



# A Comparative Study of Feminism in Shahrnush Parsipur's *Touba* and the Meaning of Night and Toni Morrison's *Paradise* through H el ene Cixous' Theories

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## Abstract

This article aims at evaluating the presentation of feminism, female language articulates women's sexuality, and the concept of the different and patriarchal society in Shahrnush Parsipur's *Touba* and *The Meaning of Night* and Toni Morrison's *Paradise* based on Helen Cixouse's theory including Body, * criture F eminine*, Logocentrism, Phallogocentrism, Racism, and Oppression. The results showed that in *Touba* and the *Meaning of Night*, women's sexuality was barely preserved on the part of *Touba* and she makes more attempts to lead a conservative lifestyle rather than striving for preserving her sexual rights as a woman, whereas. In *Paradise*, women's sexuality was more explicitly addressed. The representation of body and * criture F eminine* was much more obvious in Morrison than in Parsipur. Also, patriarchy and phallogocentrism were highlighted in *Paradise* more than in *Touba* and the *Meaning of Night*. In *Paradise*, gender-oriented separation and racism were frameworks of cultural and mental limitations, which impacted the existence of the Convent women. However, racism was not the main issue in *Touba* and the *Meaning of Night*. Finally, oppression was an important issue in women's social position and relationships, and both authors aimed to represent several examples of socially imposed oppression in their stories. It was concluded that *Touba* and the *Meaning of Night* explored the ongoing tensions between rationalism and mysticism, tradition and modernity, and male dominance and female will while in *Paradise* females are the people who have power. Women are far away from power and cannot act or decide, and they cannot think or speak on their own. Patriarchal society reserves the right to speak for men and women derived from it. The results of the present study can be useful for researchers to conduct similar evaluations of feministic features in comparing Persian and English novels.

**Keywords:** * criture F eminine*, Logocentrism, Phallogocentrism, Racism, Oppression

## 1- Introduction

The exploration of women's roles in literature has gained significant attention, particularly through feminist theories that challenge patriarchal norms. This article aims to analyze Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and Shahrnush Parsipur's *Touba* and *The Meaning of Night*, exploring their striking thematic convergence despite their vastly different cultural contexts. Both novels vividly depict the enduring suffering of women within patriarchal societies, employing literary strategies that challenge and subvert dominant male narratives. Despite their different cultural backgrounds, Parsipur and Morrison address similar themes related to women's oppression and the quest for identity. This study seeks to understand how their narratives reflect the complexities of female sexuality and language in the context of patriarchal societies, guided by Cixous' theoretical framework.

While previous scholarship has examined these works through post-colonial, psychological, or general feminist lenses, this analysis uniquely employs H el ene Cixous's theories of * criture f eminine* to illuminate how these authors represent women's experiences and articulate female sexuality, ultimately resisting the constraints of patriarchal language and power structures. The study focuses on how both authors disrupt the established

logocentric order, challenge phallogocentrism, and expose the interconnectedness of gender oppression with racism and other forms of social injustice.

Cixous's concept of * criture f eminine* posits a writing style that transcends the limitations of traditional patriarchal language. It rejects the rigid, linear structures and logical frameworks that characterize male-dominated discourse, opting instead for a more fluid, intuitive, and embodied form of expression. This approach allows women writers to articulate their unique perspectives and experiences, often marginalized or silenced in patriarchal societies. In *Paradise*, Morrison utilizes this concept to explore the complexities of race and gender within the Black community, revealing the internal contradictions and power dynamics at play within the seemingly homogenous space of Ruby. The women of the Convent, for instance, represent a challenge to the rigid social order of the town, their defiance of patriarchal expectations forcing a confrontation with the limitations of the community's collective identity. Their marginalized position within Ruby highlights the intricate layering of oppression, demonstrating how racial identity intersects with gender and class to shape women's experiences.

Parsipur, writing from a distinctly different cultural context, employs * criture f eminine* in a similarly subversive manner. *Touba* and *The Meaning of Night* powerfully depict

the suffering of women under the oppressive weight of Iranian societal norms and political turmoil. The protagonists, through their experiences of trauma, violence, and social ostracization, challenge the dominant male narratives that seek to silence and control their voices. Parsipur's use of fragmented narratives, dream sequences, and poetic language mirror Cixous's call for a more fluid and intuitive writing style, reflecting the fragmented and often disorienting experiences of women living under patriarchal rule. The novel doesn't simply recount the suffering; it embodies it, employing a style that reflects the very trauma it depicts. The fragmented nature of the narrative mirrors the fragmented realities of the women's lives, reflecting the ways in which their identities have been fractured by societal oppression.

Both Morrison and Parsipur address the crucial issue of the body in their narratives, a central element within Cixous's theoretical framework. Cixous emphasizes the importance of reclaiming the female body as a source of power and creativity, rejecting the patriarchal view of the female body as a site of shame and repression (Chrystian et al., 2016). In *Paradise*, the female body is presented not only as a site of potential pleasure and agency but also as a target of violence and control. The attack on the Convent women is not merely a physical assault but a symbolic act of violence against female sexuality and autonomy. The novel subtly suggests that the men's fear of the women's freedom stems from a fear of their own inability to control female sexuality.

Similarly, Parsipur's work showcases the female body as both a site of resilience and vulnerability. The women in *Tuba and The Meaning of Night* endure immense physical and psychological suffering, yet they retain a remarkable capacity for endurance and survival. Their bodies, though scarred and violated, become emblems of their strength and resistance. Parsipur's descriptions of the women's experiences transcend mere depictions of suffering, transforming the body into a symbol of enduring spirit, a testament to their ability to persevere even in the face of unimaginable cruelty. The violence inflicted on the female body is not simply a background element but serves as a powerful metaphor for the systemic violence inherent in patriarchal societies.

Furthermore, both Morrison and Parsipur actively challenge the logocentric system inherent in patriarchal discourse. Cixous argues that traditional language, rooted in logic and reason, systematically marginalizes female experience (Cixous, 2009). Both authors subvert this system through their choice of narrative techniques, incorporating elements of myth, dream, and poetry into their prose. The use of these non-linear forms of expression allows them to convey the complexities of female experience that defy easy categorization or rational explanation. In *Paradise*, the cyclical structure of the narrative reflects the enduring nature of patriarchal oppression, while the incorporation of magical realism adds another layer of complexity, further disrupting the linearity of traditional storytelling (Pittaway, 2014).

In *Tuba and The Meaning of Night*, the fragmented narrative structure reflects the fragmented nature of the female experience in a society characterized by violence

and oppression. The fluidity of the narrative reflects the fluidity of memory and experience, capturing the disorientation and trauma experienced by the women characters. The use of poetic language adds a further layer of complexity to the narrative, enriching the readers' understanding of the women's inner world. This research is significant as it applies Cixous' theory of *Écriture Féminine* to analyze the feminist dimensions of Persian and English literature. By comparing these two novels, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of how female authors navigate and challenge patriarchal structures through their writing.

In conclusion, this comparative study using Cixous's theoretical framework reveals the remarkable commonalities between Morrison's *Paradise* and Parsipur's *Tuba and The Meaning of Night*. Both authors creatively utilize *écriture féminine* to represent women's experiences within patriarchal structures, challenging logocentric dominance, reclaiming the female body as a site of strength, and revealing the interconnected nature of gender oppression with other forms of social injustice. Through their powerful storytelling, Morrison and Parsipur not only depict the pervasive suffering of women but also demonstrate the transformative power of female writing to resist and subvert oppressive systems. The study demonstrates the enduring relevance of Cixous's work, highlighting its efficacy in providing a critical lens through which to understand the complexities of female experience in vastly different cultural contexts.

## 2- Literature Review

Some excellent research has been done on both *Tuba and The Meaning of Night* by Shahrnush Parsipur and *Paradise* by Toni Morrison in the light of different literary approaches such as post-colonial, psychological, and feminist approaches, though as far as the researcher reviewed the literature, there was no research based on Cixous's theories .

Schur (2004), in a study entitled "Locating Paradise in the post-civil rights era," tried to "locate" Toni Morrison's *Paradise* in the post-civil rights era by identifying its place within contemporary discussions about African American culture and the civil rights movement's legacy.

Kearly (2000), studied Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and the politics of community. The act of reading *Paradise* is performing an alternative way of making a community, where individuals derive a sense of belonging and identity, a sense of having a place in the world not just by following a predetermined order, but by accepting the diversity of living in the moment.

Thabet (1997) investigates the utilization of symbolism in Toni Morrison's *Paradise*. The female figures are endowed with shared characteristics of helplessness and loss that augmented our sense of man's entrapment and dehumanization. Their dilemma also triggered off a subsidiary cluster of themes, events, and imagery to trace the best means to set up equilibrium between man and his surroundings and before his entire shaky psyche. The study spotlights the interplay of symbolism with these elements to vividly convey and enrich the authorial message. It

ultimately concludes that the symbolic dimension in the novel adds up to its literary merit and universal appeal.

Nafisi (2003), in her paper entitled "The Quest for the "Real" Woman in the Iranian Novel" natively reconstructs the importance of women's social and political consciousness and the role played by what he calls their shamelessness in the changing relations between the public and private spaces in Iran's modern history regarding *Tuba* and the Meaning of Night.

### 3- General Overview on Hélène Cixous

Hélène Cixous was born to a Spanish/French/Jewish father and an Austro-German/Jewish mother on June 5, 1937, in Oran, Algeria. As a child, she was surrounded by a variety of languages and cultural influences including German and French and to a lesser degree Spanish and Arabic. She moved to France to attend a school where she still resides. Cixous began publishing in the sixties and has worked within and outside of the forms of the novel, philosophy, playwriting, non-fiction, and cultural theory. Her work engages ideas of feminism, family, love, language, current theorists, current cultural events, and an unending and expansive inclusion of just about anything that can be related to the everyday understanding of self.

Reading based on Cixous calls for familiarity with her linguistic vantage point as well as observation of her use of language as she seeks to disrupt the social structure by disrupting the linguistic structure. In her opinion, society constructs language and develops a cultural context that establishes the subject as well as the relation between signifier and signified. She argues that language is the site for disruption because there is nothing that exists outside the relationship of linguistic structures. For societal change to occur, linguistic structures must be addressed and re-inscribed while the nexus between linguistic and societal structures cannot be over-emphasized (Cixous, 2009). Helene Cixous and Luce Igaray introduced psychoanalytic discourses into their work taken from Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan to "get the root" of feminine anxieties within the text to show a broader social fact about the place of women to grasp the concept of performativity as a key concept to contemporary Feminist theory (Cixous et al., 1975).

### ٣/١ Hélène Cixous and the Notion of "écriture féminine"

While for Freud sexual difference is premised on specular knowledge, 'catching sight of something, and is thus located in the exterior, anatomical appearance, Cixous proposes that sexual difference is located on the inside, in the Imaginary and its relation to desire (Cixous and Clément, 1975). Bodies are mapped by two different libidinal compositions. Firstly, the masculine body is engendered as a 'centralized body (in political anatomy) under the dictatorship of its parts, it is hierarchically ordered and 'gravitates around the penis' (Cixous, 1994). Secondly, Cixous envisions the feminine body in contrast as a "body without end, without appendage, without principle 'parts'. If she is a whole, she is a whole, it's a whole composed of parts that are wholes, not simply partial objects but a

moving, limitlessly changing ensemble, a cosmos tirelessly traversed by Eros" (Cixous, 1974).

The feminine body is less ordered than the masculine and can be the source of delight. Feminine pleasure is unfixed and manifold. Libidinal desires and their relation to love and the other can be described in economic terms, Cixous proposes. The two libidinal economies manifest particularly in intersubjective relations. The masculine libidinal economy reduces the other to a use-value, something that is acted upon, appropriated, and exploited, while in the feminine economy, the self-derives pleasure from "the other alive and different", renouncing the impulse to know, to master and to seize upon and to take possession of (Cixous and Clément, 1994).

Hélène Cixous, as a prominent post-structuralist feminist theorist, significantly impacted feminist literary theory. Her work challenges traditional patriarchal structures that have historically marginalized women's voices and experiences. Cixous' most famous work moves around a theory called *écriture féminine* (women's writing) which was a movement that shifted the shape of feminism in the late 20th Century. Central to her philosophy is the concept of *Écriture féminine*, a "woman's writing," which isn't defined by a set of rules but rather by a breaking away from phallogocentric language and structures.

Cixous argues that Western philosophical discourse, which she terms "logocentric," is inherently male-dominated and privileges a linear, rational, and ultimately masculine mode of expression. This logocentrism, rooted in the Greek concept of *logos*, prioritizes reason and logic, often at the expense of emotion, intuition, and the body—qualities frequently associated with the feminine. Conversely, *Écriture féminine* embraces fluidity, multiplicity, and the body as a source of knowledge and expression. It's characterized by a nonlinear, fragmented style that resists fixed meanings and embraces ambiguity.

Cixous critiques phallogocentrism, a term highlighting the intertwining of patriarchal power structures with logocentric language. This system reinforces male dominance by associating language and reason with masculinity and relegating women to a silent or marginalized position. Through *Écriture féminine*, women can disrupt this system by reclaiming their bodies and voices, creating a counter-narrative to the dominant discourse (Binhammer, 1991). This involves writing from the perspective of the female body, exploring its experiences and sensations, often challenging societal taboos surrounding female sexuality. Her work also emphasizes the importance of difference and resists the essentializing of women's experiences, recognizing the complexities and diversity within female identities. Ultimately, Cixous' theories aim to empower women through language, offering a path towards self-discovery and liberation from patriarchal constraints.

### 4- Feminine Language and Feminization in *Touba* and the Meaning of Night

In *Touba and the Meaning of Night* (1989), Parsipur presents a feminized setting that reflects the complexities of women's lives in 19th and 20th-century Iran. The

protagonist, Touba, navigates a world dominated by patriarchal values, grappling with her identity and desires. In Shahrnush Parsipur's *Touba and the Meaning of Night*, "feminine language" and "feminization" aren't presented as easily definable categories, but rather as complex and often subtly subversive strategies within a patriarchal context. The novel doesn't offer a straightforward celebration of overtly feminine expression; instead, it depicts the ways in which women navigate and resist oppressive societal structures through nuanced linguistic and behavioral choices.

The "feminization" of the narrative itself is significant. The story unfolds primarily through Touba's experiences, rendering a perspective often absent from dominant historical accounts of Iran. This feminine perspective is not merely a recounting of events; it's a carefully crafted narrative that uses silence, ambiguity, and indirect expression to communicate truths otherwise suppressed. Touba's internal world, her thoughts and feelings, are presented as more powerful than outward displays of defiance.

The language itself reflects this complexity. While not overtly flamboyant or breaking radically from traditional Persian literary styles, the narrative subtly subverts expectations. The detailed descriptions of women's domestic lives, their intimate relationships, and their experiences of oppression become a form of resistance. This detailed portrayal, normally considered trivial or "feminine" and therefore marginalized, gives power to Touba's experiences and unveils a complex system of patriarchal control.

Parsipur uses a blend of direct and indirect narration, mirroring the constrained yet resilient nature of women's lives under the oppressive regime. Touba's silence at times speaks volumes, conveying the limitations imposed on women's voices. The subtle shifts in tone and the use of symbolism—often tied to women's bodies and domesticity—create a layered and indirect form of communication, a way of expressing the unspoken truths of female experience within a restrictive social order. Ultimately, the "feminine language" in *Touba and the Meaning of Night* is a testament to female resilience and a sophisticated form of resistance within a rigidly patriarchal society.

#### ¶\ Women's Sexuality in *Touba and the Meaning of Night*

Cixous criticizes Freud for his clichés and failing to recognize the different sexual human possibilities. *Touba and the Meaning of Night* is the story of the growth, maturation, and transformation of a small girl named Tuba, within the context of a patriarchal discourse of a traditional community; from the beginning of the story, we observe how the assumptions, foresight, and prudence of a male-dominated society influence Tuba's life and change it forever. In Shahrnush Parsipur's *Touba and the Meaning of Night*, women's sexuality is presented as a site of both oppression and resistance within a deeply patriarchal Iranian society. The confrontation between tradition and modernity can be seen as one of the most important themes of this story. In her lifetime, Tuba encounters men who each

represents a particular discourse in the story (Hessampour et al., 2021). Tuba's experiences highlight the ways in which female sexuality is controlled and suppressed, subjected to societal expectations and male dominance. Her body becomes a battleground for conflicting forces: societal constraints demanding chastity and repression versus her own burgeoning desires and exploration of sensuality. The novel doesn't explicitly depict sexual acts, but it powerfully conveys the impact of patriarchal control on women's bodies and their capacity for self-expression. The limitations placed on Touba's sexuality are reflected in her restricted movements, her silenced desires, and the constant surveillance she faces. Her experiences are representative of a broader system that denies women agency over their bodies and reduces them to objects of male desire or instruments for procreation.

However, despite the oppressive environment, there are subtle hints of female agency and resistance. Touba's internal world, her thoughts and feelings, reveal a longing for intimacy and self-discovery that cannot be entirely suppressed. Her experiences, though marked by suffering and limitation, demonstrate a tenacious spirit and a yearning for freedom, suggesting a resilience that persists even amidst stringent social controls. Thus, the portrayal of female sexuality is not merely a depiction of oppression but also a testament to women's enduring strength and capacity for resistance. Touba's aspirations, agonies, failures, suppression, hopes, and life story are too universal to be lost between languages. Concerns about the condition of women, long-lasting sexual oppression, the challenges in accepting one's sexuality, complexities in the concept of chastity, and resistance to male-dominated culture — all themes that call for a harsh reaction from the advocates of the state ideology in Iran.

#### ¶/ The Role of Patriarchy in *Touba and the Meaning of Night*

In *Touba and the Meaning of Night*, patriarchy is not simply a backdrop but a pervasive force shaping every aspect of Touba's life and the lives of women around her. It's a system of power that dictates social norms, controls women's bodies and sexuality, and restricts their access to education, freedom, and self-determination. The novel doesn't merely depict patriarchal oppression; it meticulously dissects its mechanisms. Patriarchy manifests in various forms: the controlling presence of male family members, the limitations imposed on women's movement and social interaction, the silencing of female voices, and the enforcement of traditional gender roles. These are not abstract concepts but are vividly portrayed through specific instances of violence, emotional manipulation, and subtle forms of coercion. The social and political structures of the Iranian society, too, reflect and reinforce this patriarchal dominance.

However, the narrative isn't solely a condemnation of patriarchy. By highlighting the resilience of Touba and other female characters, the novel implicitly challenges its power. Their struggles, their internal dialogues, and their quiet acts of resistance demonstrate the enduring human spirit that persists despite immense adversity. The nuanced portrayal of patriarchy, therefore, serves not only to expose its detrimental effects but also to underscore the strength

and determination of those who live under its oppressive weight.

##### 5- Cixous's Concepts in Paradise

The novel *Paradise* by Toni Morrison explores the themes of patriarchy, racism, and feminism in a small town in the United States, where the Convent women, led by Consolata, rebel against the patriarchal system and fight for their freedom and autonomy. In contrast to Parsipur's portrayal, Morrison's *Paradise* explicitly addresses women's sexuality and empowerment. This section will explore how Morrison employs Cixous' theories to depict the struggles and triumphs of the women in the Convent. Toni Morrison's *Paradise* offers fertile ground for interpreting Hélène Cixous's feminist theories, specifically the concept of *écriture féminine*. While not explicitly invoking Cixous, Morrison's portrayal of the women in Ruby, and particularly those residing in the Convent, resonates deeply with Cixous's ideas. Cixous's critique of phallogentric language and its inherent limitations is mirrored in *Paradise*. The women of the Convent, ostracized and marginalized by the patriarchal society of Ruby, find a space to reclaim their voices and challenge the dominant narrative. Their collective experience, and the fragmented, often nonlinear nature of their storytelling within the novel, echoes Cixous's call for a writing style that moves beyond the confines of traditional, male-dominated structures. The Convent itself can be viewed as a site of *écriture féminine* in action. It becomes a space where women redefine their identities and relationships, outside the restrictive gaze of the patriarchal town. Their shared experiences, the exploration of their desires and fears, and their collective resistance against patriarchal oppression represent a powerful counter-narrative. The emphasis on female relationships, both supportive and complex, directly counters the phallogentric emphasis on male-centered narratives and power structures. Furthermore, Morrison's exploration of female sexuality in *Paradise*, while controversial within the context of Ruby, aligns with Cixous's advocacy for dismantling the taboos surrounding women's bodies and desires. The women's reclamation of their sexuality becomes a form of rebellion, a challenge to the patriarchal norms that seek to control and repress it. Ultimately, the application of Cixous' theories to *Paradise* reveals a rich tapestry of female empowerment, challenging traditional power dynamics and offering a complex and nuanced understanding of female identity and experience (Lakshmiathy, 2004).

##### 5.1 Patriarchal Society in Paradise

Morrison's depiction of the patriarchal society in Ruby serves as a backdrop for the women's quest for autonomy. This analysis will examine how the female characters resist oppression and assert their identities in a male-dominated world. In Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, the town of Ruby serves as a microcosm of a deeply patriarchal society, where entrenched power structures systematically marginalize and control women. The all-male governing council, the condescending attitudes of many men towards the women of the Convent, and the overall social structure exemplify this patriarchal dominance. Men occupy the dominant positions in the town's economy and social life, shaping the narrative and enforcing their values.

In *Paradise*, the blacks are already free from white oppression, they try to get a better life but the women are still being oppressed by the men of their race. Feminism in *Paradise* gives the reader a critical point of view on the issue of gender and the patriarchal system that people can use as reflection materials in daily life situations. The patriarchal control is further reinforced by the community's rigid moral code, particularly regarding female sexuality and behavior. Any deviation from prescribed norms is met with swift judgment and severe consequences, leading to ostracism and social death. The women of the Convent, by defying these norms, become targets of the town's patriarchal rage, underscoring the system's intolerance of female independence and self-determination. Freeman described patriarchy as when men are seen to be more important than women. Their feeling and opinion are important. Women are here just for men's pleasure and they are the assistants of men. They should fulfill their natural feminine functions. In patriarchy, women are different from men and they should not compete with men (Freeman, 1984). Tyson defines patriarchy as any society in which men hold all or most of the power. Usually, patriarchy gives men power by promoting traditional gender roles. Patriarchal men and women believe that anyone who violates traditional gender roles is in some way unnatural, unhealthy, or even immoral (Tyson, 2011).

The violence against the women, both implicit and explicit, highlights the extreme lengths to which the patriarchal system goes to maintain its dominance. It's not merely a matter of social ostracism; the threat of physical violence, along with the actual violence committed, showcases the inherent power imbalance and the repercussions of challenging the established order. Thus, *Paradise* presents a stark depiction of a patriarchal society, illustrating its control, violence, and the desperate struggle for survival and self-expression in the face of its oppressive mechanisms.

##### 5.2 The Convent in Paradise

In Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, the Convent functions as a complex and multifaceted space, offering a crucial site of empowerment for the women who reside within its walls. While not a utopia, it provides a refuge from the oppressive patriarchal structures of Ruby, allowing for a degree of autonomy and self-discovery unavailable elsewhere. The Convent's significance lies in its ability to foster a sense of community and shared experience. The women, often ostracized and marginalized in Ruby, find solidarity and support within its walls. They create their own internal rules and systems, challenging the dominant patriarchal narratives that dictate their lives outside the Convent. This collective identity empowers them to confront their past traumas, explore their desires, and redefine their identities on their own terms (Gustavsen, 2014).

The space also encourages self-expression and exploration. Free from the constant scrutiny and judgment of Ruby's male-dominated society, the women are able to engage in open discussions about their bodies, sexuality, and personal experiences. This shared vulnerability creates a powerful dynamic, strengthening their bonds and allowing them to reclaim agency over their own narratives (Griffith, 2011). However, the Convent's empowering role isn't without its internal conflicts and complexities. The

women's relationships are often fraught with tension and disagreement, reflecting the multifaceted nature of female identity and experience. This internal struggle, though challenging, serves to further highlight the women's efforts to construct their own space of autonomy and define their own terms of empowerment, even within the confines of their self-created community. Ultimately, the Convent represents a powerful symbol of female resilience and the ongoing struggle for self-determination within a patriarchal society.

## 6- Methodology

The study used a comparative analysis of the two novels in the light of Hélène Cixous' theories to show female sexuality and the existence of a female language in two socioculturally different communities. It applies a close reading of the two novels, analyzing the underlying themes and discussing them within their specific historical contexts in the light of Hélène Cixous's theories. The methods used in the novel are literary devices such as symbolism, imagery, and characterization, which are used to convey the themes and ideas of the novel. The methods used in the text include the application of Cixous' *écriture féminine* to the novel *Ruby*, as well as the use of psychoanalytic theory to analyze the characters and their motivations (Cixous, 2009).

The methods used in the novel are literary devices such as symbolism, imagery, and characterization, which are used to convey the themes and ideas of the novel. The methods used in the text include the application of Cixous' *écriture féminine* to the novel *Ruby*, as well as the use of psychoanalytic theory to analyze the characters and their motivations. The methodology of this study includes an analysis of both theoretical and literary texts. Close readings of *Tuba* and *The Meaning of Night* by Shahrnush Parsipur and *Paradise* by Toni Morrison seek to identify the underlying themes in those works and to discuss their manner within their specific historical contexts in the light of Helene Cixous's theories. The main focus is on the difference and its compliance with the concepts of *Body*, *Écriture Féminine*, *Logocentrism*, *Phallogentrism*, *Racism*, and *Oppression* (Cixous, 1994). The study begins with a brief but efficient introduction, which states the main concerns of the research and offers a summary of the basic theoretical concept and issue under investigation. It intends to divide the whole work into three chapters so that each subject can be defined completely. Each chapter is intended to answer one of the questions. Finally, the study will sum up the result of the analysis in the conclusion and provide the readers with some perspective for further discussion .

Reading Helene Cixous's critical works provides us with a descriptive view of the different phases in the literary output of women, and the way of asserting their rights in literature. The crucial concept, which is going to be applied in this research, is the term "*écriture féminine*" or feminine writing. Hélène Cixous first coined *écriture féminine* in her essay "*The Laugh of the Medusa*" (1975), where she asserts "a woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies" (Cixous, 2009) because their sexual pleasure has been repressed. Cixous argues that most women do write and speak, but that they do so from a "masculine" position; to speak, women (or

"woman") have assumed they needed a stable, fixed system of meaning, and thus have aligned themselves with the phallus, which stabilizes language (Cixous, 1974). Feminist theory aims to deal with gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations, and sexuality. While providing a critique of these social and political relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on the promotion of women's rights and interests. Like other poststructuralist feminist theorists, Hélène Cixous believes that our sexuality is directly tied to how we communicate in society (Cixous, 2010).

## 7- Research Findings

We can summarize the findings of research as follows:

- The results showed that in *Touba and the Meaning of Night*, women's sexuality was barely preserved, whereas in *Paradise*, women's sexuality was more explicitly addressed. The representation of body and *Écriture Féminine* was more obvious in *Morison* than in *Parsipur*.

- The study reveals that female characters in the two novels resist patriarchal ideologies and reinvent their identities through their bodies, which are the source of their femininity and independence.

- The key findings of the novel are that the patriarchal system in *Ruby* is oppressive and controlling, and that the Convent women, led by *Consolata*, are able to rebel against this system and gain their freedom and autonomy.

- The key findings are that patriarchy is a limiting and oppressive structure that affects both men and women, and that challenging binary oppositions and logocentrism is necessary to achieve true equality and freedom.

- There is a strong nexus between language and body and the feminine body influences language that differs from that of the masculine body. This is based on Hélène Cixous's notion of feminism as expressed in "*The Laugh of the Medusa*" by Cixous, "By writing herself, the woman will return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display [...] Write yourself."

## 8- Conclusion

This comparative study reveals the nuanced ways in which Shahrnush Parsipur and Toni Morrison address feminist themes in their respective works. Through the lens of Hélène Cixous' theories, it becomes evident that both authors challenge patriarchal norms and articulate the complexities of female identity and sexuality. While *Touba and the Meaning of Night* presents a more conservative portrayal of women's experiences, *Paradise* offers a more explicit exploration of female empowerment. *Écriture Féminine* is a method of writing that is used by Toni Morrison in her novel *Paradise*, and it is used in *Tuba and the Meaning of Night*. The patriarchal system is oppressive and controlling, and that women must rebel against this system in order to gain their freedom and autonomy. It must be challenged in order to achieve true equality and freedom, and that feminism and ecological thought are important tools in this challenge. Ultimately, this research

contributes to the ongoing discourse on feminism in literature, highlighting the importance of diverse voices in challenging societal norms.

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