

**FROM SIMILITUDE TO THE BEYOND  
ALTERNATIVE FEMALE SUBJECTIVITY IN “DEAR  
SHAMELESS DEATH” VIA MAGICAL REALISM**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to explore a close reading of magical realist novel *Dear Shameless Death* by Latife Tekin. The thesis aims to reveal the distinct literary discourse of the novel so as to launch on a feminist re-reading. My thesis is organized basically in three chapters. In the first chapter of theoretical framework, I initially focus on M.Foucault's (Renaissance) similitude episteme so as to elicit the distinct metafictional characteristic of *Dear Shameless Death*. Next, I explore magical realism which is a significant strategy of metafiction. These two perspectives, combined together, encourage a distinct metafiction of Foucauldian similitude. Last of all, my thesis tries to connect all this distinction to *feminine écriture*— with a strong reference to French feminist critic and writer Hélène Cixous. Thus by analyzing Latife Tekin's novel my thesis engenders a distinct literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death* as possible feminine magical realist writing.

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# INTRODUCTION

*Once a djinned girl, now an ash-breasted bird am I,  
Stretching out my wings deep in the Akçalı sky,  
Onto frail grass I fall, to the prickly star I fly,  
Oh star, laments are pursuing me.  
Oh star, there's fear in my every fancy.  
Oh hide me away, dearest star.*

Tekin, 2008.

Latife Tekin is one of the prominent authors of contemporary Turkish fiction. In this thesis I aim to analyze her magical realist<sup>1</sup> work *Dear Shameless Death* (1983). I aim to explore the use of magical realism from multilateral perspectives, which in the end will lead us to a profound feminist re-reading of the novel.

*Dear Shameless Death* with its amalgamation of magic and reality has been recognized as the milestone in Turkish contemporary literature during 1980's and afterwards. It narrates the traumatic migration of a Turkish family from rural to urban. The novel revolves around the life of Aktas family and focuses on their hardship to adjust themselves to the ongoing modernity in urban life. In *Dear Shameless Death* stems from Anatolian folk tales, myths, Islamic and Pre-Islamic narration.

My thesis explores different literary perspectives. This will enable us to reveal the distinct literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death*—in terms of both its language and the formation of an alternative female subjectivity under patriarchal constraints.

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<sup>1</sup> Magical realism is a postmodernist literary mode. It is the amalgamation of magic and reality; irrational viewpoint and rational viewpoint. It presents the magical happenings, extraordinary events as if they were real, not losing the connection with reality. (Maggie Bowers, *Magical Realism*, 2004: 22-23)

My thesis is situated within three chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to the theoretical framework and the following two chapters relatively make a close analysis of *Dear Shameless Death*.

Initially I will focus on Michel Foucault's Renaissance episteme based on resemblance and similitude. I choose to explore this area since *Dear Shameless Death* includes similitudes derived from Anatolian folklore and mythic. According to Foucault, in the sixteenth century, it is resemblance and similitude that play a vital role in the construction of knowledge and language. Similitudes, forms of resemblances, are scattered in the vast universe and communicate as well as mirror each other in an endless circle: plant talking to animal, earth mirroring sky, man talking to other beings. In relation to knowledge, language also partakes in the world of resemblance, reflected back to itself. It is condemned to knowing only the same. (Foucault, 2002:36.). Thus I could claim it is in this sense self-reflexive and turns to be a metafiction of Foucauldian similitude.

In the second part of my theoretical framework I will explore the term metafiction and then its variant as magical realism. Latife Tekin uses amalgamation of magic and reality while creating a metafiction of similitude episteme. This is an quite an alternative use of similitude episteme. To be more precise magic in the novel breaks the analogical relations of resemblances. Thus magical realism carves a *difference* upon Foucauldian notion of similitude: a distinct metafiction. This is also associated with the transgressiveness of this mode of writing so as to subvert monological structures. Amalgamation of magic and reality is indeed used by contemporary writers in order to attack dominant ideologies and the authority.

Relying on my theories, initially in my thesis I will argue that magical realism intertwined with similitude episteme turns *Dear Shameless Death* into a *distinct* metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse.

It is also this distinct metafictional narration and magical realist language that reveals the feminist insights of *Dear Shameless Death*. I must note that magical happenings combined with similitude are attributed to the female in the novel (the young female protagonist Dirmit and her mother Atiye). They follow resemblances in the universe so as to go against repressive male authority. As it will be analyzed, they use magic as a female resistance against all kinds of suppression surrounding them. This resistance definitely engenders an alternative female subjectivity under patriarchal and political constraints.

As seen, these mentioned theories are closely intertwined with each other. Indeed they form a circle, always referring to one another. In my thesis, to close down this circle and to back up the feminist perspective of *Dear Shameless Death*, I will try to connect all these theories to the notion of *feminine writing*— with a strong reference to French feminist critic and writer Hélène Cixous.

Cixous, as it will be deeply analyzed, launches a deconstructive critique of the phallogentrism and advocates for an *écriture féminine*—a feminine practice of writing. She attacks binary oppositions (such as passivity-female vs. activity-male) and attempts to subvert masculinity as an origin source of creativity. In doing so, she has a distinct quest for using language. Her language is fluid, non-linear, highly poetic, and wrapped around intense metaphors creating a difference within monolithic truth. Thus, according to Cixous, creating ruptures or finding holes in the narrations could be a solution of breaking the structure of language which oppresses as well as excludes women.

Indeed Cixous's feminine practice of writing intersects with both transgressiveness of magical realist writing and the distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse. *Dear Shameless Death*, significantly with its magical realist narration, highly evokes Cixous's literary style. As it will be analyzed, the novel creates as a strong rupture within a language which excludes women. Thus I argue that it brings us the possibility of (feminine) magical



realist writing. This perspective also intersects with the alternative usage of Foucault's similitude episteme for the explicit feminist purposes. In the novel it is the female characters, mostly the young female protagonist Dirmit, who use this episteme alternatively to create a distinct female subjectivity and to challenge the patriarchal constraints. Thus the similitude episteme goes hand in hand with possible (feminine) magical realist writing, bringing a difference to both itself and the female. In a broader scope I argue that magical realist language combined with the alternative use of similitude serves for *Dear Shameless Death's* distinct literary discourse for a feminist re-reading.

The major reason why I choose to bring these different dimensions together in *Dear Shameless Death* is definitely the flexibility of its narration. Contemplating Foucault on similitude episteme is indeed a big challenge for this project. It goes parallel to the magical dimension in the novel, mostly deriving from Anatolian folk tales. However, magical realist language of *Dear Shameless Death* also creates a rupture in this similitude episteme via *female characters' struggle against male oppression*. This double play definitely adds to the feminist perspective or feminist purposes of the novel, which has not been addressed so far within such paradigm.

Even though Latife Tekin has written seven novels after *Dear Shameless Death*, the novel has still being discussed and analyzed from different viewpoint regarding literature. It has been discussed in relation to broad sociological themes such as literature, poverty, migration and planned urbanization. Or it has been analyzed within the critique of literary realism as opposed to the amalgamation of magic and reality in the novel. However, there are not many studies on the feminist perspective relating to the novel. Indeed Tekin has been a focus of attention with her female characters (the young female protagonist Dirmit, the spiritual mother Atiye) since the release of *Dear Shameless Death*. However, this focus has been limited only in terms of narrow descriptions of female characters' repression under

cultural-patriarchal constraints. Thus, in my thesis, I wanted to bring aforementioned theories together and reveal the multilateral literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death*. Moreover, associating a possibility of (feminine) magical realist writing with the novel is a challenge for the contemporary Turkish literary studies revolving around more or less the same debates for years.

In relation to time and space constraints I focus only this particular work of Latife Tekin, although her other<sup>2</sup> works could be analyzed within magical realist writing. However, *Dear Shameless Death* is also her major piece allowing us to reveal strong feminist insights intertwined with other set of theories such as similitude episteme and magical realism.

Apart from the theoretical frame and aim of my thesis, I would also like to give some information about the plot and magical realist motifs of *Dear Shameless Death*. They will give us illuminating insights while focusing on the deep analysis.

### ***Magical Word of Dear Shameless Death***

The plot of the novel is relatively simple as opposed to its metaphoric narration. Huvat, the father, is an adventurous and illiterate man who always leaves his family behind and goes to city in order to bring some new “inventions” to the village such as a bus, a television, a water pump and etc. However, one day he comes with a woman from the city and surprises all the villagers. Atiye, the literate woman whom Huvat marries, falls into the scene from a harsh exclusion language. Afterwards she finds her own female resistance language so as to cope with her husband as well as the villagers. In the village she gives birth to four children: Nuğber, Halit, Seyit, Dirmit and Mahmut. Amongst them the language Dirmit, the youngest female daughter, is the one who develops her own female resistance against her repressive parents in a distinct way than her mother style. The life the family leads in the village is intertwined with magical happenings and reality. Spiritual or magical happenings are accepted

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<sup>2</sup> Berci Kristin-Tales From Garbage the Hills (1984), Swords of Ice (1986 )

as an ordinary part of the village life. The family's life totally changes when they migrate from rural to urban for better prospects. However, the family, significantly the father Huvat and the brothers Halit, Seyit and Mahmut quickly fall into unemployment and thus the migration misery ongoing in the urban language. The family has to move to a little house with one-room, now having one more member—the daughter-in-law. Since then Atiye starts to rely on the spiritual and magic even more than she does in the village so as to cope hardships of urban life. However, as it will be seen in the following chapters Atiye's way of coping with the struggles causes Dirmit's oppression as well. Atiye, who never questions her own sacred and magical world, keeps a harsh eye on Dirmit. However, the novel ends with Atiye's death. Tekin also includes a significant historical account as a background to *Dear Shameless Death*. The military coup d'état of 12 September 1980<sup>3</sup> also plays a vital role as a background notice in *Dear Shameless Death*. This period ultimately symbolizes the absolute repressive perspective relating to all kinds of agency in Turkey language. It will be influential significantly on female characters in terms of their silenced status.

Drawn from the Turkish colloquial language, Turkish oral story telling tradition, Anatolian folklore, Islamic and Pre Islamic narrations, we can see many motifs and figures in *Dear Shameless Death*. It is important to introduce them briefly as some of these motifs will be associated with Foucault's similitude episteme in my thesis.

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<sup>3</sup> Turkish historian Sibel Bozdoğan states that "the military intervention was a response as well as an outcome of unstable political situation of the era. Extremes on both side—basically leftist, nationalist and religious—caused murder and other forms of violence. There were right-wing and left-wing armed conflicts. On 12 September 1980, General Kenan Evren of the National Security Council and the four service commanders decided that they would overthrow the civilian government:" *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey 1997* Thus, Turkish Armed Forces, headed by General Evren declared coup d'état on the national channel. This was the third coup d'état in the history of the Republic. This period was the absolute beginning of a repressive and non-democratic period lasting 3 years with strict censorship dominantly affecting social, political and scholar life.

Literary critic of Turkish Literature Berna Moran traces Anatolian as well as Ottoman sources which have influenced Tekin's writing. (1998) Magical happenings in the novel, mostly traces back to The *Book of Dede Korkut-Dede Korkut Stories*<sup>4</sup>, *Evliya Celebes's Book of Travels*<sup>5</sup> and Deli Dumrul-Crazy Dumrul Stories. However, literary critic Sema Aslan claims that it is *Dede Korkut Stories* which Tekin has been influenced the most in terms of motifs and language.

In *Dear Shameless Death* most of the sacred motifs initially derives from *djinn* motif. In Islamic as well as in Pre-Islamic folkloric tradition djinns are considered as "supernatural fiery creatures". They have their own will and they either said to be corrupted, devilish or well-behaved and good. They are mostly mentioned in Qur'an. The corrupted evil djinns, as mentioned in Islam or folkloric tradition, said to lead humans go astray. Tekin uses usually this djinn motif as a subversive tool in order to emphasize the notion of otherness associated with the female, as it will be shown in depth analysis in the following chapters.

Another magical figure in *Dear Shameless Death* is the fair-haired witch girl called *Sarıköz*. This figure appears in the early part of the novel. Tekin uses this motif as a challenge against patriarchal society. Sarıkız appears naked on a back of a donkey and has strong spiritual powers on the male. She frightens the villagers and drives the male villagers mad by her excessive or catastrophic femininity. Her main aim is to have control of men in the

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<sup>4</sup> A major pre-Islamic epic about Oghuz Turks originated in Central Asia, dating back approximately to sixteenth century.

<sup>5</sup> Refers to the famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi's journeys lasted for forty years around the neighborhood of Ottoman Empire. Robert Dankoff from University of Chicago refers to the book as follows: "*Book of Travels* is the longest and fullest travel account in Islamic literature perhaps in world literature. It is also a vast panorama of the Ottoman world in the mid-seventeenth century. The core is an autobiographical narrative, full of adventure and humor." (*Turkish Philology and Evliya Çelebi's Book of Travels*, 2008).

village. This is subversive language feminist strategy of Tekin so as to underline the patriarchal assumptions of society relating to the female.

Tekin also uses religious male figure “Hızır Aleyhisselam”, who is seen in Islamic and Pre Islamic narrations as a faithful servant of God. He appears in both *Dede Korkut Stories* as well as in *Dear Shameless Death* as a rescuer. However, as it will be analyzed in the following chapters Tekin creates a playful narration relating to this specific Islamic motif and at some point compares this male religious figure with a spirited female rescuer—as the female version of Hızır Aleyhisselam.

Another important magical motif tracing back to now *Deli Dumrul* is the Angel of Death—Azrael. In the novel we see tragic-comic scenes of the mother Atiye with the Angel of Death—Azrael. Sema Aslan summarizes the parallelism as follows: “Atiye is a woman who is always anxious about her husband and children, she carries the whole weight of the family because of her husband’s ignorance and therefore, she is always in grief. Thus, she becomes ill frequently and meets the Angel of death four times. When Azrael comes, he sits on her chest, examines her heart and informs her that her time of death has come. Every time, Atiye manages to extend her life span by bargaining or fighting with Azrael. This motif is similar to the one in “Deli Dumrul.” Israel sits on Deli Dumrul’s white chest just as he sat on Atiye’s and Deli Dumrul also starts to bargain with Azrael to save his life. Azrael accepts Deli Dumrul’s offer only on condition that Deli Dumrul finds someone else who would give his life to Azrael instead.” (Aslan, 2008).

In addition to aforementioned motifs, probably the most visible Anatolian folkloric influence in the novel is talking to other beings like plants, wind, sea, moon, stars and etc. Significantly it is the female protagonist Dirmit who communicates with the nature or creates a vivid

dialogue with the other beings, so to speak. This position is mostly derived from the restrictions or oppressive attitudes of the family towards the young growing girl. Thus Dirmit seeks for a resolution or a solid way of escape in the nature itself. We can see similar traces in *Dede Korkut Stories* as well: "...in *Dede Korkut Stories*, the feeling of helplessness pushes the characters to seek understanding from other beings. When Salur Kazan sees his house plundered after he returns from hunting, first he speaks to his land, then to water and a dog. Uruz, before being executed by his enemies, wants to speak to a tree..." (Aslan, 2008). This motif is alternately repeated in *Dear Shameless Death* through the female protagonist Dirmit. This motif, as it will be analyzed, also relates to similitude episteme in terms of communication with other beings in nature. The nature draws everything to its side: plant talking to animal, earth talking to sky or man talking to other beings. I can say that most of the similitudes in *Dear Shameless Death* stem from this folkloric narration, *Dede Korkut Stories*.

The last motif tracing back to Anatolian folk tradition is divination or interpretation of dreams. Dreams attributed to Atiye refer to the foreshadowing of events in *Dear Shameless Death*. Atiye, with her ability of divination has the power of predicting the future. Divination is also seen in similitude episteme. This motif is, according to Foucault, inherent in knowing things.

As seen, Latife Tekin retells the old narrations by magic in a matter of fact manner.. This kind of literary amalgamation has not been on the stage of contemporary Turkish literature language until her presence during 1980s. Thus, with her new approach to Turkish literature by moving away from literary realism, *Dear Shameless Death* has been discussed for the last twenty years.



## CHAPTER 1: LITERARY DISCOURSE OF DEAR SHAMELESS DEATH

This chapter explores different literary theories intersecting with each other. Utilizing these theories I aim to reveal the distinct literary discourse and the formation of alternative female subjectivity in *Dear Shameless Death*.

Initially, I will focus on Foucault's similitude episteme in *The Order of Things*, his second chapter "Prose of The World". As I have mentioned in my introduction, *Dear Shameless Death*'s narration includes Foucault's description of similitudes. The novel's narration is dependent on resemblances and similitudes revealing each other in an endless way. Each form of similitude in *Dear Shameless Death* is reflected back to itself mirroring each other. Thus in this sense, the novel turns to be self-reflexive. As it will be analyzed in the following sections, this self-reflexivness turns *Dear Shameless Death* into a metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on similitude. Thus, in the second place I will focus on the definition of metafiction and its narration in my theoretical framework.

While creating a metafiction of similitude episteme, Tekin uses the amalgamation of magic and reality. As mentioned in my introduction, similitudes in *Dear Shameless Death* derive from Anatolian folk tales and myths which form the magical realist narration of the novel. This mode of narration is important since it carries the metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse to one step further. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, magical realism makes the novel's language expand outwards instead of entrapping it within itself through repetitive resemblances. Thus magical realism carves a *difference* upon Foucauldian notion of smilitude. Mentioned as my argument in the thesis introduction section, the whole magical realist novel now turns into a *distinct* metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse. I call it *a return* to Renaissance episteme with a *difference*, which I will deeply analyze in the



following chapter.

Within this frame, I will then focus on the definition of magical realism in my theoretical framework. *Dear Shameless Death* with its magical realist language also strongly attempts to subvert the singular version of reality and male authority in the novel. At the end of my theoretical framework, I will also focus on the transgressiveness of magical realism through contemporary female writers.

### **1.1 Resemblance and Similitude-The Prose of the World**

In order to understand how similitude episteme functions alternatively in *Dear Shameless Death*, this section is dedicated to Foucault's particular work *The Order of Things*<sup>6</sup> and the second chapter "The Prose of the World". It focuses on the description of similitude episteme in relation to knowledge and language.

Primarily, Foucault argues that in Renaissance epistemology, resemblance and similitude<sup>7</sup> play a crucial as well as constructive role regarding Western culture: "...it was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible and controlled the art representing them. The universe was folded in upon itself: the earth echoing the sky, faces seeing themselves reflected in the stars and plants holding within their stems the secrets that were of use to men. Painting imitated space... and representation –whether in the service of pleasure or of knowledge- was posited as a form of repetition: the theatre of life or the mirror of nature that was the claim made by all language, its manner of declaring its existence and formulating its right of speech." (2002:19). Here, as it is understood, knowledge is grounded

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<sup>6</sup> As mentioned in introduction section as well, I will focus not any other chapters of *The Order of Things* but merely the second chapter "The Prose of the World" due to the expediency of similitude episteme and its alternate function in relation to *Dear Shameless Death*.

<sup>7</sup> Here, in this chapter I should note that Foucault uses "resemblance" and "similitude" more or less synonyms of each other: "Resemblance signifies what it is indicating; that is a similitude" (*The Order of Things*, 2002:32).

in resemblance. According to his opinion the world holds on to itself by the absolute power of resemblances. Here, Foucault takes up another concept similitude and uses it as a synonym for resemblance, stating that resemblances are no more than form of similitude. He uses similitude in order to emphasize the organization of the figures of knowledge. Things resemble each other and they are established as forms: “The semantic web of resemblance in the sixteenth century is extremely rich...and there are great many notions that intersect, overlap, reinforce or limit one another on the surface of thought. It is enough for the moment to indicate the principal figures that determine the knowledge of resemblance with their articulations. There are four of that are, beyond doubt, essential.” (2002:20). Thus Foucault names four of these similitudes as follows: *of: conventia*, *aemulatio*-emulation (a sort of convenience), analogy and sympathy.” (2002: 20-27). These similitudes sometimes overlap and intersect each other. They usually reinforce each other and thus they are not very separate from each other. Indeed they form a circle for Foucault. This circle is fold in upon itself, reflect itself and makes us comprehend that the world should be understood in terms of resemblances.

The first form of similitude is *convenientia*. It is the communication of things, movements, influences, passions and properties within a spatial relation. Here place and similitude intertwines. In this way a resemblance between two things occurs. (2002:20). Moreover, Foucault claims that the world turns out to be “the universal convenience” of things linking together like a pair of chain: “In the vast syntax of the world, the different beings adjust themselves to one another; the plant communicates with the animal, the earth with the sea, the man everything around him.” (2002:20). Thus in this way, movements and influences in the universe communicate each other, drawing themselves together. In close connection to this, the second form of similitude is indeed a sort of convenience which is

called *aemulatio*. It is not very different from *conventia*. The slight difference is that it does not need to be spatial. Thus It is mostly achieved by means of “reflection and the mirroring”: “It is the means whereby things scattered through the universe can answer one another: “The human face, from afar emulates the sky and just as man’s intellect is an imperfect reflection of God’s wisdom, so his two eyes...the relation of emulation enables things to imitate one another from one end of the universe to the other without connection or proximity: by duplicating itself in a mirror the world abolishes the distance proper to it; in this way it overcomes the place allotted to each thing.” (2002:22). Here Foucault states that there are images in the world which function as a “natural twinship” of each other. For instance stars prevail the plants of the earth and dark earth is the reflection of starry sky. Thus, emulation is considered as a form of reflection establishing a circular connection with each other rather than a series of chain like *conventia*.

The third form of aforementioned similitude according to Foucault’s analysis of Renaissance episteme is analogy. This form is an old concept tracing back to Greek science and medieval thought. Foucault argues that in analogy *convenientia* and *aemulatio* are superimposed “... its power is immense... it can extend from a single given point to an endless number of relationships.” (2002:22). in analogy the forms of similitude goes beyond mere visibility. It is the more subtle set of resemblances. To illustrate this, Foucault depicts a world of relations relating to the notion of “shining”: “...the relation of the stars to the sky in which they shine may also be found: between plants and the earth, between living beings and the globe they inhabit, between minerals such as diamonds and rocks in which they are buried... an analogy may also be turned around upon itself.. The old analogy of plant to animal (the vegetable is an animal living head down, its mouth or roots buried in the earth)...” (2002: 24). Thus, with this disclosure of Foucault, it can be conceived that analogy goes beyond visibility and all the figures in the earth could be intertwined to each other, bringing

forth a more embracing similitude. In close relation to this inclusiveness, the last form of similitude is sympathy. Foucault argues that for sympathy, neither distance nor any kind of link is prescribed. It is indeed distinct in terms of its absolute free flow: “Sympathy plays through the depths of the universe in a free state. It can traverse the vastest spaces in an instant... it can be brought into being by a simple contact...it excites the things of the world to movement and can draw even the most distant of them together... It is a principle of mobility; it attracts what is heavy to the heaviness of the earth...” (2002: 26). While bringing forth his claim Foucault makes use of an illustration of “mourning roses” used in obsequies. The mourning roses may bring sorrow and pain, to those who smell it, merely due to their former association with death. Thus, instead of a spatial relation or a mirror like reflection, there is a movement which draws things towards one another, in a metaphorical sense, as the phrase goes. Sympathy, therefore, shall hold as an instance for *the same* as Foucault contends (2002: 26). He also claims that sympathy has a penetrating effect of assimilation in terms of turning things into more or less identical pairs of each other. In other words, for Foucault “sympathy transforms. It alters... to a homogenous mass, to the featureless of the same: all parts would hold together and communicate with one another, without a break, with no distance between them...” (p.27). this is a continuous interplay between things resembling each other and drawing into to one another in an endless circle.

However, for Foucault, with these four similitudes the circle is not yet closed. There cannot be resemblances without the world of signs carved upon the universe. Signature, for Foucault, is the basis of decoding the universe: “Knowledge of similitudes is founded upon the unearthing and decipherment of these signatures... Resemblance was the invisible form of that which, from the depths of the world, made things visible...there must be a visible figure that will draw it out from its profound invisibility” (2002:29-30). Therefore signature indicates the way to another resemblance. An example of how signatures find their way to

resemblances could be described as follows: “Emulation may be recognized by analogy: the eyes are stars because they spread light over our faces just as stars light up the darkness...” (2002:31).

Thus, with the acknowledgment of signatures revealing set of resemblances, the similitude circle is closed. Resemblance requires its signature and when it has its signature, it can reveal other resemblances: “Every resemblance receives a signature; but this signature is no more than an intermediate form of the same resemblance...As a result the totality of these marks, sliding over the great circle of similitudes, forms a second circle which would be an exact duplication of the first..” (2002:32). Thus as it is seen, knowledge in sixteenth century always follows the path of similitude. Foucault states that it is both limitless and poverty-stricken. It is limitless since it never remains within itself. It always allows for another set of resemblances revealing each other. It is poverty-stricken due to its return to the “same” knowledge: “Knowing anything but the same thing”. (2002:34).

Here in relation to knowing things, Foucault draws the line between the microcosm and the macrocosm while deciphering signs. Microcosm is the concrete and the visible world with the man in the center: “it provides all investigation with an assurance that everything will find its mirror and its macrocosmic justification on another larger scale.” (2002:34). This relation indicates that there is greater and a divine world. That is the macrocosm. The relation of microcosm to macrocosm is important in knowing things: “microcosm adjusts itself to the “infinite richness of resemblance... between signs and their meanings...” (2002:35). Therefore, for Foucault the relation of microcosm to macrocosm is crucial in order to set the guarantee of knowledge and its expansion.

Here, the magic<sup>8</sup> and divination are also important so as to guarantee the knowledge during Renaissance episteme. Foucault argues as follows: “To us it seems that sixteenth century learning was made up of an unstable mixture of rational knowledge, notion derived from magical practices...we have already seen how very meticulous the configurations are that define its space. It is this rigour that makes relation of magic to erudition inevitable—they are not selected contents but a required form...The form of magic was inherent in this way of knowing...” (2002:35-37).

Referring to all information mentioned above, for Foucault the sixteenth century episteme is now closed down through “knowing anything but the same thing and to knowing that thing only at the unattainable end of an endless journey.” (2002:33-35).

The following section will focus on similitude episteme now in relation to the “writing of things” and thus “literature”. This information will be influential so as to reveal the distinct language of *Dear Shameless Death* in the following chapter. *Dear Shameless Death* is a distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on similitude. In order to reveal what this “literary discourse” means, it is important to understand language and literature in similitude episteme.

## **1.2 Resemblance and similitude via language and literature**

### **1.1.1 The Writing of Things**

This section will explore the similitude episteme in terms of writing and language. It will complete the whole understanding of similitude episteme in terms of words’ relation to the

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<sup>8</sup> Magic here indeed refers to “Natural Magics”, a part of the occult—knowledge of hidden— which occupies an important place in Renaissance era. It refers to the control of natural forces. (Boas Hall, 1994). However, regarding *Dear Shameless Death* it both refers to controlling hidden natural forces—earthly things—and spiritual things such as djinns or angels.

world. Foucault argues in Renaissance episteme the writing of things “is rather an opaque, mysterious thing, closed in upon itself... because things themselves hide and manifest their own enigma like a language and because words offer themselves... to be deciphered... Language partakes in the world-wide dissemination of similitudes and signatures; therefore be studies itself as a thing in nature; like animals, plants or stars its elements have their laws of affinity and convenience, their necessary analogies.” (2002:39).

Foucault depicts a system in which language has its own closed existence with specific structures. They relate to the forms similitude. This position is also reinforced by literary critic Simon During. He claims on Foucauldian similitude as follows: “language alone forms the system of existence... precisely repetition, deferral, scarcity—in a word of finitude...the way that labyrinthine language moves towards infinity attempting to cover, explain, delve into everything but falling and doubling back on itself...the same...”(During, 1992:79). Therefore, following the path of During’s explanation on *Foucault and Literature*, Foucault perceives the Renaissance language as something scarce, closed upon its finitude and thus “doubling back on itself its finiteness... because it finds interiors, resonances and analogies where there are only surfaces...” (During,1992: 80). Thus, language of this specific era finds itself caught between texts and various interpretations merely via contemplating the “Same”. It is seen that experience of language connotes the knowledge of things and nature in Renaissance episteme: “To know the things was to bring to light the system of resemblances that made them close to and dependent upon one another. In the same way... language sets itself the task of... attempting to say things about it are similar to it, thereby bringing it into existence the infinity of adjacent and similar fidelities of interpretation...”(2002:46).

Therefore with this explanation, Foucault traces back the being of language in the Renaissance episteme as follows: “... it is ternary, since it requires formal domain of marks,

the content indicated by them and the similitudes that link marks to the things designated by them; but since resemblance is the form of the signs as well as their content, the three distinct elements of this articulation are resolved into a single form...it is found in the experience of language...” (2002:47). As it is seen with this explanation signs of the things relating to the language turn out to be a mere play of resemblances and thus language returns to itself; referred back to its infiniteness—with no doubt in relation to ever ceasing similitude. This is the nature of writing for Foucault in the sixteenth century episteme.

Furthermore, Foucault goes on to suggest that “literature” today reflects the Renaissance episteme. The writing of things and thus literature is somehow designated through reduplication of signs: “It may be said in a sense that “literature” as it was constituted and so designated on the... modern age manifests at a time when it was least expected, the reappearance of the living being of language... The art of language was a way of making sign—of simultaneously signifying something and arranging signs around that thing... therefore and then by means of reduplication.. of enclosing and concealing it...And yet throughout the nineteenth century and right up to own day—from Hölderlin to Mallarmé and on to Anatonin Artaud— literature achieved autonomous existence... by finding its way back from signifying function of language to this raw being that had been forgotten since the sixteenth century.. “(2002:48). Thus with this long quotation, it could be said that literature has a tendency, for Foucault, to bring language back to its “forgotten being”.

This position is also reinforced by Simon During on *Foucault and Literature*, stating that, “According to Foucault, modern literature, therefore is not characterized either by its self-reflexivity or by its use of mimesis... but by its dispersion into a number of linguistic events (texts and utterances) each incommensurable to the other. *This* is the being of language...” (During, 1992: 86). Therefore, under the light of this statement modern



literature and the language itself are derived from a number of linguistic events interwoven to one another, probably returning to the same thing or knowing merely the same thing. Within this approach literature and language disappear within the flow of texts and utterances, which all never cease to reflect the resemblance and analogy—even at present for Foucault.

I have tried to give a brief summary of Foucauldian similitude episteme since this will be an important tool to reveal *Dear Shameless Death's* distinct narration and language. However in *Dear Shameless Death*, this metafictional self-reflexivity is narrated with the amalgamation of magic and reality. Thus similitude, causing self-reflexivity in the novel, becomes a part of this amalgamation. As it will be analyzed, this amalgamation carries the novel to the beyond of similitudes. It designates a distinct literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death*: distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on similitude.

Therefore, the following section will focus on the description of metafiction. While introducing metafiction, I will briefly mention postmodernist literature since these two terms are closely related to each other in terms of narration strategies. Then I will focus on magical realist writing—which is the amalgamation of magic and reality attributed to *Dear Shameless Death*. This amalgamation is one of the significant variants or strategies of metafictional narration. Eventually I will try to bring a feminist perspective to magical realism by exploring the transgressive feminist strategies to subvert the fixed notions of reality, truth or authority.

### **1.3 Metafiction and its variant(s)**

#### **1.3.1 Postmodernist Literature as an overarching term**

Before introducing metafiction, its strategy magical realist narration and related feminist

perspectives, this theoretical section will initially refer to “postmodernist literature”. Postmodernist literature indeed embraces both metafiction and magical realist writing in terms of narrative strategies. Since *Dear Shameless Death* is a postmodernist fiction including metafictional strategies, it is important to trace the basic characteristic of postmodernist literature. Following this brief introduction on postmodernist literature, I will concentrate on a brief definition of metafiction and its importance in terms of feminist representations in literature. Following this, I will demonstrate metafiction’s close connection to magical realism. Finally I will make a brief account of transgressiveness of magical realist writing significantly for the female writers.

Postmodernism, as a term, is difficult to define and of crucial importance in contemporary or avant-garde literature. Here, rather than a rigid opposition to modernism, postmodernism is indeed a playful and parodic continuum of modernism with its quest for playfulness rather than a quest for a meaning within a chaos as in modernist fiction.

Postmodernism is the abundance of play, plurality as well as fragmentation as Edmund Smyth puts forward: “...it is any creative endeavor which exhibits some element of self-consciousness and reflexivity... Fragmentation, discontinuity, indeterminacy, plurality, metafictionality, heterogeneity, intertextuality, decentring, and dislocation, ludism: these are the common features... However, from common usage it is clear that “postmodernism” has been adopted by many commentators as means of describing the contemporary novel in general...” (1991:9).

With this claim, it is understood that postmodernism shall be seen as a continuation of modernism with now its aforementioned distinct features significantly including its playful characteristics. Smyth quotes Bertens as follows: “... it is precisely this ontological uncertainty which is central to postmodernism: It is the awareness of the absence of centers,

of privileged languages, higher discourses, that is... the most striking difference with Modernism.” (Smyth, 1991:10). Thus, in a strong sense, postmodern texts become their own narrations holding their own rights with these aforementioned features. Thus, with this position a strong sense mobility relating to literary narrations occurs. Moreover, the borders amongst literary genres get fluid as Lyotard puts forward: “A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher; the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules and they cannot be judged according to determining judgment by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for.” (Smyth, 1991, p.14). Therefore, texts turn out to be an arena of multiple, intersecting as well as conflicting voices. McHale suggests that any stable world mirrored by the text is fragmentary and usually refer to the competing reality of language (Smyth, 1991). Thus, postmodernist fiction neither begins with a set of prescribed rules like modernism nor with centering a world; yet breaks down the a-priori affinity as well as analogy within the outside world and the things inside. Here, instead of the absolute presence we have the competing reality of language that brings forth difference and dispersal and thus absence. Hassan suggests the importance of absence and unmaking in *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Towards a Postmodern Literature* and states that hierarchy, narratives or grand histories, transcendence, centering, boundaries are all replaced by metafictionality, anarchy, play, immanence dispersal, intertextuality and so forth with his representative table (1983:112-113).

Thus, postmodernism with its playful characteristic and plurality leads us to a distinct function of literary language as opposed to literary realism. Metafiction is one of the important kinds of postmodernist fiction. It brings fact and fiction together and blurs the boundaries between them mostly with its self-reflexivity. As mentioned before, *Dear Shameless Death* is the distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on the

similitude episteme. Therefore, the following section now focuses on metafiction. Then I will explore its significant narrative strategy which is the magical realist writing—the narrative style of *Dear Shameless Death*.

### 1.3.2 Metafictive Characteristics

“Fiction is woven into all...I find this new reality (or unreality) more valid.”

John Fowles, 1970.

As it is clearly seen from the summary above, metafictional narration is somehow entwined by postmodernist literature. Re-thinking and re-reading of boundaries amongst fact and fiction is associated with the term metafiction. This association is also related to the literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death* as the distinct metafiction based on Foucauldian similitude.

To be more precise, as it will be analyzed, it is the Foucauldian similitude episteme which creates the metafictional narration in *Dear Shameless Death*. This metafictional narration is a kind of postmodernist fiction mostly due to its creative power as playfulness and self-reflexivity. That is why I call postmodernism as an overarching term at the beginning and bring them together.

Throughout this whole chapter, I will also make a depth exploration of magical realist writing. Magical realism is one of the significant narrative strategies of metafiction and thus embraced within postmodernist literature. More significantly it is the literary style of *Dear Shameless Death*. As it will be analyzed, magical realism definitely adds a distinction to the metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse. This is achieved in relation to both the novel's

language and its feminist purposes. Thus at the end of this whole section I will aim to encourage the transgressiveness of magical realist writing, significantly for the female. While doing this, I will focus on contemporary women writers who use magical realism for their feminist purposes: to subvert monolithic truth— male authority, so to speak.

Therefore, that is how I aim to assemble postmodernism, metafiction, magical realism and Foucault's similitude episteme under the same roof. Indeed, as mentioned, they are dependent on each other and form a chain relation creating a distinct and multilateral narration.

To begin with, literary critic Patricia Waugh argues for metafiction as follows: "Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text." (1984: 2). To be more precise she states that metafictional works are those which "explore a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction" (2). Therefore with this statement, the construction of the text is assimilated into the very fictional process itself. Thus within this procedure, the reader becomes much aware that meaning is merely constructed primarily through internal *verbal* relationships. (1984: 23).

Another literary theorist and critic Mark Currie agrees with Waugh's aforementioned definition. He claims that metafiction indeed is not considered as the only kind or variant of postmodern fiction and it cannot be precisely defined within the boundaries of any kind of art, a historical period or any kind of total ideological or political position (1995:15). Metafiction is indeed attributed to the very idea of constructed meanings rather than

“representable essences”. (1995:15).

The term metafiction is indeed originated by American critic and self-conscious novelist William H. Gass in 1971 and it is based upon the notion of self-exploration on *the traditional metaphor of the world as book*: “If our knowledge of this world is now seen to be mediated through language, then literary fiction (words constructed entirely of language) becomes a useful model for learning about the constructed notion of reality itself.”(Hutcheon: 1998). Thus, now the fiction itself is aware of its own artefact that it is indeed a fiction. This awareness functions through various interplays within fiction—pastiche, parody, intertextuality, amalgamation of magic and reality and etc. These are indeed metafictional display and strategies achieved by “tending to be real or reality tending to be fiction”. Waugh claims for this characteristic as follows: “What we need is not great works but playful ones... A story is a game someone has played so you can play it too... All art is play in its creation of other symbolic worlds; fiction is primarily an elaborate way of pretending and pretending is a fundamental element of play and games (Waugh, 1984:34). Therefore, metafiction makes the playful feature of fiction explicit. Within this playfulness the most distinct characteristic between fiction and play is the creation of an alternative reality by manipulating the relations amongst signs relating to the outside world. Thus stemming from this position, Waugh’s definition of metafictional language is not indexical. However significantly, the language reminds readers that it is an “artefact” via various playful ways. Therefore according to Waugh, metafiction undermines the conventions of realism as well as subverts a system of a priori set of signs relating to the world outside.

This whole definition of metafiction also engenders an alternative worldview against the monolithic structure of literature, mostly founded in male dominant thinking. This is the crucial point where feminists take up metafictional narration so as to go against the

chronological-linear and thus phallogentric language of contemporary fiction. In this sense we can trace the gendered perspective of metafiction. Linda Hutcheon characterizes this perspective as follows: "...it is the subversion of the stability of point of view...the disintegration of bourgeois, patriarchal subject." (Hite, 1992). In close connection to this statement, Gayle Greene claims that feminists who take up metafiction embark on "revisions" or to write "the beyond": "The protagonist looks to the literary tradition for answers about the present, speculates about the relation of the "forms" to her life and her writing; seeks "an ending of her own"... seeks freedom from the plots of the past...or in questioning something new..." (1991). Thus according to her, metafiction is a powerful tool so as to challenge the conventional codes of literary discourse which is indeed situated in patriarchy. For Greene, if metafiction is attributed to the constructed meanings, the codes of literary discourse therefore can be changed by questioning the traditional literary conventions.

This position will be analyzed in deep detail when focusing on the alternative nature of magical realist narration within metafiction. By using metafictional strategies such as the amalgamation of magic and reality, notable contemporary women writers attempt to develop an alternate female subjectivity against an absolute patriarchal subject.

Taking everything into consideration, metafiction strongly suggests the constructedness of the world outside and asks "which is a world I live and how can I know it" via calling forth possible alternative worlds. One of these alternative worlds refers to the amalgamation of magic and reality in narrations. As *Dear Shameless Death* relates to both distinct metafiction of similitude episteme and magical realism, the following section focuses on a brief definition of magical realism as a metafictional strategy. Then I will attempt to show the transgressiveness of this narrative mode significantly for feminist purposes and for bending accepted gender roles in relation to fact and fiction. This attempt is important so as to reveal the feminist

perspective of *Dear Shameless Death*.

#### **1.4 Magical Realist Narration- Definition, Background.**

Magical realism in contemporary literature is an oxymoronic term. It includes conflicting discourses: magic and realism. It is a distinct mode of narration significantly including intense folkloric and mythic traditions, extraordinary and magical happenings. Thus, to a high degree, it is the amalgamation of fact and fiction—a variant or a specific strategy of metafiction.

As it includes extraordinary or magical elements, the term magical realism is often confused with other modes of narration: surrealism or the genre of fantastic. Thus, assigning the boundaries amongst these modes in a brief way is important considering *Dear Shameless Death*'s language. Surrealism, as Bowers argues, is most distinct from magical realism since it is associated not with “material reality” but pure imagination of mind expressing the inner life of humans via art. (2004:24). the other mode of narration, fantasy, relies upon extraordinary events but leave a space for readers' hesitation as well. That is, in fantastic narration, extraordinary events are not narrated within a realistic viewpoint. Thus readers oscillate between natural and supernatural explanation within the fiction. This leads a suspicion or even frustration in relation to understanding reality and fiction (Bowers, 2004:25).

Nevertheless magical realism has evolved as a subjective mode of narration without losing the accurate as well as organic chain relating to reality. It is intertwined with writers' own personal interpretation of reality, notably mixed with extraordinary and magical elements. Thus it is important to clarify the notion of magic in this mode of narration. Magic,



refers to any kind of irrational and spiritual element or an event which is then not approved by rational knowledge. Nevertheless, magical realism enables a representation of extraordinary or magical happenings relying on the notion of reality. Therefore it is widely acclaimed as a distinct creative sub-genre of literary realism (Bowers, 2003:30).

In a broader scope, magic is defined as follows: “In magical realism, magic refers to any extraordinary occurrence and particularly anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational science. The variety of magical occurrences in magical writing includes ghosts, disappearances, miracles, extraordinary talents and strange atmosphere but they do not include the magic as it is found in a magic show.” (Bowers, 2004:20). In a magical realist writing, as opposed to the illusion or sense of extraordinariness of magic shows, there is the realm of reality as “something extraordinary has happened.” (Bowers, 2004:20). Therefore magical realism relies upon the real so that imagined or magical elements are represented as real. Extraordinary events or tales are thus presented in a realistic way through a realistic story. Therefore, magical realist happenings neither makes readers feel unaccustomed to narration itself nor they leave a space for any kind of hesitation or irritation in relation to fact and fiction. Bowers explains this as follows: “Not only must the narrator propose real and magical happenings with the same matter-of-fact manner in a recognizable realistic setting but the magical things must be accepted as a part of material reality, whether seen or unseen. They cannot be simply the imaginings of one mind... or for the purpose of exploring the workings of the mind...” (Bowers, 2004:31). Thus, magical realist narration have a realistic setting and imaginary becomes the ordinary part of reality—usually presenting a problematical time-period in relation to various themes such as migration, post-colonization race, ethnic issues and gender.

This kind of narration with the amalgamation of magic and reality is associated with

metafiction—which creates interplay between fact and fiction. Both metafiction and magical realism places itself between art and reality. Indeed, literary critic Robert Scholes popularizes metafiction as an overarching term for the novels which reject literary realism with their distinct creative strategies (Currie, 1995:25-26). Thus, magical realism with its rejection of literary conventions is the distinct narrative strategy of metafiction.

While most people associate magical realism with Latin America during 1950's-1960s and significantly with Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) its origin indeed traces back to early 1920's German art. German artist as well as critic Franz Roh coined the word "magic realism"<sup>9</sup> in 1925 and made strong references to post-expressionist painting. According to Irene Guenther, Roh never gave the concise definition of magic realism; yet explained it within the boundaries of post-expressionism. As Guenther claims, Roh insistently rejects expressionism which all refers to the absolute hyperbolic reflections in art with abstract and fantastic elements within it. For Roh, according to his own concept of "new objectivity" differing from expressionism, this position is explained as follows: "the thing, the object must be formed anew. The term magic as opposed to mystic is meant to imply that the "secret" should not enter into the realistically depicted world but should hold itself back behind this world..." (Zamora&Faris,1995:35). Magic, for Roh, means neither a back quest for spirituality in an "ethnological "sense nor a "demonic irrationalism"; yet it is rather related to "an authentic rationalism". That is, his definition refers to a magical rationalism amongst the things outside as well as inside the world. (Zamara&Faris, 1995: 35). Therefore, with Roh's clarification of magic and the real, there is a more tangible real and the familiar art concerning itself. For Roh, it is important to grasp the *mystery* of the object through the painting in a *realistic* way. Thus from this point of articulation, magic functions as a complementary element of the real; yet it does not totally

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<sup>9</sup> After Roh's definition of "magic realism" as a form of a visual art, it then shifts to the "magical realism" in a literary sense.

occupy the real. The real stands side by side with magical happenings. Magical happenings are considered as a part of the real world. However, they are accepted with neither hesitation nor any kind of irritation as opposed to fantasy.

As literary critics of magical realism Zamora and Faris argue, initially pictorial in origin, this amalgamation of reality and magic launches its way onto literature in diversified forms. Thus it is widely adopted in contemporary literature as well (so as to name, some critics say tracing back to Kafka. Then Jorge Luis Borges, French-Cuban Alejo Carpentier<sup>10</sup>, Julio Cortazar, Günter Grass and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie, Arundathi Roy, Laura Esquivel, Maxine Hong Kingston, Toni Morrison, Isabel Allende and Angela Carter.)

Concerning magical realism in literature, suggesting that it could be attributed to a specific place would be misleading as Bowers argues. Since it is a narrative mode and a way of a solid approach towards literature, it should not be confined within a single geography. However since Roh's definition of the term, magical realist narration is initially promoted by Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli (1878-1960) in a literary sense (Zamora&Faris: 1995:61). However soon afterwards, this distinct narrative mode starts to capture mostly Latin America, including significant fiction writers; considerably French-Cuban Alejo Carpentier (1904-80) and Arturo Uslar-Pietri (1906-2001), who are said to be the first magical realist writers in the region of Latin America.

Nevertheless, the literal boom relating to magical realism comes forth with Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marque. Bowers refers the literal boom as follows: "Because Latin America has a form of postcolonial relationship with Europe and particularly in relation to the

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<sup>10</sup> Indeed it is Alejo Carpentier who initially introduces magical realism in terms of fiction. However, his description of the term is different relating to the distinct status Latin America since he proposes "marvellous realism" instead of "magical realism" of Europe: Because of the virginity of the land, our upbringing, our ontology, the Faustian presence of the Indian and the black man, the revelation constituted by its recent discovery, its fecund racial mixing [*mestizaje*], America is far from using up its wealth of mythologies. After all, what is the entire history of America if not chronicle of the marvellous real?" (Bowers, 2004:35). Thus he defines this distinctive characteristic of Latin America as (American) marvellous realism.

colonial power of Spain from whence many of its inhabitants migrated, it has had, until the mid twentieth century, a relationship with Europe that placed in on the margins of European perception, knowledge and culture. The shift away from a position of marginal cultural production... coincided with the development of magical realist fiction in Latin America... known as the boom of 1950s and 1960s...” (Bowers, 2005:33). Thus this boom writing of 1950s, more or less originates the roots of magical realist writing in Latin America. Within their narration, most of them as Philip Swanson notes: “want to reproduce a popular rural perspective—challenging the hegemony of the alien, dominant imported culture and reinstating the value of community’s own perspective.” (Bowers, 2005: 43).

Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s writing, however, has marked a new direction in Latin America fiction for the “new novel” or Latin Avant-garde. His *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is the turning point of this new novel: combination of folklore and pueblo—common people— with experimental writing (Bowers: 2005: 39). As Bowers argues: “Garcia Marquez’s writing has an overwhelming atmosphere of nostalgia and magical happenings such as the birth of a child with a tail occur as a matter of everyday reality.” (39-40). *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a family history that expresses Marquez’s own cultural context. The novel traces back to story oral telling which relates to Marquez’s grandmother. Bowers quotes Marquez as follows: “I realized that reality is also the myths of the common people, it is the beliefs, their legends; they are their everyday life and they affect their triumphs and failures...” (Bowers: 2005: 40). Thus, the main sources for Marquez’s magical realism have its strength from the author’s childhood memories bringing forth two important features: a confusion of time scales that suggests a mythic time referring to a mixture of superstition, gossip and exaggeration. (Bowers: 2005:40). The second feature relates to extraordinary incidents such as the birth of a child with a pig’s tail as a result of incest, which all narrated in

matter-of-fact style. Thus magical happenings are considered as ordinary things related to the world lived which characters live in.

Moreover, Marquez depicts a world of historical tragedies which includes civil wars, the rule of a dictator or an act of brutality. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is an account of banana workers' strike in Marquez's coastal region during the civil war when the army shot and killed many of the strikers. Bowers claims as follows referring to the novel: "Due to the denial by the military regime that the event took place, a lack of official records... the exact number of workers killed is not known..." (Bowers, 2004: 41). Thus, Marquez, here takes up the denial issue so as to create an interplay including a massacre: "...although the massacre is witnessed by Jose Arcadio, he can later find no one to agree with what he saw and massacre becomes a myth of little interest to the people." (41). Here as it is argued, massacre becomes a sort of denial which a play is acted upon a "complete ignorance". Thus, as Bowers argues, Marquez's magical realism functions a kind of a measuring tool reflecting the manipulation of reality by a corrupt government. Here, Marquez's magical realism mirrors a kind of political power which is all corrupt and sunk into violence. Therefore his magical language turns out to be a solid challenge as Swanson notes: "... must be a political question of reinterpretation of reality, utilizing the oral inherited from his grandmother's fantastic storytelling, Garcia Marquez seems to want to reproduce traditional, popular rural perspective—challenging the hegemony of the alien, dominant important culture and reinstating the value of the community's own cultural perspective." (1995).

This mentioned statement of Swanson will be important while focusing on *Dear Shameless Death*'s attempt for subverting the dominant cultural and political perspectives of Turkey. Latife Tekin, like Marquez, retells the traditional rural story from a challenging perspective in relation to politics of Turkey during 1970s-1980s. Thus magical realist texts are

transgressive in terms of subverting the linear account relating to history and culture.

Apart from Latin America, as for male writers, probably the best known writer in English speaking region is the British-Indian Salman Rushdie. He spiritedly accepts the influences of Marquez in his distinct way of writing. Magical realism has found its way in European region primarily in Canada in the early 1970s. Then it has become widespread in West Africa, South Africa, United States, India and England. (Bowers: 2005: 47). Rushdie traces both Roh's surrealist tradition and mythic-folkloric tradition of magical realism attributed to Latin America. However according to Bowers, what usually refers to European magical realism is the opposition to (British) colonialism in countries such as Canada, Australia, West Africa and the Caribbean. Thus for Rushdie using the amalgamation of magical elements and reality turns out to be a strategy for attacking the "assumed superiority of British colonialism". For example, with *Midnight's Children* (1981), Rushdie elicits a modern epic, even historiographic<sup>11</sup> meta-epic due to his own distinct status as an immigrant to Britain: "... provides the best illustration of a novel that attempts to provide a modern epic for a country that in the space of fifty years moved from a new confident nation full of the promise of its diverse gifts to a nation conscious of its own failings and on the verge of breaking down into a multiplicity of conflicting factions..." (Bowers: 2005: 54). Thus, both as a main character and a narrator of the *Midnight's Children*, Saleem tells his own tale as well as India's tale while working in a pickling country. He witnesses many magical happenings. Here, magic notably functions as a profound tool to reflect Rushdie's status as an insider and as an outsider of both cultures. As Bowers argues, Rushdie takes this hybrid identity and combines it with magical realism. Thus he challenges the authoritative history by

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<sup>11</sup> It refers to the historiographic metafiction which Linda Hutcheon describes as: "Historiographic metafiction is one kind of postmodern novel which rejects projecting present beliefs and standards onto the past and asserts the specificity and particularity of the individual past event. Historiographic metafiction attempts to demarginalize the literary confrontation with the historical and it does so both thematically and formally." (122-123). Thus, it refers to the recognition of an alternative organization or reworking of the past in relation to fiction.

creating plural conception of Indian. (Bowers, 2005:55). With magical realism, Rushdie has his political dimension towards the people who live in the margins. Magical realism here functions as an important tool to attack the singular version of truth and it recreates the history from the marginal perspective with a highly fragmented narration—a metafictional strategy combined with magical happenings.

Magical realism, including both the world of real and unreal or magic, definitely functions as a subversive narrative mode in terms of gender and language as well. It disrupts the fixed categories of (monolithic) truth, reality as well as history attributed to the male. Thus this mode of narration may easily sprawl into the formation of alternative female subjectivity within contemporary male narration. In the following section, the transgressiveness of this magical realist will be introduced significantly through female writers and from a gender perspective. I can argue that Marquez's and other related male magical realist writing do not concern gender issue and the alternative portrayal of woman significantly under social and political unrest. Thus, it is the female writers of Latin America or Britain who adopt magic for their explicit feminist purposes. This adaptation challenges the position of women from the "other" and enables a reinterpretation of the female under economic, political and emotional dependence.

## ***1.5 Transgressiveness of Magical Realism via Contemporary Female Writers***

### **From Silence to Sound—another way of knowing things**

Magical realism, besides used by male writers, is principally adopted by female writers, significantly ranging from Latin America to India, Britain, Africa and China. Principally it is

used to emphasize their own experience relating to multiple cultural paradoxical statuses. This obviously relates to the notion of cross-cultural woman status. For instance, as Bowers claims, African-American Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison, deliberately writes to underline her cultural context as African American: "...Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977) all have magical realist elements including the arrival of an *abiku* child, the presence of ghostly figures from the past, women with magical powers born without navels... these magical happenings are incorporated... to create a specifically cross-cultural African American cultural memory ... to rebuild a sense of an African American community at a time of crisis when the majority of the African American population seem to be held in a position of economic and spiritual poverty." (Bowers, 2004:58).

Thus, with this statement women engender a critical commentary on the hegemonic society and elicit an alternative voice for themselves under economic, social or cultural constraints. Feminist literary critic Brenda Cooper states that African women writers usually adapt folktales or create mythic stories so as to express their suppressed passions and to reveal their politics. (1998:40). Moreover, Toni Morrison tell us that her novel *Beloved* (1987) is a profound attempt so as to reinterpret the memories as well as stories of slavery notably from the perspective of female slaves. Bowers explains this perspective as follows "... she uses magical realist device of a revenant ghost child in full bodily form to bring back the memories of the heavily traumatized escaped slave... *Beloved* becomes a symbolic of all women who were enslaved. She is also the symbol of all the women who are under the water drowned or thrown dead overboard in Atlantic during the middle-crossing journey on the slave ships from Africa, to who Morrison dedicates her novel." (Bowers, 2004:81).

Another important cross cultural female writer of magical realism is Chinese-American Maxine Hong Kingston. She finds herself entrapped between the racist Anglo-European



American and male dominated Chinese American cultures. In her novel *The Woman Warrior: a Memoir of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (1976), she uses magical realism to reflect her position as an insider relating to the past time of Chinese America's history. She retakes the issue of past which is said to be a taboo and rewrites it including Chinese oral story telling traditions and tales of ghosts. This creates an alternate Chinese American communal memory in the novel. The whole story turns to be the narrator's alternate journey revealing her distinct subjectivity— from a cross cultural Chinese American perspective.

The crucial point that differentiates female magical writers of contemporary fiction from male magical writers is their “intention” in relation to their story narration. Adopting this distinct mode of writing enables female writers to develop their legitimate difference in terms of unsilenced (female) subjectivity under patriarchal constraints. Marquez, Borges, Rushdie or Carpentier do not deal with the woman issue considerably under cultural, social or political unrest. They narrate cross-cultural perspectives mostly influencing one another. Or their writings revolve around on hybrid identity, culture and life relating to margins. They attempt to distort the monolithic truth, reality or history and bring forth various realities via *male protagonist*.

However, while it is true that female writers do get indulged in aforementioned issues, Bowers notably advocates for the flexibility of this mode of narration: “... One can claim that magical realism is subversive because it alternates between the real and the magical using the same narrative voice. In this sense, magic remains identifiable as magic and real as real but unlike in a realistic narrative they are given the same serious treatment... on the other hand, one can claim that magical realism is transgressive since magical realism crosses the borders between magic and real to create further category...” (Bowers, 2005:67). Thus, in order to create further (plural) categories relating to woman question, this kind of narration gives an

alternative female voice against the (male) mainstream narration.

Zamora and Faris also note the subversive side of magical realism in order to clarify the appropriateness of this mode for female writers: “Magical realist texts are subversive: their in-betweenness, their all at oneness encourages resistance to monological political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful for writers... increasingly to women... for magical realism is a mode suited to exploring—and transgressing —boundaries whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical...” (Bowers, 2005:67). In close connection to this statement, as literary critic Kum Sangari argues, blurring the boundaries amongst monological, political and cultural structure and distorting the perception of reality advocate for female writers. She claims that these ways enable female writers to create a “difference” within the world ruled and controlled by the male (67-68).

Furthermore, feminist critics of magical realism perceive this narrative mode as “vocabulary of otherness that have been denied of power and thus silenced.” (Bowers, 2004:68). Feminist critics take this issue from the position of “the passive female versus the active dominant male”. Thus they question and attack the assumptions of male dominated culture and patriarchal authority which attribute woman negativity.

Two significant contemporary female writers, Chilean Isabel Allende and British Angela Carter use magical realism to engender a female subjectivity under social and political suppression. They create an alternate reality intertwined with magic, myth and folkloric tradition. For the ongoing analysis relating to *Dear Shameless Death* it is helpful to have a look at their distinct writing eliciting feminist purposes, since we find similarities amongst them in terms of the use of magic to create alternate status relating to the female.

Isabel Allende (1942) who is associated with previous president Salvador Allende of Chile writes Chile's history from the *female point of view*. In her novel *The House of the Spirits* she depicts the turbulent time of Chile during a coup in 1973. As Bowers states; "The novel portrays Chile descending into a horrific situation and clearly positions itself against the final coup of the right-wing government, which can be interpreted of Pinochet. "(2005:71). Initially magical realist happenings in the novel refer that it is a fiction. In addition to this position, Allende associates magical realist happening with the female characters of the novel; significantly with Clara. Her "clairvoyance" is not haphazard, literary critic Patricia Hart argues. Indeed it is very much linked to the political situation of Chile under the Pinochet government: "Allende emphasizes the fact that the right-wing dictatorship in her novel attempts to manipulate the population by fearful predictions of the future and political failure..." (Bowers, 2004:73). Thus in this way, according to Bowers, Hart proposes that the ability of women predicting the future in the novel reveals the "fraudulence of government's claims and undermines its influence over the people" (72). Moreover, magical happenings in the novel lessen with the male characters as Allende uses magic for feminist purposes. Bowers, paraphrasing Hart, explains this position as follows: "Magical realism in *the House of Spirits* is associated with the women of the novel and lessens with the domination of the male world of political violence in Chile... this is a form of feminist criticism of the patriarchal control over the women's lives that she calls "magical feminism..." (Bowers, 2004:73). Hart, according to Bowers, also states that women find another source of power such as telepathy against the violent male power: "Magic is alternately used or withheld to make a point about the economic and emotional dependence of women at certain time periods.. " (75). Thus, Allende's magical realism strongly attempts to subvert the political (male) authority of the era.

In a similar way, Angela Carter (1940-1992) attacks the authority of male British ruling class. Apart from her writings which re-tell the traditional fairy tales—such as Blue Beard, Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White, Beauty and the Beast and etc— from a spirited feminist perspective, particularly with her novel *Wise Children* (1991) she subverts the patriarchal upper class by foregrounding the female-illegitimate working class. Bowers summarizes this position as follows: “...the novel follows the story of two music hall dancers who are illegitimate and unacknowledged twin daughters of a high-cultured Shakespearean actor... They are raucous and crude with language, preferring to speak in slang, whereas he is an orator and speaks with precision, perfect elocution and sophisticated vocabulary. Although they are elderly the twins insist on accentuating their sensuality by the clothes they wear, going against the patriarchal idea that older women are no longer sexually attractive... The magical realism in the novel is a mixture of excessive acts such as catastrophic sex and their excessive liveliness...” (Bowers: 2004:70). Thus, Carter engenders an interplay amongst legitimate versus illegitimate, working class versus upper class or the female versus the male. She turns the system of binary oppositions upside down and questions the patriarchal definitions of these relations. Or with her another novel *Night at the Circus* (1984) with her extraordinary female character Fevvers—a winged bird-like woman— attempts to subvert the male representations of women mostly through the amalgamation of fact and fiction. She uses metafictional techniques of intertextuality and parody so as to rewrite male British history in *Night at the Circus*.

As it is understood from aforementioned several examples, female writers of magical realism use magic, myths or legends in order to undermine the fixed categories relating to the patriarchal assumptions of the female. Or they express their understanding of cultural conflicts within dominant ruling classes. In either cases, magical realism in the hand of female

writers turns to be a solid literary tool to express the unrepresentable via going beyond the (male) Authority and the (male) Establishment. As Toni Morrison claims, magical realism, in the hands of female writers, provides “another way of knowing things.” (Bowers, 2005:86).

Taking everything into consideration, this whole chapter is dedicated to the theoretical framework of my thesis. It has aimed at bringing three dimensions of *Dear Shameless Death* together for the following analysis sections. Initially, I have tried to give a brief account of Foucauldian notion of similitude episteme both in terms of knowledge and language during Renaissance era. This will be linked to the alternative use of similitude episteme in the novel which creates a distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on sixteenth century episteme. Therefore, I have tried to focus on the definition of metafiction and its narrative strategies, particularly including magical realism. Last of all, as *Dear Shameless Death* is the amalgamation of magic and reality with the combination of similitude episteme, I have explored the magical realist writing in relation to its definition and distinct usage in contemporary literature. I have also tried to highlight the transgressiveness of this narration significantly for feminist purposes. This understanding will be important in the following chapters, while analyzing *Dear Shameless Death* within this circular paradigm—which all affect each other.

## CHAPTER 2: WRAPPED AROUND THE PATH OF SIMILITUDE

### *Alternative female subjectivity via similitude*

This chapter utilizes Foucault's resemblance and similitude episteme in *The Order of Things* in order to reveal the distinct literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death*. As mentioned, the novel makes use of similitudes in its narration. As it will be analyzed, this turns *Dear Shameless Death* into a Foucauldian metafictional level in relation to its language. However while creating such a metafiction, Tekin uses similitudes in a rather unconventional way compared to Foucault's description. That is, she combines similitude episteme with her magical realist language. This usage carries the narration to the beyond of similitudes which self reflexively mirroring each other. Thus in my analysis I will try to demonstrate that this whole position engenders a *distinct* metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on similitude. At the end of this chapter, I will try to reveal this distinction in terms of re-considering magical realist writing as a *return* to Renaissance episteme: a *return* with a rupture and *difference*.

This distinction, apart from referring to the language of the novel, is also strongly associated with the formation of alternative female subjectivity. As it has been mentioned in my theoretical background, the principle way of creating female subjectivity against male pressure is achieved through metafictional strategies: that is the magical realist narration. As mentioned, Latife Tekin with her magical realist language follows the circle of similitude in a quite unconventional way. Thus in this chapter, I also argue that Tekin's magical realist language combined with similitude episteme attempts to create an alternative female subjectivity against male domination. This is similar to the other contemporary women writers' attempt mentioned in my theoretical background. Writers like Morrison, Allende or Carter has a strong quest to create a non-passive female entity under patriarchal and political

constraints.

Throughout my analysis this mentioned understanding will lead to a profound feminist re-reading of the novel. That is, it is the female protagonist Dirmit who stoutly follows the resemblance and similitude to develop her distinct non-passive female character against patriarchal constraints. As it will be shown, this quest of hers will subvert the traditional male representations of women in the novel.

Therefore in my analysis I deliberately focus not on any other female characters but merely on Dirmit. My analysis is situated within two significant dimensions. First of all I aim to explore the way Dirmit reads the world in terms of resemblance and similitude—which results in her alternate female subjectivity against repression ranging from parental to cultural. Second of all, within a broader scope I aim to show how *Dear Shameless Death* proves to be a distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse in relation to similitude combined with magical realist language.

As I have already pointed out in my theory section for Foucault resemblance and similitude play a significant role in knowledge in the sixteenth century “To search for a meaning is to bring to light a resemblance” he argues (2002:33). It is the resemblance which allows the interpretation of the texts. Foucault makes an analysis of basically four types of resemblances which are all forms of similitude: *convenientia*, *aemulatio*, analogy and sympathy. With these forms the world draws itself together in an analogical way as it has been pointed out in previous sections of my thesis. The world arena is interplay of resemblances connecting one another continuously.

We can relate this understanding to the distinct world of *Dear Shameless Death*, where most resemblances stem from Anatolian folk and mythic tradition: *Dede Korkut Stories*, which has been introduced in the previous sections. These stories rely initially on one of the

forms of similitude; that is conventia: “the different beings adjust themselves to one another: plant communicates with the animal, the earth with the sea, man everything around him...” (Foucault, 2002:33). In *Dede Korkut Stories* dating back approximately to the sixteenth century, we could see the people adjusting themselves to their environment. We could see people in monologue to other beings like winds, mountains, sea, moon, stars, earth and etc. (Aslan, 2008). In *Dear Shameless Death* as it will be seen in the ongoing paragraphs this turns to be a dialogue through Dirmit’s interactive ways. Thus, *Dear Shameless Death* inscribes its reading in terms of Foucault’s description of similitude episteme.

As it will be mostly analyzed in the second analysis chapter of my thesis, magical happenings in *Dear Shameless Death* are attributed significantly to the female characters rather than male ones. This is a clear-cut strategy for making the silenced and excluded female characters visible under repression. Magic becomes a site of resistance of the female to subvert or to de-hierarchize the so called creative male power in the novel. Here this attempt goes hand in hand with resemblance and similitude episteme. In order to escape from harsh repression trying to be carved upon her, Dirmit devotes herself to the world, which awaits for deciphering its signs. She consciously follows the path of similitude. To be more precise, she reads the world in order to find similarities for her personal, social and political aspirations. Thus she gives herself to nature, relies on its signs and takes things for what they are in relation of the words to the world. Dirmit chooses this distinct way so as to break the surrounding patriarchal constraints. The only thing she has to do is to decipher the world in its correct sense which is covered signs and marks; that is signatures hidden on them.



Since the beginning, whatever Dirmit takes up to have her distinct voice heard is precluded by her parents; mostly by her mother Atiye<sup>12</sup>. Dirmit is the silenced and excluded female entity in the household. Indeed it is her status as “djinned girl” which carves the silence upon her:

Atiye couldn't push Djinnman Memet's pronouncement out of her thoughts: “If the child is born healthy and whole, there's no telling what will befall it!”... In her fear of whatever might befall Dirmit, Atiye not only confined her to the house but she started to spy on her daughter discovering all kinds of odd meanings in everything Dirmit did and said talked to it, when she watched the snow outside and cried out in anguish, when she felt asleep while playing under the divan; all these actions were attributed by Atiye to the words of Djinnman Memet... Finally she started to suspect that Dirmit was in league with djinns. ... She tied girl's hand up in a sack...(40).

The phrase “djinned girl” refers to absolute silence and exclusion for the female. Due to her extrovert and playful child character, Dirmit is always somehow an outcast in the family. Dirmit is always labeled as a strange girl with her djinns around. She becomes the one whom to be afraid of and whom to be disliked and excluded in the village:

They also cursed Atiye's little daughter, Dirmit. They concluded that it was she who had brought the djinn to the village. Dirmit had wandered around without saying the word besmele as she pissed on the djinns feet and faces. Her actions had incurred the djinns' wrath... (42).

Dirmit had lost all her friends because she was now known in the village as the djinned girl and people wouldn't let their children play with her. Even worse, she could no longer walk about in the village on her own. Wherever she passed and whenever she paused, people threw stones at her. When children saw her coming, they turned in the opposite direction... In the gardens, men stopped her and turned her away. So Dirmit headed back home, hurling stones at all door along the way (71).

Tekin deliberately associates this motif particularly with the female to emphasize their marginal status—the foreign or the other. However as it will be analyzed it is this silence and exclusion which causes female characters to develop their own resistant world against male domination.

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<sup>12</sup> The mother figure Atiye will be closely analyzed in the following chapter. Initially Atiye appears in the novel with a harsh exclusion like her daughter. She is too associated with “djinnns”—the unknown or the other due to her foreign status in the village. However afterwards she develops her legitimate difference and resistance against her husband's domineering behaviors through magic: the control of spiritual happenings or via “divination”—another sort of resemblance inherent in knowing things as Foucault argues in similitude episteme. However, her way of forming distinct female subjectivity causes Dirmit's repression as well. This is due to Atiye's sacred world and her fears that she wishes to have a control over everything falling apart in the family.

Indeed, Dirmit is the only female character whom literally feels the harsh consequences of the traumatic migration and the military unrest that the family experience during 1970-1980's of Turkey. Saliha Paker argues for this position as follows:

As a teenager, Dirmit grows up in the Istanbul of the 1970s, a decade of political repression and unrest. The city saw protests, rioting and violence between extreme leftists, nationalists and religious fanatics like the black bearded hodja who leads Dirmit's father, Huvat, into the thick of a violent demonstration... (15).

Thus Dirmit, both in the rural and in later on in the urban life questions every bit of world surrounding her. This position obviously results in a solid formation of her distinct individualistic resistance. One of the most important literary critics of Turkish Literature Berna Moran claims about Dirmit status as follows:

Dear Shameless Death is indeed consists of small episodes, narrations very similar to folk tales... This occurs within two levels. First one depicts the events relating to Aktaş family's life style, their sacred beliefs or their ideology—the undivided world or the heavenly against material world. The second one revolves around the struggle of Dirmit and eventually her ideological separation from the family, which all heads towards a distinct individuality. (Moran, 2007:79).

Thus, growing young girl Dirmit is being confined to house due to her youth and outward looking character which desires to seek beyond the boundaries of “home” and “repressive family”; trying to search for her. Dirmit's growing female body and her quest for an outside world (as opposed to the interior) is kept under surveillance, significantly most of the time via enclosure or violence as it is seen from the excerpts. The young growing girl in the rural—since this incident takes place before the family's migration the city—should be kept in a certain place; the interior, the home. Thus, the interior or the home becomes a place closed upon itself, aiming to locate an individual to judge (her) and with no doubt to supervise her.

However Dirmit, despite being called as the “djinned girl” and her exclusion, seeks a resolution of her own female resistant world in nature. This is through the interplay of

resemblances and their signs. Indeed it is her “djinned girl” status which triggers her quest in nature in terms of resemblance and similitudes, following their signs.

First, when her mother Atiye forbids Dirmit to go outside the “home”, she secretly joins the community of sheep in the stable and starts a mutual talk. Here we can see her talking to another being or communicating with nature, which is indeed *a conventia* as Foucault argues. For Foucault, this includes the plant communicating with the animal, the earth with the sea and the man with everything around him. Thus Dirmit adjusts herself to the other beings; drawing herself together with them. Moreover, sheep’s dried turd appears something similar to clay to Dirmit’s eyes so that she can distract herself from the repression and play with it (2008: 40). Or it seems like a dark chocolate that when hungry she can eat it—another form of glittering reflections of similitude: *aemulatio* as Foucault argues for: similar things scattered around the world can resemble one another. When her mother Atiye discovers it she forbids Dirmit to go outside, to the stable. However, this time Dirmit secretly goes to the wind in order to seek for another sort of resemblance:

Roof-flying wind, I’m starving.  
So eat earth.  
You’ll tell my mother.  
I won’t breathe a word. (38).

As it is seen, Dirmit attempts to adjust herself everything around her, significantly to the nature as a way of escape. As Foucault argues, in the Renaissance episteme living beings intersect each other—giving birth to another set of resemblances. This is what Dirmit does. She takes sheep’s turd as something to play with or eat. Afterwards, by interacting with the nature, she takes the “earth” as another resemblance.

As the time goes by Dirmit spends much more time in nature looking for another resemblances or interacting with another beings. Here, I should highlight once more that the

way Dirmit makes resemblances stem from the aforementioned Anatolian folk and mythic tale *Dede Korkut Stories* as it has been mentioned several times. Therefore based on this information, Tekin indeed refers to Anatolian folk and myths and retells the story in a magical realist way; bringing fact and fiction together. Thus, it cannot be said that Dirmit's s interactive talking to wind or talking to other beings is the result of her imaginary mind or her illusion. It is a dialogue merely due to the matter-of-fact narration in the novel, which is the fundamental characteristic of magical realist writing. These kind of magical happenings mentioned in Dirmit's case are considered as an ordinary part of the Central Anatolian rural life. Magic, in *Dear Shameless Death* acts as a normal world, instead of something imaginary. Thus Latife Tekin, as mentioned before, writes with her home language bringing fact and fiction together. The novel relies on matter of fact narration while presenting magical happenings. Thus, magical realist narration in *Dear Shameless Death* is indeed a world of similitude which alternately multiplies itself to other resemblances relating to Dirmit's position.

Therefore, with the amalgamation of this kind of magic and reality in *Dear Shameless Death* revelation of similitude continues. At nights in the village when Dirmit looks out her window all she sees in the nature is a set of resemblances. She brings similitude to the signs waiting to uncover its secrets:

At night the water pump looked like a lonesome dog howling at the moon. And it was always wagging its tail and calling Dirmit over to its side. At first Dirmit was scared and for a while, she immediately ducked her head under the quilt when she saw the pump wagging its tail. But one day, while she was having a pretend picnic the pump confided something to her: "If you come to see me at night, I'll tell you where rosebuds will bloom in the morning. (40).

From then on, the dog-like water pump, which is brought to the village by her father Huvat, turns to be Dirmit's alter-ego or her double in the rural allowing her contacts with the nature and the world; bringing other things in the world and drawing the world together. As Dirmit questions life and its prohibitions acted upon her, this path of similitude becomes a

limitless way of true knowledge for her through her mutual conversations with the pump.

1. Water pump water pump  
You tell me where the rosebuds are  
You bring the moon down to your little pool  
Where's the teacher on his white horse  
He's somewhere as dark as my well  
Somewhere as cold as my water.
2. Water pump water pump  
I've got some news for you  
There's a teacher in the village  
He's for you then...  
Guess what he said to me.  
What did he say, what did he say\_  
He said I didn't look like a peasant  
Were you pleased?  
Yes I was pleased... (40)

As it is seen from the excerpts, the nature and its beings—its inhabitants— are brought together by convenient relationships. Foucault argues that everything in the nature, including the beings reside within it, finds its mirror in a larger scale. That is the macrocosmic level. Thus he argues for the importance the relation of microcosm to macrocosm. Here Dirmit, as the microcosm, is in close touch with everything around her. According to Foucault; “In an episteme in which signs and similitudes were wrapped around one another in an endless spiral, it was essential that the relation of microcosm to the macrocosm should be both conceived as the guarantee of that knowledge...” (2002:35). Thus, here the nature as macrocosm or the environment Dirmit lives acts as a guarantee of knowledge for her: the roof flying wind, the dog-like water pump telling her alternatives to build up her own female resistant world.

Built on this mutual relationship of microcosm and macrocosm, analogy—a form of another similitude is also seen in *Dear Shameless Death*. This type of similitude carries Dirmit's individuality to a much broader scope. The space, as Foucault argues, is “occupied

by analogies” and it radiates everything around it. (2002: 35). Thus, Dirmit spiritedly transmits these resemblances she finds into her own world. To illustrate this, Dirmit’s quest for broader knowledge—that is her teacher— as opposed to her repressive home is important here. As it is seen she longs for a “teacher” through her conversations with the water pump. However, it is once more precluded due to the political repression of the time: the military unrest 1980’s of Turkey, which has been already mentioned in my previous sections. Whoever comes to Alacahüvek village as a teacher is said to be “commonist”<sup>13</sup>, since he is considered to be an outsider with foreign knowledge and foreign books. This position undoubtedly relates to the political repression amongst extreme nationalists and extreme leftists of the era. Thus the longing of Dirmit for the teacher—for an alternate knowledge outside the repressive family— is important in terms of her political formation as well.

...but no matter what she did she couldn’t forget her teacher. She asked the wind, the clouds, and the migrant birds. Finally she stationed herself before the wing-gate of their house. Shouting, she stopped anyone passing by on horseback and stood in front of trucks with her hands raised. “What’s a “commonist” she asked of the visiting pedlar and the gypsies who were pitching their tents. Atiye picked her rolling pin and went after Dirmit. One minute she chased her up to the sheepfold, the next she flung stones at her. Finally, when she realized that no amount of crying and pleading would ease her daughter’s mind she pointed up at an aeroplane that was cutting through the clouds over the village: “Look up there, good-for-nothing”... That’s commonist! (57).

The analogy of “teacher”, “commonist” and “aeroplane” is ironically arbitrary<sup>14</sup> here. Nevertheless, through this analogical interpretation that Dirmit finds her own distinct voice in relation to knowledge:

... Ever since Atiye pointed out an aeroplane... Dirmit tried to figure out the connection... When she heard the thunder... she would search the sky for her teacher. And whenever a plane flew over the village Dirmit’s feet tugged her over to schoolhouse... Dirmit cradled her notebook against her tummy... (66).

<sup>13</sup> This “commonist” word will be important once more in the second analysis chapter in terms of carrying Dirmit’s female subjectivity to further position.—an ideological break from her parents.

<sup>14</sup> This refers to the only arbitrary resemblance in *Dear Shameless Death*. I should note that although this sort of resemblance is not the exact reference to the Foucauldian similitude in “Prose of the World”, it acts as a guarantee of knowledge similar to Foucault’s description of knowing things in Renaissance episteme.

Therefore, a resemblance between two different things in the macrocosm leads Dirmit to trace the hidden signs of the true knowledge. The word “commonist” becomes important for Dirmit to associate with the notions of “teacher” “flying” or “free-spirit”.

Here Latife Tekin intentionally creates forms of similitudes in order to carry Dirmit’s quest one step further. Apart from natural resemblances and similitudes that Dirmit finds in nature, this spontaneously “created” analogy in the novel is very important. In a sense it reminds us that the novel with the amalgamation of magic and reality strongly inscribes its reading through a set of resemblances. On the other hand it tells us that one should go beyond the signatures or marks of the things. As seen in the above excerpt Dirmit does this. Thus, this created analogy serves the purpose of constructing an alternate female subjectivity in political terms as well. She now has a quest for knowing the beyond in relation to politics. This status of hers will be deeply analyzed in the following chapter when focusing on transgressiveness of magical realism for the female.

Silence and exclusion acted upon Dirmit in the village continues in a more harsh way after the family’s traumatic move to the metropolitan city. The family faces the migration misery: trying to get adjusted to the ongoing modernity and seeking for employment. Huvat, the father, and the brothers Halit, Seyit and Mahmut quickly fall into unemployment; however, it is once more Huvat who takes up a different road to cope with the hardships of urban life now. He obsessively starts to get engaged in extreme religious beliefs so as to cope with the ongoing modernity in urban life. Thus, he devotes his most time to coffee houses or his green-religious books and once more forgets all about his family. Since Atiye gets fed up chasing Huvat and she devotes herself to Halit, Seyit and Mahmut, seeking them employment. However ironically, it is the time for the father Huvat as well brothers to keep an eye on Dirmit in the city. Now Dirmit’s quest for knowledge in relation to proper education via

reading and writing increases intensely, compared to her previous self. Now, Huvat, as he is indulged in his green books, has a strong attempt to silence Dirmit via mere religious ideology. He forbids Dirmit to seek for an alternate source of knowledge including the school:

Huvat opened up his green books and sat down beside her... Huvad forbade Dirmit from studying anything but textbooks...

If this girl ever reads any more of these books again you just tell me," he ordered Atiye. Then he placed some green books before Dirmit... Then Huvat started beating Dirmit to make her read the green books... (101).

Due to this repression Dirmit tries to seek other resemblances in nature once more. She looks for plants which she is familiar as the ones in her village so that she can talk to them. She looks for "those odds and ends that lay trapped between house and street". At last she finds appears a birdie-bird plant which is similar to the ones in her village. It grows on the edge of the stones in the park just like the ones in Dirmit's village—another form of similitude, a *conventia*, as Foucault puts forward: "Resemblance imposes adjancies that in their return guarantee further resemblances." (2002:20). Thus from then on, it is birdie-bird plant which becomes the alter-ego or the double of Dirmit in the urban. It tells her what to do under silence and exclusion. It, in a way, replaces the function of water pump in Alacahüvek.

1. Birdie-bird plant, is it shameful for the girls to send messages to boys?  
No, it is not.  
Should I send more messages then?  
Just to the boys you love.
2. The birdie-bird plant offered her some advice, saying that if she reads books she would learn many many things. Dirmit mentioned the school library again and said that she felt too shy to go and read like the other children...The birdie-bird plant made her sit down... and explained... If her heart started to pound when she entered the library she should just keep breathing deeply and if she blushed she should bow her head quickly... Dirmit listened to the birdie-bird plant's advice and swore that she would read in the library every day until closing time... She stroked the leaves of birdie-bird plant and then trotted off to the library (101).
3. First she read through a book with a picture on its cover of a donkey, a rooster and a cat standing on one top of the other. Then she pushed it aside and took up another one, which bore the title Historical Atlas... (102).
4. Birdie-bird plant, I am so angry....  
Why? Don't be like that...  
But she says you should not teach other what you know.  
What you know?



I don't know  
 Are you telling me you don't know what you know?  
 I wish I did!  
 What would you do then?  
 I'd spread it around... (123).

As it is clearly seen from the extracts, it is through resemblance or the path of similitude that Dirmit finds birdie-bird plant in the urban. In this sense similitude opens up a reliable way for her. She seeks her own voice against parental as well as patriarchal constraints through similitude; through the birdie-bird plant now. She intersects the plant on the surface of thought at first. However, inspired by the spirited conversations she has with birdie-bird plant, she discovers the signs hidden within it and develops her own legitimate difference. It is the birdie-bird plant's advice that leads Dirmit to read and write as opposed to religious books that her father forces her to read. In a way, the analogical path leads Dirmit into a way of knowledge which she is not entrapped within. The world she lives indeed dissolves into other worlds (Mahler, 2004) but the analogies that she looks for in the cosmos prove right. This exactly acknowledges the unproblematic relationships between signs and objects in Renaissance episteme. When Dirmit follows the marks on earth or in a macrocosm everything becomes convenient to each other and starts to intersect each other.

Another similar sort of similitude is in *Dear Shameless Death* is when Dirmit follows the sign of the "street" now as opposed to the "interior". The street from afar emulates a huge black curtain. It mirrors another reflection in front of Dirmit. That is, the street in a way imitates a huge curtain, which hides its own marks to be discovered:

...pulling it open and drawing it shut the street revealed to Dirmit white birds swirling about over the sea, trees with their branches weeping the ground in the wind, a dust cloud of pollen, walls covered in colored posters, people laughing and walking... her parents words stopped humming in her ears...Wait a minute I'm coming" she shouted.. And the street curved into a smile..

... as the street grew longer or shorter, it led Dirmit to the seashore... Dirmit perched on a huge rock and stared out at the sea. First she took the sea in herself and then she let the sea take her into it... So Dirmit gave herself to waters.

the stars that glittered in the sky were in fact scaly fish...she thought... While Dirmit embraced the sea, Atiye stood watch all day long by the window, she prayed God to plant an awful fear in her daughter's heart that she would keep her from going out...however; Dirmit lost all her fear of her. ...at nights she wrote poems that she

recited to the sea... She disowned her mother, brothers and her father and made streets her home... The tress, walls, clouds and houses became her brothers, the sea her mother and the sky her father... (216).

As it is seen from the long excerpts, the relation amongst macrocosm mentioned above enables things to imitate one another in the vast universe. Dirmit's relation to macrocosm is important in terms of reading the signatures of each thing in her environment. She goes straight to its marks, revealing another set of resemblance. The street that curves into a smile takes her and makes her decipher another thing—sea—in her environment. When Dirmit gets closer to the sea, all she sees is another sort of resemblance and this starts to open a way to her distinct subjectivity amongst the members of her family.

It is important once more to emphasize that that Dirmit does not invent aforementioned magical happenings, as the world she lives in is narrated through a magical realist way—the amalgamation of fact and fiction without leaving a room for suspicion. Thus, Dirmit manages to read the hidden signs of the things scattered around her in a correct analogical. She is not lost within them due to any kind of illusion. This position legitimates the idea of the similitude episteme acting as a guarantee of the relation between sign and its object. Here in Dirmit's position, signs reveal themselves through magical happenings and thus through a deep metaphorical way.

Thus the whole position brings forth an alternative female subjectivity of Dirmit, enabling her to engender a distinct form of knowledge. In the end she has a strong attempt to drift apart from her repressive parents. Dirmit literally falls into the self discovery of her, rejecting so called rigid religious ideologies carved upon her. She, with a persistent reliance on resemblance and similitude reads the surrounding reflections between signs and the related objects in a *correct* way, since similitude is based on the smooth reflection between sign and

object related to the world. In the end, as it is seen from the excerpt above, she gradually takes up poetry<sup>15</sup> as a site of female resistance against all kinds of repression surrounding her.

Thus, this is where similitude episteme and feminist perspectives of *Dear Shameless Death* strongly intersect, which I have mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. As seen Latife Tekin, by retelling Anatolian folklore with magic and reality, follows the world of similitudes. She attempts to use this path so as to distort the singular version of truth—that is the male oriented thinking in the household. In a strong sense, through the analogical quest of Dirmit, the existence of another world legitimates itself. Moreover, silenced and excluded Dirmit finds her own language outside her home through a web of resemblances as opposed to the oppressing language in the household. She liberates herself through the path of smilitude, as seen in this chapter. Thus Dirmit does not turn into a “passive” or a “djinned-hysterical” object of (male) power. In this sense, smilitude wrapped around magical realism unmakes the hierarchical discourses such as passivity-female versus activity-male and somehow challenges the patriarchal conceptions. This feminist perspective and the distinct status of Dirmit will be deeply analyzed in the following chapter within transgressiveness of magical realism, particularly for the female.

Keeping the smilitude relation in mind, at the end of my analysis as mentioned in my earlier argument, I would like to show how magical realism turns the novel into a *distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse* based on similitude episteme. Initially magical realist perspectives are assimilated within the verbal relations in the novel. They are indeed yoked together merely into the fiction itself, self consciously telling that *it is a fiction*. Relying on my theoretical framework on metafiction and its strategy magical realism, *Dear Shameless Death* with its amalgamation of magic and reality blurs the boundaries of fact and

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<sup>15</sup> This genre of writing is initially associated with the female in Western literature; however I should note that from antiquity to modern literature it has not been necessarily a female domain in Turkish language and literature. The reason Dirmit chooses to write poem instead of a novel or a short story is just a causal relation in *Dear Shameless Death*.

fiction. The novel tells us that it is a constructed world within a matter-of-fact narration. It also signifies that there is no one singular version of truth in relation to reality.

However more significantly, *Dear Shameless Death* traces back to resemblances and similitudes through the female protagonist Dirmit as seen in the excerpts. Thus the narration finds itself within the boundaries of abundance of similitude. This is a continuous and an endless way of knowing things for Foucault. Foucault claims in relation to language of the sixteenth century as follows: “Language contains its own inner principle of proliferation... languages accumulates to infinity, since it never ceased to develop, to revise itself... found itself caught.. By means of re-duplication into the same... between primal Text and the infinity of Interpretation” (2002:45). Thus, the language brings to the light a set of resemblances and makes them enclosed upon one another, which indeed mirrors the macrocosm and microcosm relation. Literary critic Simon During, as mentioned in my theoretical background, reinforces Foucault’s claim stating that this kind of language derived from similitude refers to the same thing: repetition, deferral and scarcity. In this sense, we can say that the whole language of *Dear Shameless Death* is self-reflexive. It is understood by the process which claims that the world is a repetitive text. Thus in this sense I argue that *Dear Shameless Death* is a metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on similitude.

Nevertheless, I must strongly note that there is a double-play here. I must underline this sense of metafiction has its own *distinction* as well, as mentioned at the very beginning of my analysis. Here I argue that due to the amalgamation of magic and reality in the novel, the narration is not enclosed or entrapped within aforementioned scarcity or self-reflexivity. I can say that Latife Tekin’s language has its own principle of proliferation too. This position derives from elevated metaphors, unconventional phrases and ambiguous time as well as mythic space descriptions, as it is seen from the extracts above. Reader is somehow invoked

by the dynamic magical- interpretative quest of the female protagonist Dirmit. She struggles for her subjectivity under parental and cultural oppression. Latife Tekin's language never ceases to develop; yet it does not revise itself. The language does not turn into the "same" or repetitions giving a scarcity to itself as Foucault and Derrida argue. Nevertheless, it is through the path of similitude intertwined with magical realism that the novel goes beyond analogies. That is, the language follows the path of the sameness and stabilities—the prose of the world. Yet it merges into a *difference* through the female protagonist Dirmit. As it is seen from the excerpts, all magical happenings attributed to Dirmit carve a difference upon her (female) subjectivity. In this sense we can say that magic, inherent feature in knowing things, makes the narration set outwards instead of enclosing it within its own reduplication. Thus this position assaults the language of similitude episteme and more or less breaks the analogical relations. It carries the novel to a variety of differences instead of knowing the Same. That is why I argue that the whole narration is a *distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse based on similitude*.

Therefore, this distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse and going beyond the analogical self-reflexivness could be carried to a new paradigm in relation to magical realist narration. As I have analyzed, magical realist happenings (attributed to the female) in *Dear Shameless Death* entraps neither characters nor the narration, despite set of resemblances self-reflexively mirroring each other. Thus within this magical-metafictive distinction and similitude episteme, we can come to an alternative understanding of magical realist narration. As mentioned in my theoretical framework, magical realism is associated with postmodernist literature and metafiction in terms of its combination of fact and fiction, blurring the boundaries of literary realism. However here, magical realist writing via this feminist-oriented analysis could be regarded as a *return* to Renaissance episteme with a *difference* or a *rupture*— breaking the analogical relations of similitude and moving away

from Sameness. This will be a new paradigm about magical realism theories discussed in my theoretical framework. It is with no doubt that this distinct *return* of *Dear Shameless Death* is achieved not through a male dominance but through a female protagonist. *This* will make us re-consider the nature and flexibility of magical realist writing within postmodernist literature, particularly for contemporary women writers.

In addition to this distinct metafictional status of *Dear Shameless Death* engendering an alternative female subjectivity against male representations of women, the following chapter will also explore the female question. It will focus more intensively on the function of magical realist happenings attributed to the female so as to subvert dominant power relations.

## CHAPTER 3: MAGICAL DEVICES AT WORK- TRANSGRESSIVENESS OF MAGICAL REALISM

As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, female subjectivity under parental and patriarchal constraints derive from the distinct combination of Foucault's similitude episteme and magical realist narration of *Dear Shameless Death*. This position, as analyzed, engenders a *distinct* metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse: a possible return to Renaissance episteme with a rupture or a *difference*. This distinction important because it enables us to reveal other literary perspectives in magical realist language. Nevertheless, this distinction is also important because it allows us to reconsider other transgressive strategies of magical realist writing for the female. That is, apart from familiar postmodernist strategies such as fragmentation, discontinuity, anarchy and etc, it opens another way of distorting the singular version of reality or male authority.

Relying on this distortion of male authority, this broader chapter aims to explore the transgressiveness of magical realism for the female. Thus this chapter focuses on how magic as well as divination function as a solid site of female resistance against patriarchal constraints. Indeed in my previous chapter, I have explored this position through Dirmit's path of similitude which creates non-passive and non-obedient female subjectivity. However within a much closer analysis I will attempt to show not only Dirmit finds alternatives against male power but the other female characters also have their own way of struggle under male domination.

In my analysis I argue that magical happenings within a magical realist writing turns to be a solid site of a somatic female resistance. That is, magical happenings significantly attributed to the female form bodily counter reactions against the male domination in the

household. That is why I choose to call it as somatic. As it will be analyzed this position engenders a non passive female subjectivity as opposed to the silenced and excluded entities.

My analysis is divided into three basic parts. It includes the exploration of female characters' distinct way of using magic for their (feminist) purposes. As I have mentioned, I aim to analyze the other main female character for engendering a more comprehensive analysis in relation to female question and magical realism. Thus, initially I will display how the mother Atiye engenders her legitimate difference against male dominated household via using magic and divination—the control over spiritual happenings. This position definitely makes us recall Foucauldian description of similitude episteme once more. As it has been discussed in the previous chapters, according to Foucault, magic and divination are inherent in knowing things in the sixteenth century episteme. Indeed they are the intrinsic marks relating to the things in the world. Thus, deployment of magic and divination attributed to Atiye in the novel makes her create an alternate female voice in the household. It allows her to manipulate the male household, so to speak.

Secondly, since I have started my previous analysis chapter with Dirmit, I will continue with her analysis. This will depict the distinct formation of her somatic female resistance which is at odds with rigid religious sanctions trying to be carved upon her. In the last part of my analysis I will trace back to the whole literary discourse based on similitude and the female question and try to connect magical realist narration to the practice of feminine writing—in a broader term feminine *écriture* with a strong reference to French feminist critic and writer Hélène Cixous. This attempt will provide us with a more illuminating insight to understand the potential transgressiveness of magical realist narration for the female.



Literary critics Robert Kroetsch's and Linda Kenyon suggest on as follows: magical realism "Magical realism as a literary practice seems to be closely linked with a perception of "living on the margins" (Zamora&Faris, 1995:408). To begin with, I could claim that magical realist language of the *Dear Shameless Death* definitely stems from this notion of "margins". Tekin, in her novel, depicts a world of two distinct directions. First one is the emergence of female characters as "silenced entities living on the margins". Resulted from this position, the second direction heads towards to a modish magic most attributed to the female. This leads to subversive opportunities for creating a solid room for resistance against male representations of woman. This is where Tekin engenders a double pole language to the male-centered thinking in the novel. Her fundamental concern is eliciting silenced and excluded language of woman of margin and bringing forth a forcible rupture within the male dominance in the novel.

The mother Atiye appears on the scene within a harsh exclusion. Literary critic and translator Saliha Paker argues in the introduction part of *Dear Shameless Death* as follows: "Atiye is the omnipresent mother who seems to be the most conservative and remains firmly attached to the undivided world; world of irrational. She relies on the irrational...casting and breaking spells, turning on the taps of fountains to open the way for good fortune, consulting hodjas for amulets to protect against evil, pouring molten lead into boiling water to get rid of the evil eye and etc.." (2008:13). However Atiye does all these things so as to make a room for herself in an alien environment. At the beginning, Atiye, is indeed a foreigner whom Huvat— her husband—brings to his village Alacahüvek, far from the city.

Huvat arrived with something that made them forget all about talking box. This time it was a woman, with flame-red cheeks and milky skin. And her head and legs were bare. (19)

For days on end the poor woman was surrounded by a crowd of women and children, who never stopped pawing her. They rubbed her face with the edge of their yashmaks moistened with spit to see if the redness was real and they tugged at her hair and skirt. She was soon worn down to skin and bones. Finally she collapsed and fainted. Then they knew why three sheep had bloated up and died... why Huvat's mother had fallen of the wooden veranda. All were caused by the ill-omened woman who was possessed by a djinn. Their first thought was to strangle her and dump her body somewhere, but they were afraid of her djinn, so they threw out her mattress and

bedding and after a lot of talk, shut her up in the stable... (20-21).

As it is seen from the extract above, the foreign woman breaks onto the scene via silence. The foreign woman whom apparently does not know the language of villagers is somehow associated with djinns or so to speak “the other” as opposed to the (mortal) villagers. As I have mentioned in my previous chapter as well, Tekin significantly associates this djinn motif with female characters in order to emphasize their position from the “other”. However, as it will be seen in the following paragraphs it is exactly this exclusion that enables female characters to develop their own difference against the repression surrounding them. Here Atiye is also considered to be a djinned woman like her daughter. She is associated with the notion of the “other” as she is radically different from the villagers, full of evil or harm.

Thus, with this explanation mostly associated with chaotic-female world rather than ordered-male world in relation to villagers, djinns then turn to be something which villagers are afraid of because of bringing bad luck to the earth. Therefore, here the system of exclusion relating to the female is very apparent. However, as it is understood later on, the foreign woman is about to give birth to her first baby.

...On her first night in the stable the woman dreamt she was bending over an iron cradle to kiss a sleeping baby. Then she left through an iron door. From that time on, whenever she closed her eyes she had the same dream until she was having it while she was awake. This went on until a long-haired snow-white talking goat charged at the. She shouted at the top of her voice, but the goat muttered some in comprehensible words instead of backing off and hurled itself straight at her. Just then a ball of light dropped from above and the goat's hair turned pitch black. Slowly the goat backed away and disappeared. From then on the saintly Hızır Aleyhisselam never left the woman alone in the stable... One evening when the woman had been in the stable almost nine months, she was seized by stabbing pains from her waist to her tailbone... (21).

... At that moment, Hızır Aleyhisselam came to the baby's rescue, this time, sending Akkadın, White Woman, in his place. For years Akkadın had been waiting her day of fulfillment... (21).

Relating to the extracts, magical devices make themselves explicit within a realistic setting in a matter-of-fact narration. Tekin attributes spiritual and folkloric- magic significantly to the female character as it is seen. With this position, we move towards a greater understanding that under silence and exclusion, through magical and spiritual happenings women try to develop their own alternatives particularly against dominant power.

Here, as it has been introduced in the previous sections, Hızır Aleyhisselam is a religious figure seen in Anatolian folk tales as well as Islamic narrations. This figure is usually used in literary texts as a mighty rescuer or a live saver. However here, we see a White Woman (Akkadın) who comes to rescue Atiye and her baby. This is quite an unconventional and a subversive perception of traditional Islamic narration. Here the religious figure is feminized and turned into White Woman. Thus, playing with significantly male oriented traditional folklore via metafictional strategies, Tekin creates other worlds which turn so-called male folk tradition and singular version of truth upside down. Moreover, attributing magical happenings to female characters under silence is not haphazard. Atiye, having such a night in the stable, develops her own way of magical strategy under the repression of foreign environment and male.

First with her skills relating to daily life Atiye starts to secure her position in the village. However, her status does not hinder Huvat's domineering behaviors such as beating or completely ignoring her wife. However Atiye now gets her strength through her habitual tragic-comic fights with the Angel of Death— Azrael. This is exactly a good signification of how she seeks a solid site of a subversion relating to male domination:

...Azrael, the Angel of Death, arrived to feel her heartbeat and pulse and talked with her for a long time. As soon as Azrael had left, Atiye beckoned her children and her husband come over to her bedside...she signaled Dirmit to her side and made her write down her last wishes... the first was Huvat should shave the beard from the tip of his chin. Dirmit and Mahmut should be taken out of mosque school and Halit should find himself a job... (92).

...That night Atiye sailed off on angels' wings on a tour of the seven layers of heaven. In the morning she woke up with a smile and Azrael had spared her life... She also announced, however, that if they didn't comply with her wishes, she would have to surrender her spirit immediately... (93).

...After Atiye had recovered, Huvat regretted a thousand times that he has shaved off his beard. (93).

This scene with Azrael is repeated in various forms. Atiye, whenever she gets ill, encounters Azrael and haggle with it, make her life spared so as to hold on enforcement towards her husband.

...After Huvat had gone out, Atiye called on Azrael, who arrived and crouched down on her chest. "Take my

life, oh Azrael!” she shouted and closed her eyes. Then she opened her mouth wide and breathed deeply. In between her mutterings, she shouted, “Take my life! Every now and again until finally she opened her eyes and said, “I can’t give up my spirit”... Now Huvat was called back in and after much pleading from his children he came over and sat sullenly at Atiye’s side... Atiye revealed to her husband that if he spent the rest of his life... minded his own business... God would forgive him, if not God intended to cast Huvat into flames of hell for having so thoughtlessly laid them aside...”

...We’re all even, girl,” Huvat groaned (146).

...Azrael stepped down from Atiye’s chest and looked thoughtfully at her long pale face... did not reject Atiye’s request but granted her just enough time to complete any unfinished business... Soon she said to Huvat: “Bring me some news of my brothers and sisters”.. For many days Huvat begged Atiye to abandon this idea... Halit complained that they didn’t have a single clue how to trace them... As they pressured her to give up Atiye’s wish intensified into an irrepressible passion... She began to... speak and sing in her incomprehensible tongue.

...But Atiye managed to convince them... (170).

Here Atiye, in the absence of access any other power, finds other alternative sources of power such as the control over the spiritual: magic. She bargains with Azrael so as to manipulate her husband or trace back her roots. Referring to Isabel Allende’s *The House of Spirits* mentioned in my theoretical background, this position may be considered as the “feminist criticism of the patriarchal control over women’s lives”. As it has been mentioned, Clara in *The House of Spirits* uses her clairvoyance skills for feminist purposes. Allende’s characters used to manipulate (male) population via her fearful predictions. This way of coping struggles is similar to Atiye’s habitual bargains with Azrael. Moreover, Atiye’s “incomprehensible speech”<sup>16</sup> mentioned above signifies her foreign status as opposed to the villagers. However, Atiye also uses this unfamiliarity of hers as a subversive tool so as to confuse the male mind or manipulate the male household.

Now Atiye, apart from her habitual fights with Azrael, develops other effects which bring practicality and magic together so as to go against the so-called “authoritative” voice in the household:

... Soon Huvat lost his senses completely and cultivated a beard on the very tip of his chin. In his jacket pocket he kept a knife a fine-toothed comb and clasped under his arm two-green covered books... He also enrolled Dirmi and Mahmut in the mosque school and ordered Atiye and Nuğber to cover their heads... All of this was too much for Atiye. Afraid that unemployment would drive her husband over the edge, she went out her way... She visited all the mosques where she turned off and each tap in the fountains. She collected water from sea’s seven waves and poured it over Huvat’s head. She clicked locks open and shut above his head as he lay sleeping. And she ran out in the daybreak to stick a knife in the earth... (89).

<sup>16</sup> This foreign status of Atiye dates back to her Arabic or Kurdish ancestors, also mentioned by Saliha Paker in the introduction part of the novel *Dear Shameless Death*.

...She also started to practice witchcraft. After blowing prayers on forty peppercorns, she roasted them on a brazier...bolting the doors on him she forced him. (90).

Atiye, as it is seen, strongly engenders her own sacred resistant world against patriarchy. Here it could be said that Atiye acts through her body. It is her magical-bodily acts and reactions that cry out the critique of patriarchy, so to speak. Magic becomes a solid field of making a point about her counter struggle and resistance. Thus within this viewpoint, magical realist world enables Atiye's formation of somatic female resistance.

Here, so as to explore the resistance issue in close relation to (inscribed) female body, feminist philosopher Susan Bordo asserts that the body is a cultural text. She traces Foucauldian notion of docility<sup>17</sup>; yet differs from him in attempting to reveal internalized cultural inscriptions upon body as a site of resistance and a medium of culture. (Hekman, 2008: 64-65). She takes up the materiality of the body neither as biological nor physical. However, the body is culturally constructed and this is what counts as materiality for Bordo. In this sense, according to her, the body is a "site of struggle" where subversive daily practices are acted upon as opposed to silence and exclusion. By claiming the body as a site of struggle, she takes up the idea that diseases such as anorexia and bulimia are particularly exaggerated in the way of conveying. Bordo, indeed, approaches these diseases as a site of potential resistance and rebellion or as a self-mastery: slenderness as a mastery of one's own and a resistance against pathologized dominant way of seeing these diseases. In *Unbearable Weight* she makes it clear that these diseases can not merely defined from medical and psychological perspectives but also should be analyzed within cultural context, as "complex crystallizations of culture" (Bordo, 1997: 18-20). Thus, she takes the body out of its physical

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<sup>17</sup> In his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1978) M. Foucault traces the "reproduction of power through institutions such as schools hospitals, prisons since power is present everywhere. He takes a soldier figure as an ideal figure and shows how the individual internalizes various control regimes—including the control of activities or distribution of time and place— becomes a docile body: "unconsciously reproducing repressive power relations." (Druxes, 1996:9). Derived from this notion docility, Susan Bordo brings forth the adversary side as "female resisting bodies" tracing diseases like hysteria, agoraphobia, anorexia nervosa.

context and fits in cultural context: the body a site of a resistance and rebellion against traditional domestic roles in patriarchal society.

This sense of resistance deriving from the body, not always necessarily anorexic but highly metaphorical here, associates with the magical happenings in *Dear Shameless Death*. As it is seen, silence and exclusion of Atiye is created through magical happenings at the very beginning, where she is locked up in the stable. However afterwards, this magic is used against itself as a site of a formation of an alternate female subjectivity against patriarchal power relations and constraints.

In close connection to her bodily reactions, Atiye's divination also enables her to have her own effective female power in the male household. Here Foucault's description of similitude episteme makes us recall that divination is the main part of knowledge. Thus, here the path of similitude is again intertwined with magic and reality so as to elicit an alternate truth for the female. Indeed Atiye starts to get her strength from her deep institutions and dreams:

... Atiye now was practicing her latest skill: reading coffee cups. Azmiye Hanım, her neighbor spread news of her fortune-telling ability through the area...Atiye promptly prepared the coffee and pressing her finger on the bottom of the cup ,divined the appropriate words... First she talked and she got others talking... The house was teemed with women... Huvat was always infuriated whenever he came home loaded down with his green books...But the fiercer he grew the more Atiye developed her fortune telling skills... (107).

... Atiye awoke with a start... "They've shot Seyit!" Tearing her hair and pummeling her breast with her fists she finally collapsed onto Seyit's bed... Huvat sped off in a car. Around they break he returned, his face as white as limewash. "His condition is serious" he said. (135)

Thus, Atiye succeeds in finding an alternative voice against the male household through her own words, sacred world and her memory within an environment where she lacks of protection. I argue that she in a way becomes the symbol of a collective memory of Anatolian folk tales and myths and finds her own voice via magical happenings. Her female resistance could be regarded as somatic. As seen from the excerpts above, it is derived from her distinct bodily gestures wrapped around magic and spiritual happenings. However ironically, as I

have pointed out in my previous chapter, Atiye's way of resistance also causes her daughter Dirmit's silence and somehow exclusion. Thus Dirmit seeks for a much broader understanding of female subjectivity when compared to her mother Atiye.

Due to her sacred world and control over spiritual happenings, Atiye carries the fear of the notch of Djinnman Memet<sup>18</sup> during Dirmit's birth. Since then, Atiye as well as the male members of the household keep a harsh eye on Dirmit. Dirmit's female body is kept under surveillance and disciplined through various sanctions:

...That spring Dirmit couldn't take a single step outside the double wing-gate of her house... Atiye kept a close eye on her. Then as she grew more anxious about Dirmit's frequent visits to the water pump and conversations she had with, she soon forbade the visits... Dirmit tried all day long to distract herself, piling up tiny pebbles here and there in the garden... It was only when Dirmit started to chat with pebbles; keeping them her side during meals and taking them to bed with her that Atiye became nervous. She forbade Dirmit to play with pebbles... So Dirmit found another way to distract herself. She spent all day leaping off the high wooden veranda onto a pile of dry weeds...But... Atiye began to believe that djinns were helping Dirmit running up on the veranda...Atiye now forbade Dirmit running up on *the veranda and jumping off*...(70).

As seen, Atiye imprisons Dirmit and her childhood desires, so to speak. However, as mentioned before, Dirmit seeks a resolution in nature, following the hidden marks of the things all revealing one another. She comes to a greater understanding through interactive encounter of resemblances. Dirmit, as mentioned in the previous chapter, counting on the advices of birdie-bird plant, gives herself to reading and writing: and then *poetry*. In order to understand the underlying reason why she chooses this path as a strategy for her female resistance, it is better to follow the excerpts:

...all had all been destroyed; Dirmit came up with a new theory about her mother. It occurred to her that she would be spared her mother's tongue-lashing only if found herself to without actually touching it... She decided to write poetry. Spreading out her books on top of the sewing machine, she lowered her head and reflected seriously upon how poetry should be written... (179)

"From then on, sneaking on to the roof, Dirmit wrapped herself up in a quilt made of words. She slept on a bed of words and sat on a chair of words. Atiye became thousands of words whose days were numbered. Huvat gazed at bottles filled with words. Nuğber sat waiting for words. Zekiye wept words. Seyit smiled with his gleaming white teeth made of false words. Halit banged words on walls. Dirmit didn't know which way o turn or which one to write first. As she wandered in confusion, words rained from the clouds and poured out of tap. All those words, together with all those others that say quietly... turned into chaos in Dirmit's head but no poetry...No matter how she tried she couldn't write a second poem.... For a while she raced with the sun, laying

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<sup>18</sup> This character of the novel is introduced in my previous chapter where Djinnman Memet appears as the djinnman who helps Atiye when she is giving a birth to Dirmit. As Saliha Paker argues he acts like an exorcist cleansing a person and he is the one who initially associates Dirmit with the silence and exclusion via his words: "Mark my words! If the child is born healthy, there's no telling, what'll befall it!" (2008:26).

a sheet of paper in front of her at sunrise and commanding herself to write a poem at sunset... Next she tried racing with the moon, but the moon faded away before the poem was written. At last Dirmit came upon a way... One by one she took the world from her head and put them into her heart. When a world made her heart pound she wrote it down at once... (180).

Here as it is seen, Dirmit, via following the path of similitude, chooses a distinct break from her parents. This is both an epistemological and ideological break. It is epistemological due to tracing back to similitudes deriving from Anatolian folk tales. Here she once more interacts with other beings in the world: sun and moon. This break is also ideological because Dirmit rejects all kinds of repression and rigid religious beliefs trying to be carved upon her by the male household. Thus she takes her liberty from patriarchal society as well. The aforementioned lines are the magical realist description of a young woman starting to fall into the mere language; a distinct kind of knowledge. While having this kind of distinct break, as it may be seen, she also carries the “anxiety of authorship” within her due to the enclosure and passivity motifs attributed to the female—significantly in terms of being a *female writer*. This is where Tekin makes her feminist purposes explicit once more.

In relation to “anxiety of authorship” Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar make a depth analysis of the nineteenth century women’s writing in their influential work *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*, which It analyses both the patterns of plot and metaphor for women’s choices of certain images, stories and fantasies of escape, confinement and madness. (Robbins, 2000:88). As the literary critic Ruth Robbins argues, Gilbert and Gubar take masculist critic’s Harold Bloom’s “The Anxiety of Influence” and turns it into “The Anxiety of Authorship” from a feminist perspective. It turns to be an analysis of why women writers are the object of male-authored literary text such as “the passive, dependent image of male desire” (2000:89). Moreover, Gilbert and Gubar claim that, the literary fear of writing is caused by a struggle of being heard as a woman writer within male tradition that excludes her as follows: “indefinable, alienated,



a freakish outsider.” (2000:90). In other words, the attempt for writing significantly in the nineteenth century is indeed considered as a mere male sphere and women are not able to enter the sphere due to feeling of entrapment and enclosure. This is once more reinforced by Gilbert and Gubar as follows: “The consequences of social and psychological limitations imposed on the woman writer are summarized as a literal timidity... or a competitive protest... and an obsessive imagery of confinement that reveals the ways in which female artists feel trapped... By the culture that has created them.” (2000:91).

Thus, as it is seen from the previous extract, it could be easily stated that Dirmit finds herself trapped by the culture and parental sanctions which create her. Moreover, after her first attempt of writing poetry, her notebook is discovered by her parents and torn apart telling her that “*What good poetry to someone like you, anyway girl? Huvat and Mahmut burst out laughing... Dirmit moaned, “My poems! My poems!”* (182).

Resulted from this position, Dirmit once more consults with birdie-bird plant, which actually acts like her alter-ego in the urban. Then she talks to snow. Here magical devices appear in a very smooth way via a matter-of-fact-narration without any hesitation. This leads Dirmit to search for her own female voice in the public now, in a more decisive way:

... Dirmit told the snow everything that had happened the night before... “Come with me!” the snow commanded and led her down a long avenue... Dirmit beheld a multitude of people, there holding hands aloft and shouting as they marched along in rows... Letting go of her hand, the snow instructed her to rid herself of her troubles by mixing with the crowd and shouting as loud as she wished... As she looked around at all shouting people, she realized that she didn’t know a single person.... Then she remembered that the snow had told her... she parted her lips and raised her first fist... as she started shouting: “They’ve torn up my poems! They’ve torn up my poems!” (183).

This status of Dirmit, searching her own voice, now in public, refers to the word *commonist* mentioned in my previous chapter. Dirmit, once more encounters this word, now in an implicit way. The morning march refers to the commonist gathering in the streets, often causing political turmoil relating to the time period of 1980s in Turkey. Thus, this incident also gives a solid foreshadowing of Dirmit’s ideological break from the rigid religion or male

oppression. This will allow the formation of her political viewpoint under the male oppression as well. Moreover, when her parents learn where she has been, she is again precluded from any creative performances. However, Dirmit does not give up her quest. She gradually forms her alternate female subjectivity against repressive household and continues to seek for the beyond through magical devices—through flying words and letters:

....I'd like to back up", he said, "But you keep going on about the clouds and the stars and the rain and the sea, so what can I do, girl? Dirmit shrugged her shoulders... Meanwhile everyone had withdrawn to a corner... First, Dirmit was forbidden to go up on the roof and to write poetry. Next, because she meddled with the stars in God's firmament and waters that sprang from God's earth, she was forbidden to speak to anyone in the household for seven days. Dirmit listened in silence to their decision. "Well, then I could write you a letter!" No one responded. Dirmit looked at her brothers, her mother and her father one by one... Then she got up, took her seat and placing a sheet of paper before her, turned to them and smiled. "I'm writing this to all of you!" she said. "Be sure that you read it carefully."

... And so she composed a letter that began: "I talked to the stars and the moon, I went to school in the village with my notebook against my tummy when the teacher was absent, the city scared me early one morning, when I was up on the roof because..."

... It was a long long letter that took her six days and seven nights to write. Dirmit took all papers and attached them together, as one by one she arranged her thoughts. At night she hid the papers in her bosom and during the day she kept a close eye on them. On the morning of the seventh day she arose from bed before anyone else and strings the pages of the letter from one corner of the room to the other, like a rope. The rest she stuck up on nails in the walls. Then she picked up one end of the letter-string and out of sheer spite went up on the roof and dangled the string of pages over the edge... Having done that, she quietly crept back to bed, pulled the quilt over her head...A long time later she heard her mother proclaim, "There's nothing wrong with her. She is doing it all on purpose." Next Halit came and asked "Where is the rest of the letter, girl?" He climbed up to look but couldn't find the rest of the letter. He searched the entire roof, including the underside of tiles and the inside of chimney...After a while he noticed a long white ribbon sailing out over the city. He shaded his tearful eyes with his hand and watched it for a long, long while. "What has my sister written about me?" he quietly asked the city. (234).

With these long excerpts it can be obviously seen silence and exclusion trying to be created from Dirmit lead to poetry. This position turns to be a solid trigger of an acknowledgment of being a female writer<sup>19</sup>. Now Dirmit is literally fallen into language up on the roof. Here, with a reference to Susan Bordo once more, Dirmit creates her somatic female resistance through the very act of writing. In a way she brings forth the lived experiences of marginalized and excluded one(s). She makes herself visible and makes her own counter voice heard with her lived body, which is marked by social regulations. To be more precise,

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<sup>19</sup> I must note that Dirmit's brother Halit also writes poetry—a kind of diary he keeps during his military service. However, he is praised for this "gift" whereas Dirmit is cruelly scoffed and excluded. Thus, the anxiety of authorship goes parallel to her status—inappropriateness of being a female (writer) in patriarchal constraints.

her body which is trying to be shaped and disciplined makes itself visible through writing the lived experiences. When Susan Bordo argues for the body in “Double Bind” she states as follows: “...the rules for conventional construction of femininity... require that women learn to feed others, not the self” (1989). By relying on this viewpoint, the status of Dirmit can be translated into the metaphorical statement of Bordo. Here, Dirmit follows a highly metaphorical path which allows her to feed “herself” now instead of “others”: literally fallen into language as a formation of an alternate female subjectivity. Now Dirmit turns the words into a flying white bird, sailing all over the city.

The novel ends with the last stormy fight of Atiye with Azrael, which unfortunately results in her death. However while she is in her deathbed, she still makes use of her divination skills and asks God about the fate of her children. Amongst them it is Dirmit who only stands as:

...Holding a red flag and running madly caught up with the crowd... (235)

Thus we could say that Atiye, with distinct way of knowing things, acknowledges Dirmit’s difference as well. At the end, I could claim that Atiye’s death, although causes a deep grief, liberates Dirmit to go one step further, apart from her writing:

...delighted that her mother had not given in to the demons and unable to contain her joy, Dirmit announced the family that her mother was turning the netherworld upside down. Huvat swore that she would drive herself mad chasing after her mother’s spirits and, to mark his words, he licked his finger and stamped it on the wall. As Dirmit clenched her teeth and angrily eyed the wet mark, a bright red carnation bloomed right out of it. She blinked in disbelief. Rising slowly, she plucked the red carnation off the wall and pinned it to her breast. (236).

As it is seen, now Dirmit makes use of divination, telling the reader some news from the netherworld. Here once more magical becomes real and real becomes magical. This is an important feature of metafictional strategy of magical realist writing so as to subvert singular version of truth—particularly associated with the male version of truth. Huvat’s marking on the wall reminds us the notch of Djinnman Memet’s, mentioned in the previous sections. Both

of them attempt to exclude the female. However with Dirmit picking up the red carnation as a way of refusal, metaphors extend into a real state to undermine the male authority. Toni Morrison's claim tells us that "magical realism provides another way of knowing things" (Bowers, 2004:86). Thus here, it enables Dirmit to situate herself outside the dominant power structures.

Thus, both female characters develop their own legitimate female difference through magic. As analyzed, in the previous chapter this female difference is achieved through the alternative use of similitude episteme. Therefore I would like to make concluding claims for the magical realist language of *Dear Shameless Death*. Literary critic Brenda Cooper claims as follows: "Magical realism attempts to capture reality by a way of depiction of life many dimensions, seen and unseen, visible and invisible, rational and mysterious..." (Bowers, 2004:126). This allows Tekin to articulate the local—Anatolian folklore intertwined with alternate use of similitude—within a realistic context.

However, although this whole articulation portrays Aktaş family's hardship against the oscillation between the rural and the urban, it is indeed an ironic reworking of the Anatolian folk tales and myths from a feminist perspective. As I have tried to demonstrate throughout my analysis the novel's plot and narration resist the basic assumptions of patriarchal constraints. Thus, the gendered perspective of *Dear Shameless Death* via magical realist writing makes itself explicit here. The female characters' subjectivity formation and resistance definitely mirror Latife Tekin's magical realist language. As I have already pointed out in my introduction, they all serve for the same purpose: to have one's own voice from the position of the margins—significantly of the female. Tekin, in fact uses metafictional

strategies<sup>20</sup> in order to provide new codes of recognition relating to the male centered language.

Therefore, this whole position of distinct metafictional literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death* brings a distinct kind of writing which goes beyond analogical narration and turns the singular version of truth relating to the male. Apart from Atiye's effective bodily control over the spiritual, magical realism functions through the notion of "writing as a woman. "At the end it is Dirmit who makes the words fly all over the city, definitely challenging the male dominated thinking. Thus Tekin's distinct magical realist language encourages reversing the so-called creative power of male upside down. Or in a broader scope it aims to make a strong attempt to subvert phallogentric language, so to speak. Thus, Tekin's magical realism could be linked to the construction of a *feminine writing*, as stated in the previous sections with a strong reference to French feminist writer and critic Hélène Cixous (1937). This link is indeed due to the two significant perspectives intersecting with *Dear Shameless Death*: deconstructive critique of phallogentricism and importance of autobiographical experience.

Feminist literary critic Pam Morris argues about Cixous as follows: "she launches a deconstructive critique of the phallogentrism and discovering an *écriture féminine*—a feminine practice of writing... which she swings into a typical zestful attack on the working of binary oppositions to uphold masculinity as origin source of creativity..." (1993:118). This attempt of subverting phallogentric language or masculinity as origin source of creativity goes parallel to Tekin's magical realist language in terms of engendering a solid female creativity via magic and poetry as opposed to the male failure<sup>21</sup> in the novel. Atiye's and Dirmit's somatic female resistance in terms their female creativity strongly undermine the male

<sup>20</sup> In *Dear Shameless Death* metafictional strategies refer to self-reflexivness relying on the function of alternative use of similitude episteme, amalgamation of irrational and rational viewpoints, blurring the time and space descriptions or unconventional proliferation of tenses.

<sup>21</sup> Male failure in *Dear Shameless Death* indeed refers to the characteristics of male household (Huvat, Mahmut and Seyit) which usually associated with idleness, tragic-comic illiterateness or getting into habitual troubles.

intensions or male authority over the female. In *Dear Shameless Death*, as opposed to the phallogentric language, creative power is constructed not as male but as *female*: initially magic and divination attributed to Atiye which engender alternative sanctions subverting the masculine power. Secondly it is Dirmit's magical poetry which eventually defeats her brothers' or her father's restrictions.

While engendering a female creativity in writing Cixous strongly suggests that the ambiguities of language create a trap and allows us to think alternatively against totalization of language by the male. (Robbins, 2000:169). She goes on to assert that totalization undoubtedly suppresses women in general. Thus finding holes in the narrations could be a solution of breaking the structure in language which oppresses as well as excludes women. (2000:169). Thus in *Dear Shameless Death*, the magic and reality as well as Tekin's mythic narration function as a strong rupture within a language which excludes women. However I must also note that women fall into the phallogentric language through this exclusion, lack or let us say language-less-ness. Yet as seen in *Dear Shameless Death*, amalgamation of magic and reality leads to distinct word-plays and metaphors which undermine the perception of singular reality—that is the male reality.

In addition to these, Cixous also attaches a great importance to autobiographical experience as she associates it with the binary oppositions to her early life in Algeria, as a French colony. In *Sorties* (1975) she argues that: "Patriarchy is maintained by the exchange of women as possessions from fathers to husbands so as to control or gain something... What he wants... is that he gain more masculinity... authority, power or pleasure, all of which reinforce his phallogentric narcissism at the same time... Masculine profit is almost mixed up with a success that is socially defined..." (Morris, 1993:119). However Cixous, as opposed to the masculine profit, attempts to bring forth feminine libidinal economy; that comes from

the female body or the “gift”: “There has to be somewhere else I tell myself...She... never settling down, pouring out, going everywhere to the other...If there is a self proper to woman, paradoxically it is her capacity to deappropriate herself: endless body, without “end”... (Morris, 1993:119). Thus, with her statements, that aforementioned mystical place where Cixous pours out, tells about her and definitely writes about her experiences turns to be the mere lived body of hers. In the “Laugh of the Medusa” (1975) she spiritedly argues for this contention of hers: a positive feminine identity through writing. “The Laugh of the Medusa” is indeed the manifesto of a feminine writing. Its spirited tone, unconventional syntax, non-linear style refers to high abundance rather than the lack and the absence which is attributed to the “female” by phallocentrism. Therefore Cixous writes as follows:

We’re stormy... our glances, our smiles ,are spent... laughs exude from all our mouths; our blood flows and we extend ourselves...our signs, our writing; and we are not afraid of lacking..

Flying is woman’s gesture—flying in language and making it fly...for centuries we’ve been able to possess anything only by flying; we’ve lived in flight, stealing away...

A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there’s no other way... (Morris, 1993:120).

As it is seen from her words, her language is intense and wrapped around deep metaphors within heterogeneity rather than one singular version of truth. As Morris argues, Cixous’s writing launches on abundance, creative extravagance, playful excess and the physical materiality of the female body (1993:122). While writing through her body, Cixous says that this whole experience is “volcanic” in relation to subversiveness of a feminine text.

Thus, this is where Cixous and magical realist language of Latife Tekin strongly intersect several times with each other. Tekin’s use of magical realism, her pluralized tenses and meanings, her elevated metaphors and puns, her mythic syntax and the way how she makes the words fly definitely evoke Cixous’s poetic and fluid language. Moreover, the philosophies of experience and writing with the narrations of female body play a crucial role in both

writers. As I have already pointed out that *Dear Shameless Death* is a semi-autobiographical novel, Latife Tekin carries the meaning through her body significantly via the young girl Dirmit and her magical realist poetry.

As a consequence of all this practice of feminine writing, Cixous says as follows: “it is impossible to *define* a feminine practice of writing and this is an impossibility that will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed or coded. (Morris, 1993:119). Therefore, we could only trace the subversive strategies relating to the style, language, tone or syntax of language and come up with illuminating insights for a feminine practice of writing. As I have mentioned in my earlier footnotes, although Cixous is criticized for being essentialist or an utopist for urging a woman “to write herself” with the drives of her body, it is indeed not that rigid sense of bodily drives. Robbins summarizes her suggestions as follows: “... although bodies are biological entities, Cixous is much more interested in their cultural meanings than apparently simple facts or sex or race. Thus for her, femininity is not a matter of sex; rather it describes a position in relation to culture which is not dependent on biology, though she concedes that women are more likely to occupy this position than men are in society as it is currently constituted. Both women and men are capable of feminine writing; it is just women are more likely than men to want to engage in it, because they have less invested in the discursive status quo.” (2000:173). Relying on this clarification, magical realist writing in *Dear Shameless Death* is carried through not much verbal articulation but experiences of female lived bodies of Atiye and Dirmit—females bodies that are culturally coded as Cixous suggests.

Therefore, like Cixous, Tekin engenders a non-linear and totally flying narration via magic and reality. This clearly subverts the edifices of patrilinear logic of language in relation to Cixous’s understanding of feminine writing—“flying is a woman’s gesture; fly in language



and making it fly”—Thus, as I have put forward as my argument in the thesis introduction, magical realism in *Dear Shameless Death* turns out to be as a site of a female resistance. It engenders a feminine non-obedient narration within male oriented thinking. Moreover as I have tried to demonstrate in this analysis, it could strongly be twisted into a practice of feminine writing, leaving us with the boundaries of (*feminine*) *magical realist writing*.

For the last concluding remarks, I would like to trace back to the previous chapter. The similitude episteme combined with magical realism creates both distinct female subjectivity and distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse. In this sense we can reconsider magical realist writing returning to Renaissance episteme with a rupture or *difference*. In *Dear Shameless Death* it is undoubtedly the magic, narrated in a matter-of-fact-manner, which creates this sense of difference or a rupture in the (metafiction) Foucauldian literary discourse. Foucault suggests that literature, even today, finds its way back on reduplications of things inscribed in the world. Simon During, mentioned in my theoretical background as well, reinforces Foucault’s argument telling that for him modern literature is considered as repetition and doubling. However, magical realism creates a big rupture within this paradigm. Even though I strongly suggest that magical realism combined with resemblance in *Dear Shameless Death* goes back to Renaissance episteme of similitude, it obviously does not return in a traditional or linear way.

This is where Cixous’s feminine practice of writing intersects with both transgressiveness of magical realist writing—as analyzed throughout this chapter—and then this distinct metafiction of Foucauldian literary discourse. Cixous suggests a profound critique of binary oppositions relating to the female and challenges the phallogentric language with a *difference*<sup>22</sup>. In this sense she creates ruptures with pluralized meanings, deep metaphors, puns. Thus in this chapter I have tried to show how magical realism functions as a site of a

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<sup>22</sup> Refers to post-structuralist Jacques Derrida’s work. It refers to his concept of *différance*; Derrida argues that all meaning takes place within this concept. Words relate to each other in terms of their differences.

female resistance mostly in accordance with Cixous's feminine writing. Thus for the closure of this circle, this whole possibility of (feminine) magical realist writing intersects with the alternative usage of Foucault's similitude episteme for the explicit feminist purposes. While female character(s) follow the path of similitude in the novel, (feminine) magical realist narration provides a difference or rather a rupture. It totally breaks the analogies and thus Foucauldian metafictional self-reflexivity. It goes beyond the entrapment of repetitive language and through Atiye's and Dirmit's distinct female subjectivity strongly challenges the patriarchal constraints and male minds. Consequently I should also note that Cixous does not suggest us a nostalgic reworking of a feminine magical realist narration, going back to Renaissance similitude episteme. Even though this is quite an unconventional and an unexplored literary approach at present, this interpretation would be an overestimation. *Dear Shameless Death*, with its distinct female characters and its Anatolian mythic nature, inscribes its reading through the alternative use of similitude episteme. In this alternative sense it intersects with the transgressiveness of magical realism and thus possibility of feminine magical realist writing. Thus, this whole analysis makes us re-consider the flexibility of magical realism at any circumstances as a notable narrative mode, significantly for the female. As it is seen from the whole analysis, it is versatile, combined with Foucauldian description of Renaissance episteme and even regarded as a distinct return to it. All of these features found in this analysis definitely function for feminism in order to overturn the accepted gender roles and male representations of women in *Dear Shameless Death*.

## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I aimed at demonstrating a close reading of *Dear Shameless Death* by Latife Tekin within multilateral literary perspectives. I aimed at revealing the novel's distinct literary discourse for a profound feminist-reading, which will be notable for the further (feminist) literary studies.

I read *Dear Shameless Death* in three sections: First, I focused on Foucault's similitude episteme. My aim was to indicate the metafictional narrative in the novel. Second, I explored magical realism—one of the strategies of metafiction. In doing so, I alternatively combined the use of similitude and magical realism to point out a distinct metafiction, going beyond mere resemblances. Last of all, within this distinct combination I tried to reveal the feminist perspectives in the novel. In the process of my whole analysis I tried to show how magical realism functions as a solid site of a female resistance against patriarchal constraints. Within this position, I tried to explore the transgressiveness of magical realism significantly for the female. Taken everything into account, I tried to connect the whole distinct magical realist discourse to the notion of feminine *écriture*, with a strong reference to French feminist critic and writer Hélène Cixous.

In doing so, I came to a greater understanding of *Dear Shameless Death*. As I have analyzed in my chapters, the alternative use of Foucauldian similitude creates a big difference or a rupture in the male thinking. This difference goes hand in hand with the notion of feminine writing in terms of subverting the male authority and thus phallogentric language. Here Latife Tekin's magical realist narration, combined alternatively with similitude suggests us a possibility of (feminine) magical realist writing. This is the distinct literary discourse of *Dear Shameless Death*, which I aimed at revealing at the beginning of my thesis.

Moreover, as a concluding remark, I call this distinct literary discourse a return to Renaissance episteme with a rupture or a difference. I think this whole position is a quite an unexplored literary field at present. Therefore this thesis may pursue to further literary studies concerning magical realist writing and feminism. For the last final remark I would like to ask a question. As seen, Foucault's Renaissance episteme and Cixous are brought together in this thesis. Therefore, does Cixous, somehow, suggest us *a nostalgic reworking of a feminine magical realist narration, going back to Renaissance similitude episteme- with a rupture or a difference?* As I have noted in my last chapter, this may be an overestimation; yet I think it is worth thinking in terms of further literary studies—significantly for challenging monolithic structures.

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