGiveron 1; Beard Lect. 1). Mary Beard treats two themes in her book: silencing of women and women in position of power. Through the latter, she ventures to discuss how women of power are still derogated, mocked and ridiculed.

However, under the two themes she raises subjects such as criticizing the patriarchy's greedy for maintaining power and public speaking for himself only, in addition to silencing women in twenty-first century, when it is supposed that women are liberated, and running high positions of power. Moreover, she depicts how patriarchy still influences in negative way on women. She argues that the patriarchy domination and misogyny have long and many years of practice she reflects on myths of Greek of Roman antiquity. In this matter, Hélène Cixous, thus, argues that if one examines literary history, it is the same story. It all refers back to man, to his torment, his desire to be at the origin (Cixous 265).

Beard, on her writing style, tries to be concise and easy on the ear, the book is adapted from two lectures, one given at the British Museum in 2014, and the other earlier of 2017. Beard knows that the matters with which she is concerned are extremely complicated. Before she arms her reader, Cooke argues, she makes the reader to think and raise questions (Cooke).

She acknowledges that calling out sexism is not the same as describing it, and that it is only by doing the latter that one will be able to find an effective way to fight it. The question is where should one look for information? Misogyny has many outlets, according to Beard, and its roots are deep and broad. Nevertheless, in her book, she focuses primarily on Greek and Roman antiquity, a period she believes continues to leave an impression over public speaking practices in contemporary period, whether talking about a person's voice timbre or their authority to speak on any given topic (Cooke). Examples that Beard illustrates include Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, *Lysistrata* and the myth of Medusa, the female with snakes in place of hair,

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phallically symbolic of an illegitimate claim to masculine power who is violently silenced by a male (McGiveron).

### **1.3.1. Voice of Women**

Mary Beard in the first lecture treats subjects of silencing women's public voice. She starts with illustrating of Homer's Odyssey epic story. Telemachus, the son of Homer, tells his mother to 'shut up' because speaking is men's business; Beard wonders

At which point young Telemachus intervenes: 'Mother,' he says, 'go back up into your quarters, and take up your own work, the loom and the distaff ... speech will be the business of men, all men, and of me most of all; for mine is the power in this household.' And off she goes, back upstairs. (Lect. 1)

Women's voices, according to Aristotle, were evidence of their wickedness. Virtue is expressed by deep, full-throated sounds, such as those made by lions, bulls, and human males. Women's voice, on the other hand, is considered harmful, even hazardous due to its pitch and babble. It is assumed that the mere sound of their voices will bring the state to its knees (Sehgal).

She, however, questions the nature of women's right for public speaking. She explains that there is something behind telling middle-aged Penelope, Telemachus's mother, to keep her voice silent. A male privilege, Cixous explains, that can be seen in the opposition between action and passivity by which it sustains itself. The topic of sexual difference has long been associated with the same dichotomy: activity vs. Passivity (Cixous 265). Thus, while women are obliged to keep their tongues paralyzed, men are learned to dominate public speaking from early years of their lives. Yet, the story of Telemachus, telling his mom to keep silence stresses men's disgust of women's voice. In other argument, Beard writes that even if women are not silent, and they force public to hear them, they pay a high price for being heard. She tells of

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Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a mythological story about people changing their shapes, stresses the idea of silencing women's voice. Io is turned to a cow that she can only produce sounds of cow; Echo is turned to an animal that repeats only voices, that she never has her own voice (Lect. 1).

Women who aim to penetrate the realm of masculinity in order to gain power are portrayed in the media as 'breaking the glass ceiling' or on a 'power grab', reinforcing the notion that women are not worthy to power, as though they are entering a masculine world to which they do not belong. Furthermore, Women who use masculinity features are often mentioned by Beard. She uses the example of Maesia Sentinus, who is allowed to defend herself in court because her presentation was considered 'masculine' enough in ancient Rome (McGiveron). Additionally, she tells of other woman who acquires manly features, according to Roman anthologists, Afrania who is used to initiate legal cases and defend on them, thus her voice is described as barking of dogs and yapping, Beard notes, women are still unqualified to acquire a human speech (Lect. 1).

Silencing occurs not only as a result of political disenfranchisement, social isolation, or material dependence on men, but often as a result of the threat or execution of violent assaults on women's bodies (J. Sadler 20). Beard sustain her arguments, telling of Lucretia's rape, who suicide to prove her innocence. However, in other ways that women are getting hushed, Bears argues that women's speech is articulated and spoken by men. In other words, women's right for voice and speech is stolen. She tells of Sojourner Truth, ex-slave, abolitionist and American campaigner for women rights and oratory of the 1851 'Ain't I a Woman?' Beard suspect that the words of Sojourner Truth are spoken by man, and the authorized version that Truth has allegedly said is produced after a decade or more since Truth has said what has said (Lect. 1).

### **1.3.2. Women in Power**

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What does female power or language look like if public speech and power have been created as male? Beard wonders. Beard claims that, according to cultural theory, female power is automatically interpreted as a misuse of power, a threat to the social order rather than advancement. Beard responds that power should be described differently. It should be thought of as an attribute or even a verb 'to power,' rather than a property, by detaching it from social prominence (J. Sadler 20-21). Moreover, Beard disputes, there is no model for them to adopt, and lending from patriarchy gives women the privilege they want. She also mentions efforts by female leaders Theresa May and Margaret Thatcher to project a sliver of femininity into existing power structures by wearing typically feminine everyday objects (handbags and heels) as a sign of their reluctance to be branded as masculine (McGiveron 1).

Mary Beard starts the second lecture discussing the work of Charlotte Perkins Stetson Gilman's *Herland*. The story is about a land far away, unknown for other lands, isolated. Where women give birth only to girls without intercourse with men, thus there is no sex in her land. What Beard alludes is that the work raises a prominent questions about how has one come to view women who wield power, or attempt to wield power? What are the societal underpinnings and manifestations of sexism in politics and the workplace? How and why are women excluded from traditional conceptions of 'strength' that one carries around in one's head? These women have created a utopian land that could stand by itself and well ruled, but when, in the story, three men arrived to her land, the women feel derogated, weak and unable to acknowledge how great powerful, significant and equal to men are. Beard, however, hints how much women are belittling themselves, their potentials and abilities to exert power like men, perhaps perfectly (Lect. 2).

Moreover, women in position of power, like Margaret Thatcher, are excluded from definitions of power. Significantly, she must adapt herself to manly norm to acquire the privilege of powerful being. Margaret Thatcher takes elocution lessons to deepen her voice. In

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public life, women are still seen as intruders; when they seek influence, they are still seen as such. Moreover, Beard draws a clear connection from classical views to the misogyny that accompanied Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign (Sehgal). The few classical tales that are not well-known today still, nonetheless, have relevance when it comes to disempowering women. Beard reflects on the most recent general election in the United States. She mentions the many pictures of Donald Trump, dressed as Perseus, decapitating Hillary Clinton, dressed as Medusa. With her snake-haired hair and a gaze that can turn men to stone, symbolizes the horrors of the powerful woman, and she had to be silenced by the most heinous brutality. This image is available on T-shirts, coffee mugs, and tote bags, Beard noting. It is one of the superbly to-the-point drawings used in the novel (McKay). Women are criticized when they rank a powerful position, depicting their power as dangerous that can destroy states and people, like Medusa.

Beard discusses the violence faced by Diane Abbott and Hilary Clinton, arguing that strong women are frequently subjected to more abuse than men when they make mistakes. If Beard were to rewrite this novel, she says, she would defend women's right to be wrong, at least sometimes (McGiveron 2; Beard, Afterword). However, in Beard's criticism of phallogocentrism privilege, and her call for redefining the meaning of power to fit women. Cixous, likewise, proclaims that the challenging of this phallogocentrism unity has today become insistent enough to threaten the stability of the masculine edifice that passed itself off as eternal natural (Cixous 266). Therefore, women must consolidate to overcome the phallogocentrism if they want to hold their power.

Despite all, Beard's arguments are not absolute but inconsistent, thus the meaning she constructs is not stable. Derrida, as a result, argues that the presence of meaning cannot be achieved, that each signification—a writer thinks she achieves—continually points towards other preceding or subsequent significations, thus speeding dissolution of the presence of

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meaning. In other words, meaning can never be present, since it develops continually through context of reference, thus it becomes subject to change. Moreover, he asserts that the shift of significance is only possible when the alleged presence of meaning refers to something other than itself (Zuma 43). Thus, beard's meaning keeps changing due to her inconsistent arguments. She, on one hand, projects the Greek and Roman Antiquity myths and practices on the injustices that patriarchy practices against women's voice in twenty-first century. On the other hands, she admitted in her that one should not overstate that all western culture, patriarchy's injustices and oppression over women's voice, to the Greeks and Romans, in speaking or any other else. And, though societies overthrow many gendered certainties of antiquity, yet it remains the fact that the patriarchy traditions of dominating public speaking still lie very much in the shadow of the classical world (Lect. 1). Despites her contradiction, she keeps arguing the otherwise. Her meaning is elusive and unstable, therefore changeable which alludes to the absence of consistence truth.

### **2. Rebellion Over Phallogocentrism: Christine Pizan and Mary Wollstonecraft:**

#### **2.1. Christine Pizan and Re-writing Myth:**

Christine Pizan has received a lot of attention for her contribution to late-medieval scholarly discourse on the "women question". Pizan builds an allegorical literary city, or citadel, based on Biblical narratives, classical mythology that celebrates significant contributions of women in political, literary and religious history where women have played an important role. Her proto-feminist adaptations of mythological heroine demonstrate a mastery of late-medieval rhetorical techniques. She participates in myth-making and re-writing myth. She constructs a literary edifice to protect women from historical mischaracterization. *The Book of the City of Ladies* is a compilation of medieval myths, and the author frequently

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establishes her authority by quoting from fathers of literature, especially Boccaccio. Pizan thinks through myth in order to assert a role for women's presence in history and literature (McKinley 353).

In the process of writing *City of Ladies*, Christine Pizan does not present herself as an author, rather as a compiler (Casebier 35). According to the literary historian Alastair Minnis, the term author refers to someone who is both a writer and an authority figure, someone who should not be read but also valued and credited. Thus, an author makes something and causes it to develop, moreover establishes an authority and originality, when is cited by another (Minnis 10), while the compiler denies any personal authority, and claims responsibility for order and arrangement of other author's ideas and thoughts (192). Nonetheless, Christine Pizan is a, since her work is a collection of stories concerning the lives of pagan, Christian, and chaste women. Although Pizan's *book* is a respond to male writers and critics who condemn female ethics, behaviors, and character, her main source is Giovanni Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claris*, known in English as *Concerning Famous Women* (Casebier 35).

*Famous Women* consists of 106 chapters arranged in chronological order, each profiling a woman of renown, and each chapter is entitled by the women's name and title e.g. Zenobia, Queen of Palmyrene. Boccaccio organizes each chapter with a sentence or two to introduce a subject, subsequent with brief remarks about what made a subject famous (a virtue, a vice, a bad or good deed), then continue with Boccaccio narration as a storyteller. He is well known for his misogyny, *Famous Women*, thus raises pivotal questions (Shemek 195,196-197). In *Famous Women's* Preface, Boccaccio explains that he does not imply with 'famous' only women of chastity and virtue, rather of vice too:

For it is not my intention to give the word 'famous' so strict a meaning that it will always seem to signify virtuous, but rather to give it a wider sense, if the reader will forgive

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me, and to consider as famous those women whom I know to have become renowned to the world through any sort of deed. (Boccaccio xxxvii-xxxviii)

However, his book condemns many of his subjects' lives. Pizan's city of Ladies features many of Boccaccio's same women, but she explicitly corrects his writing, replacing negative details and commentary with adamant praise for all of their actions. Thus, her writing is a counter course to Boccaccio's (Shemek 196). In other words, Pizan bases her defense of women upon and against texts that establish and encourage literary misogynistic source material. She deconstructs Boccaccio's gendered fallacies, thus she established herself as an authority that presents personal biographies of pagan and Christian women. As a result, Pizan posits female biological experience as a legitimate challenge to male textual authority (Casebier 35-36).

In her effort to refute the tradition of misogynist theories about women's ethics and character, she not only edits and make additions to Boccaccio's *Famous Women*, but she deconstructs her source material in order to make it well fit to her ideology—idealization of women (Casebier 83). Therefore, Pizan is notable writer and scholar that take an exceptional step to defend women's character through history. Her tendency to writer as revolutionist over Phallogocentrism that ruins and condemns women, is manifested in defying her source by re-writing the stories, the myths and history.

### **2.1.1. Myth of the City**

Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* makes no apparent reference or plain indication like of Boccaccio's title "*Concerning Famous Women*", but it merely states that the text is about ladies, with no explanation as to why they are chosen in the first place. As a result, Pizan strictly avoids the use of terms such as 'famous' that have questionable connotations. However, she presents the idea that is absent from previous literature: the myth of the city. The very symbol, the professor of late medieval French literature Rosalind Brown-Grant argues,

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operates through various indications and orientations. First, the city associates Pizan's text with St Augustine's *City of God* (413-426 CE)(Brown-Grant 134). Pizan's *City of Ladies* portrays one city, a heavenly city for ladies in which includes those who deserve to reign eternally with God. That is, Pizan is well conscious of the affinity between *City of God* and *City of Ladies* (Hindman 471). Secondly, Pizan shapes her city as a classical symbol of the utopian community merely for virtuous, pagan, and Christian women (Brown-Grant 134). Where at the end, Lady Justice addresses Pizan describing city of ladies: "Of it maybe said, 'Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, civitasdei'" ("Glorious things are said of you, O city God"; latin-online-translation.com, Pizan 254). Thirdly, one of her core points is that women contribute to the growth of society, and that they have themselves played a leading role as city builders and intellectuals. Finally, Pizan marks her text unique and different from Boccaccio's (Brown-Grant 134-135).

As Christine Pizan does, many medieval authors employ architectural allegory, castle, citadels, buildings and palaces to explore or refer to intellectual competence, moreover to imagine thorough vision of human civilization. Therefore, Pizan's use of Building is to redress injustices against women in literary traditions (McKinley 354). However, Earl Jeffrey Richards investigates Pizan's use of city rather than convent. She argues that she chooses a city for its symbolic freedom because cities possess kind of freedom the monasteries or convent does not possess. Moreover, a city for Pizan alludes that humanity raises itself above the level of bestiality (Jeffrey-Richards 227-228). Additionally, Pizan uses the term city to indicate that her city is a defense setting for women against misogynists, and significantly as a setting for liberty and freedom, though she never uses the term 'liberty' or 'freedom' in her book, but she constructs the city where her subjects can act and behave freely (229). Yet, Pizan uses the city's connotation of liberty, alludes to her acknowledgement for John of Viterbo's definition of city: "city is called the liberty of citizens of the immunity if inhabitants ... for that reason walls were

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built to provide help for the inhabitants... ‘city’ means ‘you dwell safe from violence’...”(qtd. in Blank; ellipses in origin).

Pizan imagines the city of ladies as a secure refuge for women who have demonstrated their worth and chastity by virtue, as if she is saying to her subjects the city is constructed to protect you from atrocities and accusation of men. Therefore, her establishment of the city as an allegory for Goddess women is constructed by means of re-writing and subverting works of men who condemn women, basically Boccaccio’s texts.

### **2.1.2. The Queen Semiramis**

Semiramis, the legendary Babylonian queen, who has invaded new lands while seducing her son, Ninus, is a focal a topic in Christine Pizan’s re-writing and subverting Boccaccio’s version of Semiramis. *City of Ladies* initiatively discusses the subjects of women’s education, subsequent by fable of Queen Semiramis whose heroism and good nature are emphasized by Pizan, who rationalizes her incest. Semiramis lives at the down of time, before writing law. She is just doing what she thought is appropriate and righteous (Holderness 97-98). Pizan builds her city by means of her subjects’ stories. In other words, each story is about virtuous, chaste, pagan and prudent women. Therefore, Semiramis’s fable is the corner stone of the allegorical city of ladies. Significantly, her story is the lesson on how to interpret and re-write misogynistic texts. Her revisionism is plain, that many of her examples present a renowned and improved version (98), Semiramis’s example of the first re-written fable that defies Phallogocentrism.

For Boccaccio, however, Semiramis may not be unwise as Eve—Boccaccio condemns Eve for casting Adam out of heaven—but Boccaccio proclaims that her cleverness does not call for proudness. He argues that due to her greediness for mighty, she conceives her subjects, masquerades in shape of her son: “Semiramis’s face looked like very much like her son’s ; both

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were breadless ; her women's voice sounded no different from her young son's ; and she was just a trifle taller, if at all" (Boccaccio 5).

Boccaccio, for a moment in his portrayal of her story, idolizes her *manly* courage; however he accuses her of constantly burning with carnal desire that gives herself to many men. Thus, she loses her chastity (Boccaccio 6). Her femininity perverts her masculinity. She is neither male nor female. Boccaccio describes her downfall in a graphic detail, including her incest, prostitute, the murders of her lovers, and finally her own murder. The simple fact of being female may transform virtue into vice, according to Boccaccio (Holderness 99).

Christine Pizan rejects Boccaccio's version of the tale. She cleans Semiramis' name in *The Book of the City of Ladies*. On the one hand, Pizan vehemently shifts the blame—the incest—away from her Semiramis, but not away from her actions. Pizan transforms the Babylonian queen's mistake into evidence, and a lesson about the value of education in the pursuit of virtue. As a result, Pizan announces that women are capable of great use, and they are entitled to an education. On the other hand, Pizan's Semiramis never pretends to be other than her sex, and her military adventures are fully naturalized, the lady does not give up the exercise of arms, but with great courage than before, vigorously undertake to govern and rule the kingdoms. However, Pizan argues that with the help of Semiramis, her husband manages to subjugate mighty Babylon. The author states that Semiramis accomplishes so much that greater courage, more marvelous and memorable deeds have not been recorded by any men (Pizan 39-40; Holderness 100). Christine Pizan confronts Boccaccio's misogyny, re-writing Semiramis's tale to correct the medieval men's writing regarding women. Nevertheless, Pizan justifies Semiramis's error, arguing that to err is human, and Semiramis's time is governed by the law of nature, thus law are not born at the time, there is still no written law, and people live according to do whatever comes into their hearts (Pizan 40). Julia Simms Holderness sums up that Semiramis, the latest and enhanced version, does not falter. The absence of written laws

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indicates Semiramis's ignorance of the difference between good and bad, as Pizan transforms Boccaccio's distant history into prelapsarian past. She has no knowledge of God's or man's laws, only the natural law of her heart. She makes the appropriate judgment she can with the information she has, or more accurately, does not have (Holderness 102).

### **2.1.3. Medea, Queen of Clochis**

Boccaccio's Medea is the most example of ancient witchcraft. She is Perseis's son Aeetes's daughter. Boccaccio portrays Medea as attractive, and by far the well-trained woman in the field of evil. His portrayal of her as wicked and evil is what Pizan tends to subvert. Moreover, Boccaccio argues that regardless of who teaches her, Medea knows how to disturb the sky, to collect the wind, to cause chaos and to create artificial fire fools her, and takes another woman rather than her. Medea ardently loves Jason of Thessaly. She destroys her father wealth, and flees secretly with her beloved Jason. Yet, Boccaccio shapes Medea's character as cruel and savage, he tells that Medea takes with her brother and scatters the parts of his body, so that her father is distracted. Additionally, Medea is accused of being a wicked wife who kills her husband and her two sons she has born (Boccaccio 35-36).

Christine Pizan speaks, however, of Medea in Part I, in the subject of intellectual women; Medea is known for knowledge of magic and spells that due to her enchantments that Jason wins the Golden Fleece (Pizan 69). In the Part II, briefly, Medea is manifested as a pure figure for fidelity in love. The part where Boccaccio mentions Medea killing her brother, her husband and her two sons is ignored by Pizan (McKinley 358). Christine Pizan describes Medea as the character who possesses such great knowledge, loved Jason with a too great and too constant love (Pizan 189). Medea is describes in a goddess figure of love. Jason who desires a marvelous golden sheep, protected by different enchantments, Medea helps him to obtain these Golden Fleece. She gives him charms and enchantments on the condition that Jason must

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take her as a wife. However, Medea who would rather have destroyed herself than do anything to her beloved Jason, turned despondent and her heart ever again feel goodness or joy (190). Christine Pizan's ideology is shaped by her re-writing and re-revising of male writing and correcting their misogynist beliefs of women. Her writing, though exceptional in Medieval Context, guarantees a pure and promising position for women.

### **2.1.4. Ceres, Goddess of Grain and Queen of Sicily**

Ceres is seen, in Christine Pizan's *City of Ladies*, with other skilled and artistic women who make up the city's pillars. In areas where Boccaccio shows skeptical questioning, Pizan makes assertive and direct answers. Furthermore, Boccaccio takes a considerable time to dig in Ceres's lineage. Yet, Pizan makes no reference to Ceres's ancestors; instead, she focuses on how the woman clears the path for development of societies and communities. Moreover, Pizan saves mention Ceres' goddess privilege till the end of her recounting. Pizan affirms that Ceres's divinity as an indication for the impact of her contribution to human life, rather than a distinguishing characteristic (Elmendorf 53-54).

Boccaccio depicts Ceres as the queen that has a great wisdom who discovers how to till soil, and the first for other accomplishments (Boccaccio 11). Christine Pizan emphasizes the privilege worth of Ceres's deeds and skills, enjoying the privilege of being the first to discover cultivation and to invent the necessary tools (Pizan 75). However, these subtle changes alter the significance of Ceres's Fames. Pizan's line does not belittle Ceres's accomplishments, but invites other women into the honor for advancements of which they likewise capable. Pizan's rhetoric in the second half of the section of the story is a great deal different from and responding to Boccaccio's text. He poses a series of questions about the worth and the value of Ceres's discoveries and accomplishments, in order to hints for the disadvantages of Ceres's

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achievements. Pizan, on the other hand, offers straightforward answers. Thus, Ceres paves the foundation for Christine Pizan to build her city of ladies (Elmendorf 54-55).

Boccaccio's questioning the usefulness of Ceres's achievements raises through his misogynistic tendency toward Ceres, as a woman. His misogyny condemns his writing's credibility. That is, the accomplishments are established by a man, he would not accuse them of bringing a vice to the world. He rather accuses a woman to bring such vice and evil to the world:

If we do not deceive ourselves, we shall see that because of these the door was opened to vices which had been in hiding for a long time afraid to come out into the open, and assurance was given them that they might proceed. For this reason the fields, which had been common to all, began to have boundaries. (Boccaccio 12-13)

Boccaccio raises the issue of whether society is better off the discoveries. He praises the Golden Ages' simplicity and innocence. Pizan, thus, announces that mankind is distinguished from beasts not only by reason, but also by culture. He hopes for return to previous times. Pizan, however, wants to use the experiences and accomplishments of both past and present women to improve humanity's medievalist state. She appreciates and values Ceres for her accomplishments, idealizing her efforts and potentials that surpass men of great knowledge over history. Thus, thanks to this woman, the world is led away from bestial living conditions to a rational, human life'' (Pizan 76).

### **2.1.5. Minerva:(the titles under the element *Christine Pizan and Re-Writing Myth* are names of her characters, she presents them as stories)**

The introductory statement about Minerva's history and identity during her lifetime is written in a similar construction to Boccaccio's, but it is simplified. Pizan eliminates elements

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that may contribute to enigmatic and mythic speculation about her parentage due to a lack of details (Elmendorf 56). Pizan vehemently argues that Minerva has a subtle mind, of profound understanding, not only in one subject but also generally, in every subject. **Therefore, Pizan calls Minerva the goddess of knowledge (Pizan 73-74).** The author does not only attribute the very characteristic to the woman, but also positions it firstly among Minerva's praiseworthy characteristics. Minerva's everlasting virginity is the first consistency Boccaccio desires to shed light on. Instead of describing Minerva by her chastity, as if it is a particularly unusual characteristic, Pizan considers it as last attribute. However, she underscores the Minerva's aspect of subtlety and intellect and manifests her desire to shed light on women's characteristic of knowledge and cleverness that many men accuse them of ignorance and greenish minds:

... she overcomes the order and lust of the flesh which so strongly assail the young. The Athenians hold this maiden in such high reverence that they worshiped her as a goddess and called her the goddess of arms and chivalry because she was the first to advise their use, and they called her the goddess of knowledge because of her learnedness. (Pizan 74).

Boccaccio says that Minerva enjoys manly intellect and wisdom. As if cleverness and subtlety is only for man. While Pizan retains Minerva's femininity, she does not achieve her goals because she is a woman; rather, she pushes the limits of what a woman is supposed to be capable of (Elmendorf 57).

### **2.1.6. Arachne of Colophon**

Christine Pizan constructs this new 'city' with her ink and reasoning, which Arachne constructs sense with her weaving skills, challenging Athena's supremacy. The fable of Arachne in Boccaccio's *Famous Women*, he praises her for discovering the dyeing of wool, spinning and weaving. Her works of weaving are described as beautiful like what a painter

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does with his brush. Boccaccio depicts her growing faith in her abilities and her ambition in confronting Athena to a weaving contest. She hangs herself when she is defeated (McKinley 356 ; Boccaccio 38). He includes the story by his condemnation and criticism of Arachne's pride for believing that she has granted heaven for herself. In a sarcastic tone, he proclaims:

Arachne herself though she could move and take all honor to herself, or with her prayers and virtues make God, the Greater of all things, so benign towards her that she could force Him to open the Treasure of His munificence, to bestow upon her all His favor, and forget all other people. (Boccaccio 39).

Alternatively, Pizan goes against Boccaccio's claims, elevating the skill and potentials of Arachne, she portrays her as one of the heroines with artistic abilities. The tale is told by Lady Reason to convince Pizan's doubt of women's ability to invent knowledge, arguing that God has wishes to provide the world with many necessary and profitable things not only through these women but also through many other women, emphasize Arachne (Pizan 81). Moreover, She valuably stresses Arachne's invented techniques, announcing that these techniques are quite necessary for the world, although many men have reproached women for practicing it (82). In other words, Pizan derogates men's claims of women's intellect and subtlety, stressing the good that comes to the world by women like of Arachne. Furthermore, disapprovingly of Boccaccio's condemnation of her life, Pizan depicts Arachne's inventions as good and beneficial, rather the possessor who controls the usefulness of the inventions rather than the invention itself. Thus, the possessor must use them properly to serve God. However, Pizan, interestingly, ignores the detail of pride. Instead, she emphasizes Arachne's abilities, talents, skills, and favor that improved the world (McKinley 357).

### **2.1.7. Lucretia, Wife of Collatinus:**

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Lucretia is manifested as the chastest and noblest Roman lady, supreme in chastity among Roman women. Lady Rectitude cites her tale to answer Pizan's concerns of men who claim that women's desire to be raped (Pizan 160). Pizan's most readily alternation is her division of Lucretia's story into two parts. However, the segmentation allows Pizan to bring forth and such light in Lucretia's virtue and chastity, in two discussed subjects: women like to be raped, and they beautify themselves to attract men to them through stimulate men's desire (Casebier 41). Although Boccaccio emphasizes Lucretia's chastity, he sheds same importance to her beauty as more in degree, stating that it is not certain whether she seems lovelier than the other Roman Women because of her Beauty of because of her virtue. Yet, his emphasis of Lucretia's sight and appearance suggests the possibility that Lucretia is responsible for her rape. Therefore, she has invited her raper, Sextus, to her by her physical attractiveness. However, although Sextus's desire is featured to be evil, suspicious and wicked, Boccaccio prejudices the reader against Lucretia, suggesting that she is the motive for Sextus to rape her. Pizan's version, in response to Boccaccio, removes any indications of acquaintance between Lucretia and Sextus, in order to swipe away any mis-reading of Lucretia's temptation for her raper (Casebier 42; Boccaccio 101).

Pizan, however, portrays only Lucretia's moral qualities, and depicts Sextus as a wicked lover, who holds a wicked intention for Lucretia. Pizan argues that Sextus deliberately visits the woman when he knows that her husband is absent. Karen Casebies analyzes the seduction scene, saying that Sextus inability to accept Lucretia's rejection of his love demonstrates his own moral devastations. For Pizan insists and increases her heroine's virtue by vividly revealing Sextus's wickedness. In contrast, however, Boccaccio removes any hints that include the evil intentions for Sextus, that he is merely derived by lovesick emotions (Casebier 44). Moreover, Boccaccio's heroine is presented passive in the tale, he allows her to speak only when she kills herself in front of her husband and relatives to save male honor. Lucretia's

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accounts underscores the political focus and the fact that her suicide is to sustain the role of the medieval patriarchy (46). Nevertheless, Lucretia's suicide restores hers and Roman city's honor, but with Pizan's invention of laws, that makes rape a capital crime. Thus, she replaces the moral responsibility for sexual aggression on the phallus. That is to say, Casebier argues, Lucretia becomes a model by which all women may regain their moral integrity and preserve their virtue without restoring to suicide (47). To sum up, Lucretia among other myths and fables presents Pizan technique of re-writing and subverting male writing to what fit and sustain women's character, defying and stressing women's potential to write and raise focal subjects.

### **2.2. Mary Wollstonecraft's Appeal for Social Reform(I reformulate the title)**

#### **2.2.1. Education:**

The book's title, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, signals that it will be concerned with rights, primarily equality of rights between men and women, or at least the very least guarantees women more rights. Her work, on the other hand, seems to be more of a proposal for educational reform than a presentation of gender equality. However, Wollstonecraft's Preface, the letter to Mr. Talleyrand, provides a more detailed summary of the substance of the book (Bergès 19, 22). The preface indicates the objectives of her work, she dedicates it the man who published a pamphlet proposing national education by which he casts women to private education. She does not devote the book to him out of pragmatism, but out of a deep sense that he is the right character to address. Talleyrand agrees with Rousseau that women's personality and character differs from men's, implying that they should be taught differently and separately. Yet, she proclaims that women would be essentially slaves until they have real and equal education;

Contending for the rights of woman, my main arguments is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she

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sill stop the progress of knowledge and virtue; for truth must be common to all, or it will be inefficacious with respect to its influence on general practice. (Wollstonecraft et al 22)

That is to say, she contends that the human race is of the union of two sexes, thus they are the pillars of humanity, and it is quite illogical to superior on over the other. Therefore, education is reasonable for both sexes to acquire the same truth.

Alan Richardson states that Wollstonecraft concerns her treatise with education prominent. As a social reformer as well as political thinker and supporter of gender equality, she places a high value on education (Richardson 24). However, she questions male writers' judgment; Rousseau, Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Gregory—she criticizes in her *Vindication*—who render women as objects of pity, of weakness and ignorance. Richardson argues that education is preeminent in forming individual subject, and Wollstonecraft eventually sees the history of female education as a virtual conspiracy by male educators and writers to make women weaker and less reasonable (Richardson 25). Moreover, Wollstonecraft prioritizes the early education for women because the matter assists them to fulfill her domestic duties either as a wife or a mother.

Nonetheless, she condemns many male writers—Rousseau particularly—for limiting women's education only for the body, thus women should be educated to what fits her, and makes her more feminine and women. She argues against Rousseau's position, saying that girls are forced to sit still playing with dolls and listen to foolish conversations (Wollstonecraft et al 109). She stresses the value of education for children; if children are to be educated to understand patriotism, their mothers must be a patriot, but the education and situation of woman, at present, shuts her out from such investigations (Wollstonecraft et al 22). That is,

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education is the stone corner that would equalize the injustices against women. It stabilizes the gender equality by their value and worth would raise and shine.

On other argument, Wollstonecraft no longer advocates domestic education for children. Moreover, instead of passively relying on adults, children must learn to use their faculties in groups of other youngsters, working to solve problems (Richardson 34). Therefore, boys and girls should be educated together, the same subjects, and treated the same so as to enable them to learn to live together respectfully, thud cast the stereotype of regarding the other sex as strange, hateful and superior or inferior (Bergès 26). Mary Wollstonecraft's writing, yet, bears and advocates education for women from infancy to raise an independent and reliable sex that can match and equalizes the other sex. *Vindication* is more concerned with educational reform than is with establishing political and civil rights. Thus, she noteworthy never states the significance of political or civil rights for women, but she takes her ease and time to state well eloquent arguments about education's worth for women and children (Bergès 30).

### **2.2.2. Slavery**

*Vindication* examines a debate on kind of slavery that depicts female enslavement. Wollstonecraft argues that marriage a reform of slavery, and that wives are consequently slaves to their husbands. Her treatise, furthermore, uses vocabulary from colonial slavery to criticize female enslavement and demand the restoration of inherent rights (Ferguson 125,131). Wollstonecraft announces that men enslave women as wives, as daughters under many reasons; on form of enslavement is by cramping their understandings and sharpening their senses. She means that men make women value their appearances, sensibilities, therefore to be more desirable to men (Wollstonecraft et al 49). She employs the allegory of tyrant government and subjugated subjects to demonstrate kind of relationship is between women and men:

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As blind obedience is ever sought for by power, tyrants and sensualists are in the right when they endeavor to keep women in the dark, because the former only want slaves, and the latter a play-thing... all the sacred rights of humanity are violated by insisting on blind obedience; or, the most sacred rights belong *only* to man. (Wollstonecraft et al 50-51, 111)

However, she criticizes men who claims that women are ignorant, weak, irrational, overwhelmed by sensibilities, and better to be illiterate, asking if their depictions place them in ranks of brutes, why would they rush for them, why would they fight over them, spending great amount of money, time and energy to win them over. They, she argues, should be treated both as objects of love and friendship. That is, Sanderine Bergèes eloquently puts Wollstonecraft's aim; "should men treat women as friends and companions, should they lavish them with praise, fall in love with them, if they consider them to be more than dogs [brutes]?" (Bergès 52-53).

In chapter Two, Wollstonecraft treats the paradoxes of men's attitude towards women as slaves and friends, as well as the vocabulary they employ to characterize these companions. She points to the cruelty underlying the inconsistencies of men writing about women's attitudes and character. Wollstonecraft discusses Rousseau's *Sophia*. He designs her to illustrate what education can do for a female character, and if it is necessary, it should fit her nature as feminine (Bergès 54). In other words, women are must be salves to men because for that purpose God creates them, being submissive to either father or husband. Thus, women's nature is to serve men, to amuse and relax them, so they should learn to obey and to please. However, men are contradicted, they enslave women; while in their writing they raise accusations such women are enslaving men by means of their femininity and sexuality. This is what Wollstonecraft refers as inconsistencies (Bergès 54-55). She stresses that without women's natural rights; they

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have no voice, thus they are enslaved (Howard 63). Women are treated as slaves and expected to be as such. Yet, men never admit the situation.

### **2.2.3. Marriage**

Mary Wollstonecraft, in addition to variety of subjects she treats in her *Vindication*, examines the subjects of women's right and choice for marriage. Sandrine Bergès argues that a reader should ask why women should get married in the first place. Wollstonecraft answers women are not obliged to marry nor have children. Marriage should not be the only option for those who do not have access to financial resources. Alternatively, Wollstonecraft believes that women should be able to work and support themselves without having to sell themselves for a roof over their heads. Moreover, both sexes, she contends, need to neglect their feelings and passion in selecting a partner because marriage cannot survive solely on passion; it requires long-term feelings for one another, the kind that promotes respect, empathy and cooperation (Bergès 146).

Mary Wollstonecraft wants to awake her female readers to the fact that there are duties associated with marriage, and for being satisfied the couples should take their roles as wife and husband seriously; thus marriage for love is not reliable deed (Bergès 146-147). Wollstonecraft states that passion ruins the mind, while the security of marriage lays in tenderness of friendship and the confidence of respect instead of blind motions (Wollstonecraft et al 56).

She criticizes, furthermore, the claim that women are married to please and satisfy men, only. Women are unfit to be a wife or mother if she has been conditioned to please rather than consider her duty. Her argument responds to Rousseau who asserts that women should be raised to be attractive to men and to provide them with a break from business life. He, thus, holds that women need to acknowledge how to dress well, be entertaining and not burden him with serious talk (Bergès 147). Further, she asserts that marriage for sexual please is doomed as well

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as marriage for passion sake (Wollstonecraft et al 54). In Wollstonecraft's time, marrying someone for love means that one, Bergès asserts, have a physical attraction to someone who evokes romantic feelings in the other, but not someone one regularly meets and knows, used to one's personality and character (Bergès 149).

Instead of love, Wollstonecraft recommends friendship. Ruth abbey argues that her depiction of family as a fundamental political institution extends liberal values into the private sphere by promoting the ideal of marriage as friendship (Abbey 78). She calls her female readers to replace that passion with friendship, which builds valid marriage. She utilizes the notion that marriage should include many of the characteristics of friendship, and condemn the traditions and values of romance and family life, and to propose a way for marriage to be redesigned to understand the core liberal value (Abbey79).

### Chapter's Notes:

1. The running section cites from only one source, unless it refers to the otherwise

The source: *The Book of the City of Ladies* by Christine Pizan, translated by Earl Jeffrey Richards in (1982), published in USE by Persea Books.

2. Feminism is belief in and advocacy of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes expressed especially through organized activity on behalf of women's rights and interests. Cited from: "Feminism." Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism>. Accessed 16 Apr. 2021

Proto means before, therefore Proto-Feminism is term used to refer to any feminist activity before the Feminism movement is appeared and defined in the late Twentieth Century.

3. Blindness and Insight are terms by Paul de Man. According to him, the contextual use of the terms is set on Literary Criticism, questioning whether a critic is criticizing the author's deliberate meaning or an author's Blindness. The general context of the deliberate and undeliberate meaning of a text is used in this thesis. For further reading and comprehension, check Blindness and Insight Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism (1971) by Paul de Man. The terms are presented in the essays entitled: The Rhetoric of Blindness: Jacques Derrida's Reading of Rousseau p. 102

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# **General Conclusion**



## General Conclusion

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The dissertation's aims and objectives were about tracing the patterns in which Feminine Writing progressed through British literary history, and exploring the strategies by which Female authors rebel and defy Phallogocentrism. It examined the works of Christine Pizan's *The Book of the City of Ladies* (1405), Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), and Mary Beard's *Women & Power: A Manifesto* (2017).

The study examined the mutual influence between women's language or feminine writing, preserving and stressing women's rights and gender equality. That is to say, the research sought to investigate the following questions: How did Feminine Writing evolve from Medieval period and Eighteenth century to Twenty-First century? And, how did Feminine Writing of Christine Pizan, Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Beard rebel over Phallogocentrism?

In *The Laugh of Medusa*, Hélène Cixous's aim was to bring women into writing. As the founder of "écriture féminine", her theory pressed women to use the same means, which the phallus used to subjugate women's psychology, rights and value. She asserted that the absolute history of writing has been one phallogocentric tradition, which contributed to disturb and to obstruct women's thinking, creativity and innovation. She, therefore, urged women to shatter the masculine oppressing discourses, which govern literature, and writing for ages. However, 'écriture féminine' was indefinable. Cixous did not provide any clear clues or features for her theory. Therefore, this dissertation used the theory as a feature of literary production that was produced only by women. In other words, the study tackled the writing used by women as a definition for the feminine writing.

On the one hand, feminine writing has evolved—in terms of treating the subjects of gender injustices and women's natural rights—from providing sensual arguments in Medieval Ages, to reasonable, rational and logical arguments in Age of Reason, to Twenty-First century period where the writing was focusing on examining and investigating the backgrounds of

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silencing women in position of power and in Social Media. Elaborately, in *The Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine Pizan's writing stressed the ideology of idealizing women, picturing them in a Goddess figure that were capable for many activities, achievements, performances and implications tantamount to men. Thus, her writing provided fables of ladies who were intellect, physically strong, religious, chaste, prudent, wise and philanthropist. Noteworthy, her arguments were based on emotional backgrounds, apparently manifested in her weepy prayers to God for condemning her as a woman rather a man (Pizan 5). She, then, wrote the book to prove women's worth, arguing sensitively, emotionally and excessive polite. In contrast, however, to Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, she used reason to make her arguments valid and reliable. Her treatise advocated women's right for education—though the title suggests advocating a wide range of rights—and stressed that truth must be common to all. In Age of Reason, her arguments were rational, logical and reasonable. However, Mary Beard's *Women & Power: A Manifesto* mirrored the Twenty-First Century period. Her aim was to shed light on silencing women's voice either on Social Media or in public speaking in conferences, parliaments ... so forth. Her writing examined how patriarchy stills ridicule, mock, and derogate women's right for speaking and running powerful positions in the government or businesses. The difference she brought forth that she—as a classist—transmitted the oppression of Greeks and Romans into Twenty-First patriarchy, arguing that man had many years of practice in subjugating women's voice.

On the other hand, writers Christine Pizan and Mary Wollstonecraft in particular, have defied and rebelled over Phallogocentrism in their unique strategies. Christine Pizan chose to re-write male writing that condemns women's character and behavior to raise and bring forth the good qualities of women. Her book's stories were taken from Giovanni Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*. He condemned many women as unchaste, greedy, weak and corrupt. Thus, Pizan re-wrote his stories to underscores women's worth and value, moreover to

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rebel and refute men's claims of women, she re-wrote and reviewed story of Lucretia, Medea, Cicero, Semiramis among many others, presenting through them how strong, chaste, virtue, intellect and wise women can be. Mary Wollstonecraft, on the other way, chose to raise revolution in the society, calling for social reform, particularly educational reform. She condemned the decision of casting women to domestic education to learn what fitted her femininity and nature as women, to be only a house-wife and a mother. She criticized men's claim of the good of private education for women, men such as Rousseau. Moreover, she criticized marriage, arguing that it is a way for women's enslavement. And, she stressed that marriage places women in a position of pleasing objects for men. She called society for re-examining the devastated state of women, advocating that they are human being created by God, too.

Briefly, women were and are kept in the same position: as patriarchy's objects. Thus, they had and have to stand for their natural rights. Language, is the means to fight gender injustices because patriarchy since ever has used language to subjugate them. Christine Pizan's, Mary Wollstonecraft's and Mary Beard's feminine writing is the perfect illustration to rebel, enforce feminine presence and peruse gender equality.

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