

# Feminine in The Laugh of the Medusa

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## Introduction

Words turn probability into fact and, by absolute force of characterization, translate tendencies into behaviors. Women write from a commitment to the idea that words, as much as actions, have consequences. Women have a particular and a sort of complex relationship to language; because they have for so long been stripped from fulfilling their desires or revolutions, they have turned to language as an approach to dealing with society and perhaps dominantly influence the world as well. Sure, men do it as well, but women do it another way. (Does that actually surprise you?) *Écriture féminine* is interpreted as “females’ writing.

“The philosophy, which unloads the connection in the midst of the ethnic and emotional engraving of the female body and woman difference in text and language. *Écriture féminine* is a fictional theory that was invented in 1976 by Cixous in the much-famed book ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’ which is also known as “feminine writing.” *Écriture féminine* using philosophy centers the prominence of linguistics for the better understanding of a person. This general concept builds on the earlier effort in psychoanalysis about the technique that human beings come to comprehend their roles. In trying to achieve so, it explains how women are generally placed as ‘aliens’ in a masculine figurative order (Cixous, 1976).

## Discussion

“The Laugh of the Medusa,” published in 1976, remains popular until this day and plays a key role in understanding the main concepts regarding this theory. Phallogocentrism refers to centering the phallus and the male viewpoint. Phallogocentrism refers to privileging the masculine in the construction of meaning and knowledge and implications of the concept of *écriture féminine*. According to Hélène Cixous, *écriture féminine* is a reaction to a masculine economy controlling thought and literature where the suppression of females has been prolonged all across the world. Hélène Cixous firmly emphasizes that “a woman must put pen to paper about her self, and also bring and relate other women in their writing, as they have been denied from the basic luxury of freedom of expression for far too long. Cixous provoked females to transcribe themselves away from the biased world men created, especially to impose themselves on women. She advised females to write freely, with courage, and to put the improbable into words. *Écriture féminine* is not only considered a chance for female writers; rather, she firmly believes with full confidence that it has been engaged by male writers as well. Some people have thought of it as a vague idea which is very problematic to merge with the general concept of *écriture féminine* developed by Cixous because of the many allusions she makes to the female body. Cixous visualizes *écriture féminine* as a method of writing that would exist

or take place in the influence of the real rather than the symbolic. It, therefore, takes the form of the expression of the inexpressible and can only be arrived at via experimentation and play (Cixous, 1976).

Cixous claims that the subject position is thought to be on the limitations of the Symbolic, controlled by the Phallus. Though, Cixous also observed that “female” is assumed to be decentered, and thus able to make and move. The basic concept of *écriture féminine* comes from the general perception that women are unfathomable, not as ethical, and also not as balanced as men. Cixous relates non-figurative writing with the womanly and maternal bodies, and figurative writing is related to the Symbolic. Feminine writing does not fit appropriately with all females, but she made a point that anyone can lodge the suspended position of “woman.” Rejecting to define *Écriture* as feminine would be like defining it to limit and imprison it. Cixous inconsistently asserts that *Écriture féminine* comes from the female body and that men can put pen to paper from that position as well. She defines *Écriture féminine* through a variety of metaphors, including honey, milk, and even the ocean; she claims that *Écriture féminine* assists as a troublesome power. Every woman has come across the situation of a nuisance in getting up to speak her thoughts. With huge pressure and with her heart racing, she would be completely lost for words sometimes, and eventually, she would realize how great misconduct it is for a woman openly in public (Cixous, 1976).

*Écriture féminine* refers to a distinctively feminine flair of writing characterized by disturbances in the text, such as gaps, hushes, jokes, new images, and so on. It is unconventional, unfathomable, and varying, and the trouble to understand it is credited to eras of a clampdown on the female voice, which now speaks in a borrowed linguistic. Supposed to originate from the mother, before the child attains the verbal language, this pre-linguistic and lifeless potentiality manifests itself in those literary texts which, eliminating all repressions, undermine and subvert all significations, the logic and the closure of the phallogentric language and opens into a blissful free play of implications (Cixous, 1976).

Cixous does not provide a particular and flawless definition of feminine writing or the processes it necessitates. In fact, she states that feminine writing cannot be well-defined. In her discourse, she does not aim to be theoretical in any traditional sense as she is against a traditional and, therefore, male-centered construction of meaning. She does not completely manage to avoid theorizing and scrutiny. Despite the lack of a clear definition, it can, however, be assessed that the general notion of a need for a new mode of writing for women is reflected in Virginia Woolf’s thought. The aim is to question whether and to what extent *écriture féminine*, as presented by Cixous, is appropriate and adaptable for the analysis of Woolf’s feminist leanings in her works (Cixous, 1976; Woolf, 2018).

Virginia Woolf’s novels have stood out in literary history mainly for their modernist narrative tactics and style. In highlighting the point of view of women as well as in the theme of partaking in an imaginative process within a world. Woolf has been observed and, in a way, canonized as one of the most prolific feminist writers. It is of interest whether her fiction writing both regarding its content and style, can be seen as a form of feminist achievement as well. It is to be analysed how *écriture féminine*, or feminine writing as a subversive feminist project, relates to Woolf’s novel-writing as well

as to her ideas about women's writing. Woolf herself was aware of the need for women to release themselves not only in life but also in their literary output. This is reflected in her consideration of the concept of a "woman's sentence" which shares features with and may be seen as a precursor of *écriture féminine*. *Écriture féminine* can be said to commonly aim at offering an unconventional manner of expression. Therefore, although many of the ideas and concepts related to *écriture féminine* originated years after Woolf's death, it seems relevant to Woolf's tendencies to employ alternative forms of expression in relaying human experience (Woolf, 2018; Cixous, 1976).

Virginia Woolf detailed in some of her works how the lives of women in history were often overlooked in comparison to the lives of men. Her character, Judith, was created to show there was only a certain role a woman could play. Judith is severely chastised and beaten for her willingness to learn over getting married and eventually fades into obscurity when she commits suicide. Judith is used to be an example of the deliberate and unfortunate erasure of women's contributions and potential (Woolf, 2018).

Cixous's text helps clarify the subversive nature of the spaces Woolf creates in her texts through unique language where women's minds are free to wander and where women are uninhibited in experiencing their selves and bodies. At the same time, Cixous helps conceptualize the way in which, in her fiction, Woolf exposes the restrictive nature of the male-dominated rational structures of language and of society in which life is bound. The emphasis of the analysis is aspects of Woolf's novel *Mrs. Dalloway*. Furthermore, the point of view of female characters is stressed. The individual subchapters address the relation of Woolf's concept of the woman's sentence and Cixous's *écriture féminine*, the particular use of language in talking about the female body and pleasure in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the significance of women's internal lives in a world of male-dominated rational thinking. Lastly, further problematic aspects of Cixous's text are presented (Cixous, 1976; Woolf, 2018).

Women must break free from this masculine world and create a world of their own; they should create their own new modes of expression and should never fear to write in the way they want to. A woman must write for herself, for her own pleasure and must write about achievements of other women in different areas of life. Women should motivate each other. A woman must put herself into her own script so that the world would eventually realize the importance of her and eventually recognize her achievements as well. A world where women can express their thoughts freely would be a place much better to live in instead of a society that is dominated by men only (Cixous, 1976).

*Écriture féminine* is befuddled, rule-transcending, and transgressive, but it is observed that the idea presented by Cixous has many unaddressed issues. The authority, for example, is seen as unaffected by social and gender conditions and able to issue a clean spirit of the feminine. That aspect could be problematic with feminism which burdens femininity as a collective construction. However, *Écriture féminine* could also be well-defined as "the engraving of the feminine body and feminine variation in linguistic and script. This theory places knowledge before linguistic and civil rights. Because language could never be an impartial standard, it can be authorized to task as a gadget of male-controlled expression. Females are seen as suffering from the menace of having to use a medium, which is

essentially an eccentric male tool twisted to favor male purposes and to dominate females. *Écriture féminine* could also be labeled as a contradiction of masculine script or as a way of escape for women. The path to finally get rid of the dark shadow of male dominance that has been cast on women for the past few centuries. The women could finally express her thoughts, her feelings in her writings in a way that had never been done before due to restrictions put on them by a male-dominated society (Cixous, 1976).

## Conclusions

The ritual of women's writing has been much overlooked due to the mediocre position women have occupied in male-controlled civilizations. The responsibility of women's literature, then, is to classify and make an area of study for a group of people sidelined by history and to explore through their writing their lives as they were while occupying such a unique sociopolitical space within their culture for many years, the woman writers and their writings have gone through some considerable modifications. Women were not entitled to many of their basic rights, and she was only valued on account of their marital and domestic obligations, and she were limited to the sidelines of a patriarchal civilization for far too long. Maybe she wrote a manuscript under a male alias to be accepted; maybe she burnt or buried her script, scared of the significance it might have; or maybe she indirectly inscribed a counter-narrative by which she did accomplish some of her ambitions. To express creativity as a woman often nominated an oppositional choice for their fictional heroines, according to their limited options in society. Today in the modern era, the general question of women's identity remains to be asked, and one can only wonder if a woman will ever be able to break free in this male-dominated society. By writing, the female will eventually take her body and soul back, which has been apprehended and turned her into the weird body on display, like some sick or diseased body. Cut the body, and you cut speech and breath at the same time. For females only way to move forward is to, Write, write, and even more, let no person even try to hold you back, let nothing break your soul, your confidence: not even a gentleman who is trying his best to hold you back and deny you the opportunities you deserve. Be a woman! Nothing more, nothing less (Cixous, 1976; Woolf, 2018).

## Works Cited

Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." Translated by Keith & Paula Cohen. *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Summer 1976. 875-893

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