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**مخالفت و تخطی: بررسی رمان خانم دالووی اثر ویرجینیا وولف و سیمای  
هنرمند در جوانی اثر جیمز جویس بر اساس دیدگاه نوشتار زنانه ی الن سیزو**

پایان نامه جهت دریافت درجه کارشناسی ارشد

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پایان نامه ی حاضر به بررسی رمان خانم دالووی اثر ویرجینیا وولف و سیمای هنرمند در جوانی اثر جیمز جویس بر اساس دیدگاه نوشتار زنانه ی الن سیزو می پردازد. سیزو معتقد است که این نوع نوشتار را نمی توان در قالب یک نظریه ی قطعی و مشخص بیان نمود و این نوع نوشتار فراتر از گفتمان نظام مردسالار است و نگارنده ی آن افرادی هستند که ساختارهای از پیش تعیین شده ی چنین نظامی را در هم می شکنند. این پایان نامه تلاش می کند عناصر و عوامل مختلفی را که با این نوع نوشتار مرتبط می باشند را مورد تفسیر و بررسی قرار دهد.

واژه های کلیدی: فمینیسم فرانسه، نوشتار زنانه، سیالیت، تخطی، جریان سیال ذهن

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دانشگاه لرستان  
دانشکده علوم انسانی  
گروه زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی

# الیناسیون در رمان آبی ترین چشم تونی موریسون خوانشی بر اساس دیدگاه روانکاوی فرانتس فانون

پایان‌نامه‌ی ارایه شده در بخش تحصیلات تکمیلی گروه زبان و ادبیات انگلیسی دانشگاه لرستان  
برای دریافت درجه‌ی کارشناسی ارشد در رشته‌ی ادبیات انگلیسی

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*To all the people who made me suffer*

*May they open their eyes...*

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## Abstract

This dissertation aims at the analysis of the novels *Mrs Dalloway* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in regard to Cixous' concept of *l'écriture féminine*. According to Cixous, this style of writing cannot be put in a clear-cut theory. The selected novels by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce incorporate elements of transgression, resistance and subversion of the hierarchical structure of masculine ideological system through characters whether male or female who in their actions and attitudes transgress and subvert the masculine representational system. Both novels in their poetic narrative which incites fluidity and multiplicity of meaning are shown to display Cixous's conceptualization of the subversive power of feminine writing.

**Keywords:** French feminism, *l'écriture féminine*, Hélène Cixous, fluidity, transgression, subversion, phallogocentricism, stream of consciousness technique, multiplicity of meaning

# Chapter one

## Introduction

### 1.1 The aim and the scope of the study

It was in the twentieth century that a systematic feminist criticism in tandem with women's rigorous struggle for their political rights in society was established. To date feminist criticism has covered a wide variety of issues related to Marxism, psychoanalysis, gender theory and linguistic domain. The present study focuses on the Cixous' concept of *l'écriture féminine*, within the tenets of French feminism, influenced by post-structuralist thinkers such as Derrida, Foucault and Lacan in the Novels of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Hélène Cixous' concept of *l'écriture féminine* outlined in her poetic manifesto "*The Laugh of the Medusa*" refers to a style of writing which breaks free of the dualistic thinking of masculine economy and its phallogocentric language centered on the phallus as the transcendental signified, placing women in a position inferior to man who are considered the dominant voice in the history of Western thought. This style of writing "is highly metaphoric and celebratory in tone, exploiting the rhythmic and sound qualities of the language in a way that highlights its physicality. But it also

appears to be potentially "violent" in its attempts to disturb the binary hierarchies of phallogentrism and the tightly logical grammatical hierarchies of complex syntax." (Jeannette King, *Women and the Word*, 2000, 53)

Miriam Brody in (*Manly Writing*, 1993, 3) argues that a good writing in Western culture is exclusively associated with men. Writing that is "plain, forceful, and true" and reflects their best selves in the field of writing. "Selves that are productive, coherent, virtuous, and heroic". In contrast with such writing lies Cixous's revolutionary feminine writing that is meant to voice the suppressed female body and sexuality. All through her essay Cixous invites women to write and bring women to writing. Although she says the history of writing is intertwined with the history of reason but women should break down all obstacles and venture writing. According to Cixous although one cannot formulate and pin down a single formula for *l'écriture féminine* but certainly this kind of writing does exist and its practitioners are those who "are breakers of automatism, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate." In the novels *Mrs Dalloway* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* which are analyzed in chapter 3, we can identify such figures like Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith and Stephen Dedalus. They are iconoclastic characters who oppose, resist and transgress the codes and norms of their society embedded in the social system.

Cixous has been decried by feminists accusing her of biological essentialism which is based on the idea that one's sex is determined by biology. Feminists oppose such essentialism that regards women as the weaker sex and consider it a way for the oppression of women in the patriarchal society. Because Cixous highlights the difference for women and her works mostly deal with "exploring the possibility of a

feminine writing or a writing said to be feminine, of defining and enclosing masculine and feminine libidinal economies"(Katherine Binhammer, Metaphor or Metonymy? The Question of Essentialism in Cixous, 66), these feminists argue that she similarly emphasizes the position of women as the other. Although many philosophers like Gatens support Cixous' argument by debating that this is a policy utilized by Cixous to undermine the phallogentric system of male dominated society, they do not totally accept it. Cixous herself disapproves of the violence of language and says " The word 'woman' holds me captive. I would like to wear it out."(Cixous qtd in. Binhammer, 65)

Chapter two deals with the theoretical background of the study including the genesis of feminism, feminist movements in Britain, America, and France and also the prominent figures in each movement who have largely contributed to development of feminist movement Starting with the first wave feminism in Britain and America and later on the French momentum in France. Also it provides an outline of the major influences upon French feminists and in the second part it draws attention to Cixous' life and its impact on her writing career, the concept of *l'écriture féminine* in terms of poetic language, body and laughter.

Chapter three presents an analysis of the novels written by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce respectively tracing the characteristics of *l'écriture féminine* identifiable in the forms, themes or content of the novels in the light of Cixous' delineation of feminine writing in her writings. Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* is characterized by the narrative of transgression and resistance towards the codes of masculine ideological

systems that dictate the individuals to follow a definite, normal course of action. But Clarissa Dalloway and Warren Septimus Smith are the ones who fail to conform; as a result their narrative discourse serves to undermine the hierarchical discourse of masculine representational system. Also the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* revolves around the thoughts and introspective mediation of Stephen Dedalus who as an exile and outsider rejects the ideological forces of religion and politics, the codes of morality and propriety. Through his artistic use of language, his subversion of the laws of society, the poetic narrative of Stephen forms a kind subversive force in the masculine representational system. Moreover, his "supple periodic prose" suggest multiplicity, fluidity and recycling, aspects attached to the female body and female writing."(Bonnie Kime Scott. *James Joyce*, 1987,116)

Chapter four is devoted to the concluding remark which presents a concise result of what was discussed in the previous chapters.

## Chapter two

### **The theoretical background of the study**

#### **2.1 First and second wave in Britain and America**

Feminism as a systematic social, political, and cultural movement gathered momentum in America and England during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Nevertheless Feminism's origins date back much earlier to the time of Ancient Greece, traceable in the oeuvre of writers like Sappho and Aristophanes' play *Lysistrata* and afterwards in Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* and seventeenth century writers like Aphra Behn and Anne Bradstreet who were the first to claim their positions as women writers in world's literature and many more who contributed to the movement. Susan Osborne explains that the initial movement of women in the history of Western world was started in the year 1798 when the French revolution took place. She goes on add other writers like Pizan "the first Western woman to live by her pen" (*Feminism: A Very short Introduction*, Margaret Walters, 2005, 19) that anticipated and contributed to the development of women's movement much earlier:

There were quieter examples of women who not only made their own way in the world but also protested against the inequalities between the sexes. Christine de Pizan (1364-1430) was a Venetian writer whose book *Treasures of the City of Ladies*, a collection of snippets of advice to women, is still

quoted today. Pizan refused to accept the male certainties that women were both inherently weaker than men and more likely to fall into evil ways.

(Osborne, *Feminism*, 2001, 9)

She also talks about Mary Astell(1666-1731) who three centuries later gave voice to the issue of the inequality between men and women in marriage, "perhaps the earliest English feminist text". She also discusses women's deprivation of educational system necessary for them. As Margaret Walters puts it" radical only in her perception of the way women's lives were restricted by convention, and their minds left undeveloped and untrained. (Walters, 26)

The totality of movements within feminism is unanimously divided into three categories, first wave feminism, second wave feminism and third wave feminism, each dependent on the other for its ultimate formative power in political and social arenas. Although one cannot pin down the precise borders of feminism, as Rosemarie Tong writes in her book (*Feminist Thought*, 2009, 1) feminism is an umbrella term that defies rigid classifications:

Since writing my first introduction to feminist thought nearly two decades ago, I have become increasingly convinced that feminist thought resists categorization into tidy schools of thought. Interdisciplinary, intersectional, and interlocking are the kind of adjectives that best describe the way we feminists think.

But as she maintains, the diversity of labels of the 'feminist thought' are indicative of the fact that Feminism is not just a 'monolithic ideology'. Moreover they make it



possible to designate different attitudes, positions and approaches feminists have utilized to explain women's oppression in a patriarchal society and also what they have to offer as solution. The term 'feminist' was first coined in 1895, following Sara Grand's concept 'New Woman' to picture a new generation of self-sufficient women who surpassed the traditional impediments of their ordinary marital life. It is Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the rights of Women* that is regarded as the genesis of modern feminism. In addition to Wollstonecraft's contribution, one can mention John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* and earlier, in the nineteenth century, women's Suffrage movement that together shaped liberal feminism of this period. The issue of women's suffrage occurred from the 1830's onwards and more frequently from the 1860's. Wollstonecraft's main concern was directed against the erroneous ways in which girls were reared in society and emphasized the importance of education for middle class women that enabled them to be eligible and rational members of society in which they had an influential role as mothers. "Taught from their infancy that beauty is a woman's scepter, the mind shapes itself to the body and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adore its prison." (Wollstonecraft, qtd in. Walters, 33)

In 1850's, an organized feminist movement was evolved in Britain that addressed women's problems in private and social sphere. 'First wave' Feminism refers to the pioneering movement that targeted at women's social and legal inequalities in the nineteenth century. It mostly dealt with the injustices that women suffered from in their private lives including education, employment, the marriage laws and the plight of intelligent middle class women and aimed at equal opportunities for women. Some of the important achievements of this period are: access to higher education for girls

that allowed them to participate in formal national examinations, reform in employment opportunities that brought about the admission of women to medical profession that was previously exclusive to men, reforms in married women's property rights, also child custody rights and regulation of sexual morality. But the right to vote was not achieved in this period and was finally fulfilled in 'Second wave' feminism.

Two prominent figures of this period who had an important role in the development of feminism are: Virginia Woolf, whose ideas were adopted and expanded by many future feminists and Simone- de Beauvoir, who according to Maggie Humm, with her work *The second Sex* (1949) the 'first wave' may be said to end (Raman Selden, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary theory*, 1989, 207).

Woolf as the mother of modern feminist literary criticism is highly acclaimed for her two outspoken critical texts *Three Guineas* and *A Room of One's Own* (1929) that are deemed significant for the development of feminist theory. Debrah Parsons in (*Theorists of the Modernist Novel*, 2007, 1) writes: In her nine novels, innumerable critical essays and reviews, and extensive autobiographical writings, Woolf persistently explored and experimented with the boundaries of literary convention in order to express more fully the qualities of conscious experience". Woolf points out that women's writing is determined by the economic and social conditions they live in. according to Woolf, these factors in addition to the conventional attitudes towards the role of women in society, form obstacles that prevent the intellectual work done by women. As Woolf states in *A Room of One's Own* "there was an enormous body of

masculine opinion to the effect that nothing could be expected of women intellectually". Furthermore:

It is fairly evident that even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist. On the contrary, she was snubbed, slapped, lectured and exhorted. Her mind must have been strained and her vitality lowered by the need of opposing this, of disapproving that. For here again we come within range of that interesting and obscure masculine complex which has had so much influence upon the women's movement.

(A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf, 1929)

Moreover, she is also well-known for her concept of a 'woman's sentence' that to some extent reverberates Cixous' more radical concept of *l'écriture féminine*.

Recent readings of Woolf, Rachel Blau DuPlessis's Writing Beyond the Ending, and Karen Kaivola's All Contraries Confounded: The lyrical Fiction of Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes, and Margaret Duras follow a popular trend in contemporary feminist criticism. Influenced by such writers such as Hélène Cixous who argues for the development of an *écriture féminine*, and Kristeva who urges the destabilization of the symbolic order through a reintroduction of semiotic and maternal drives, DuPlessis and Kaivola argue that Woolf's work embodies a revolutionary potential that is psychosexually determined.

(*Reflecting Woolf: Virginia Woolf's Feminist Politics and Modernist Aesthetics*, Helen Polychronakos, 1999, 66)

Although she refused to be considered a feminist, her ideas inspired many feminist theorists to come. Her exceptional use of discourse manifested in her stream-of-consciousness narrative disrupted the traditional discourse of her time and enabled her to voice women's experiences in ways typical of women and their writings.

Claiming "human character changed," Woolf accuses Bennett and the other Edwardians of ignoring the change. *Life* itself had to change in response to the changing nature of modern, urban and post-Freudian experience. Sharing the same interest with other contemporary women writers such as Dorothy Richardson and Katherine Mansfield, Woolf attempted to break significantly with the traditional conventions of literature. She argued persuasively and strongly for a rejection of materialist writings of the Edwardians who "have given us a house in the hope that we may be able to deduce the human beings who live there". (*Towards a Feminine/Feminist/Female Discourse of Virginia Woolf*, Jing-yun Huang, 2004, 37 and 38)

What Woolf aspires for women is a room of their own, one which men for centuries have possessed, "a space, a room of her own, a sanctuary to which the women writer can escape. This space can be literal- a room in a home- or figurative- time in which she can focus on her creative efforts."(*Towards an e-Critique Feminine*, Deborah Silverman Boven, 2004, 62)

Second wave feminism signifies the appearance of modern feminism following the Second World War, beginning with the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's influential book *The Second Sex* in 1949 which is considered a significant