



Reconstructing Female Subjectivity in Michele Roberts' Novel *In the Red Kitchen*

Michele Roberts'in In the Red Kitchen Romanında Kadın Öznelliğinin Yeniden İnşası

ABSTRACT

This article examines Michèle Roberts' novel *In the Red Kitchen* within the framework of second-wave feminism, revealing how the novel utilizes feminist writing as a counter-narrative against patriarchal discourse. The study aims to demonstrate how Roberts restructures writing, moving away from male-centered and authoritarian discourse towards fragmented, collective, and spiritually mediated forms of female expressions. At the heart of this process is the Ouija board, functioning as an alternative epistemological tool that enables the re-emergence of silenced women's histories and challenges the dominant, linear historiography. Within this framework, this study aims to analyze *In the Red Kitchen* in relation to radical feminist critiques of patriarchy, particularly the authority structures that regulates knowledge, language, and female subjectivity. Roberts' narrative reveals how women's voices have historically been silenced and restricted within patriarchal systems of meaning-making, reflecting the dismantling of this patriarchal symbolic order. In this context, the novel is examined within the framework of radical feminism, aiming to demonstrate how women can break free from the oppression of male authority figures through their spirituality. Furthermore, drawing upon Michel Foucault's analysis of *pater familias*, this article aims to explore the relationship between female experience and women's writing. Therefore, this study aims to demonstrate the rediscovery of silenced women's experiences, demonstrating how women connect beyond ontological and temporal boundaries to gain a broader feminist voice and visibility.

Keywords: radical feminism, writing, Ouija board, patriarchy, female subjectivity

ÖZET

Bu makale, ikinci dalga feminizm çerçevesinde Michèle Roberts'ın *In the Red Kitchen* adlı romanını inceleyerek, romanın feminist yazın eylemini ataerkil söyleme karşı-anlatı olarak nasıl kullandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, Roberts'ın yazarlığı erkek merkezli ve otoriter söylemden uzaklaştırarak, parçalı, kolektif ve spiritüel olarak aracılanmış kadın ifade biçimlerine doğru yeniden yapılandırdığını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ouija tahtası, bastırılmış kadın tarihlerinin yeniden ortaya çıkmasına olanak tanıyan alternatif bir epistemolojik araç görevi görmektedir. Bu çerçevede bu çalışma ayrıca romanı, özellikle bilgi, dil ve kadın öznelliğini düzenleyen sembolik bir otorite yapısını ataerkilliğin radikal feminist eleştirileriyle ilişkilendirerek okumaktadır. Roberts'ın anlatısı, kadın seslerinin tarihsel olarak ataerkil anlam oluşturma sistemleri içinde nasıl silindiğini ve kısıtlandığını ortaya koyarak, bu ataerkil sembolik düzenin yıkılmasını yansıtır. Bu bağlamda roman radikal feminizm çerçevesinde incelenerek kadın maneviyatıyla erkek otorite figürlerinin baskısından sıyrılabilmeyi ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca Michele Foucault'nun *pater familias* kavramının incelenmesiyle birlikte bu makale kadın deneyimi ve kadın yazını arasında bağlantı kurmayı amaçlar. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, susturulmuş kadın deneyimlerinin yeniden keşfedilmesini ve kadın öznelliğinin yeniden inşasını vurgulayarak ontolojik ve zamansal sınırların ötesinde kadınların nasıl bağlantı kurarak daha geniş bir feminist ses ve görünürlük politikası kazandıklarını göstermeyi hedefler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: radikal feminizm, yazın, Ouija tahtası, ataerki, kadın öznelliği

INTRODUCTION

Michele Roberts, a feminist writer born in 1949 England with French background, often engage with themes of gender, history, and female spirituality in her works. With her unique narrative tactics that blend feminist philosophy, historiography, and spirituality, Michele Roberts is an author who distinguishes out in modern British fiction. By creating alternative, pluralistic, and fractured narrative frameworks in opposition to conventional forms of history and narrative, Roberts frequently seeks to bring historically suppressed female agency to light. She reinterprets subjects like myth, religion, female trauma and memory from a feminist viewpoint in her books, emphasizing the ways in which women create their individual and collective identities. Roberts challenges the ways

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in which patriarchal systems shape language and narration while simultaneously generating new forms of expression that subvert patriarchal structures.

Roberts' body of works reflect her diverse literary career encompassing fiction, poetry, and non-fiction. Her most prominent works include *The Wild Girl* (1984), *Book of Mrs. Noah* (1987), *In the Red Kitchen* (1990), and *Daughters of the House* (1992); *Flesh and Blood* (1994), *Impossible Saints* (1997), *Fair Exchange* (1999), *The Looking Glass* (2000), *The Mistressclass* (2003), and *Reader, I Married Him* (2005). Her novel *In The Red Kitchen* revitalizes the feminist idea of herstory through the act of rewriting female alternatives.

Through interwoven female voices, narrative shifts, and spiritual mediations in Roberts' novel *In The Red Kitchen* demonstrate the ongoing nature of women's silence, suffering, and oppression caused by patriarchal structures. The novel presents divergent female protagonists ranging from a spirit belonging to an Ancient Egyptian princess Hat, a Victorian Spiritual Medium Flora and a 20th century writer Hattie. This multitude of different female narrators and various timelines reflect female urge to channel the stories of each other who have been silenced by the patriarchy through rape, incest, scientific pathology, and gender roles. Roberts provide resistance against the repressive consequences of patriarchal discourse by focusing on the female characters' attempt to discover their own voices and express themselves through writing.

In particular, the father figure symbolizing the control mechanism of patriarchy plays a crucial role in the novel; patriarchal dominance is perpetuated not just in the public domain but also within the family, through the most personal connections. Abuse, repression, and coerced silence are common manifestations of this control over their daughters's bodies and identities. Therefore, incest and paternal authority are represented in the novel not as individual traumas, but as structural elements that ensure the continuity of the patriarchal order.

Therefore; Roberts frames spiritual communication and writing as places of resistance against these repressive patriarchal systems. Whether through written texts, disjointed tales, or performances, these women characters attempt to communicate their experiences which turn into an act of regaining their agency and taking back their own voice. As a result, while the novel highlights the persistence of patriarchal tyranny, it also highlights the persistence of women's urge to tell their stories, connect with one another, and resist where silence is broken up within this collective narrative by giving way to a shared female discourse.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: WRITING AS RESISTANCE AND SECOND-WAVE FEMINIST THEORY

The study of women's history has been closely linked with the epistemological, political, and spiritual break of the radical feminist movement since the 1960s. From an academic intervention, the effort to raise awareness of women's historically suppressed experiences has developed into a holistic feminist practice that opposes gender roles constructed by patriarchal societies and supports collective female resistance that assist women through discovering their own spiritual traditions (Spretnak xii). Therefore, when combined with the epistemic tools of radical feminist theory, women's history has been an essential basis for political action and spiritual regeneration. Gerda Lerner assists feminist thinkers with her questions on the subjective structure of history pointing out to its selective and ideological practice. As she questions what constitutes history "since women are half and sometimes more than half of humankind, they always have shared the world and its work equally with men" (Lerner 16). By highlighting the difference between past and history, Lerner's definition of history shows that historiography is a subjective practice of power. Even though women have always constituted social life, and transmitted collective memory, they have been left out of the recorded accounts constructed as history. Therefore, the main issue covers not only female systemic invisibility but also their absence through the construction of historiography.

In one of the interviews, Michele Roberts acknowledges that she joined the "Women's Liberation Movement," which she associated with the founding discourse of second-wave feminism, particularly with its emphasis on the emergence of women's experience, the understanding of female solidarity and the necessity for women to produce their own voices (Roberts and Sanchez 137). These political trajectories are also cemented in her novels through the silenced female subjects that end up with fragmented, discontinuous, and often alternative forms of expression of writing, remembering, and spiritual communications.

Finding a space within the cultural/political discourse for women was mainly associated with the representation of female agency through the components of language which Cameron (1992) explains as "one of the ways a concern with language entered contemporary feminism was through the preoccupation of the early second wave (in the late 1960s and early 1970s) with 'images of women', that is, presentations" (5). Mainly, the representation of men and women throughout history had a biased nature where women constituted the inferior side of the dualisms in which they are defined as "primitive", "irrational", "outer", and "subordinate" (*Different Heaven* 166-7). Through the

construction of opposing images of men and women, as Sheila Collins underlines, patriarchy establishes a dichotomy that justifies gender hierarchy. These representations function as portraying women as invisible in the social, cultural, and epistemic domains. By undermining and making women's history invisible, masculine historiography reinforces its authority through systematic forgetting and selective remembering. Women's experiences are categorized as marginal, illogical, and secondary, which either totally excludes them or devalues them. Within this frame, as Carol Christ suggests; female experiences are narrated by men which are reflected partial and fragmented (Christ 4). Women have lived in a society throughout history that has not been recounted from their own experiences and how males have mostly shaped the narratives that are promoted as objective cultural narratives. Cameron describes this silence of women as the “symbol of oppression, while liberation is speaking out, making contact. The contact is what matters: a woman who lies or who is silent may not lack a language, but she does not communicate” (Cameron 7). Silence is not merely a state of absence, but also the representation of power regimes. Women's silence stems not from a lack of language skills in women, but from the obstruction of their ability to communicate within a social and cultural context. In this context, liberation means speaking and connecting with others; it is through this communication that women can express their experiences and become visible in social life. Therefore, silence is not reflected as an individual choice, but a tool for the patriarchal structure to render female agency and female experiences invisible.

Through these stories rather than acknowledging their own experiences, articulating their emotions, and valuing their perspectives, women have frequently repressed and negated them. (Christ 5). Storytelling and sharing experiences within female communities not only function as a form of expression but also as a tool of cultural and epistemic power used against patriarchal narratives. Therefore, significance of women's methods of identifying, expressing, and replicating their own experiences within a social context from a feminist standpoint creates a crucial area for female intervention and serves as a basic mechanism supporting the female framework. In this context, Susan Gal provides an alternative basis for women's visibility focusing on rethinking women's historical silence in the public sphere not only through social and economic structures but also through language, discourse, and forms of expression (Gal 1). One of the most important areas of intervention for feminist literature can be found in the role of writing as a counter-narrative against patriarchal rhetoric. Women's experiences are either hidden or misrepresented since language and narrative forms inside the patriarchal structure are primarily molded by a male-dominated perspective. Therefore, writing transgresses its function for women to express themselves but also adapts a form of resistance that changes patriarchal discourse and constructs an alternative epistemic space in opposition to it. Within this frame, Roberts provides a mechanism of resistance against the repressive consequences of patriarchal discourse by focusing on the female rage to discover their own agency, voices and express themselves through writing and symbolic means.

According to Sanchez, Michele Roberts' works other than providing a site for feminist themes, reflect the writing process itself to make feminist issues much more visible (137). In her novel *In the Red Kitchen*, the act of writing becomes a platform for feminist struggle when it is intertwined with feminist spirituality. For Charlene Spretnak “both politics and spirituality are concerned with power- power created, maintained, and utilized in alignment with a particular view of life” (Spretnak 349). In this context, writing moves beyond its aesthetic practice and transforms into a medium for female subject to construct her own existence and intervenes in patriarchal power relations. When intertwined with feminist spirituality, the act of writing produces a transformative form of power that reinterprets and reclaims female experiences. This intersection of writing and feminist spirituality is further emphasized by Christ, who argues that: “this new literature created by women has both a spiritual and a social dimension. It reflects both women's struggles to create new ways of living in the world and a new naming of the great powers that provide orientation in the world” (Christ 7). The multi-layered narrative that highlights Roberts' narrative structure allows the feminine experience to be visible from both a political and spiritual perspective. *In the Red Kitchen* constructs a communal field of experience through interweaving unique stories of women with a fractured narrative form different time spans. This framework can be considered as allowing the development of a new vocabulary to convey these experiences while reflecting women's quest of existence in patriarchal societies. Although female agency in the novel urges to re-exist through reincarnation, and communication with spirits, this reappearance throughout different timelines also points out a vital issue; throughout history patriarchal violence continues to persist.

The novel's spiritual components therefore can be considered as crucial in creating a distinctive literary voice. This narrative framework, which is based on spiritualism, telepathy, and mediumistic experiences, dismantles logical and linear interpretations of history constructed by the male gaze. In this sense, spirituality creates an alternative form of space where suppressed female experiences can be expressed. This alternative voice creates a counter-narrative against patriarchal modes of knowledge construction serving political and critical strategy that allows a distinct literary voice to develop to alter the text's discursive narrative structure.

Women's Writing and the Disruption of Patriarchal Discourse in the Context of Radical Feminism in Michele Roberts' Novel *In the Red Kitchen*

Flora's psychic sessions serve as an alternative epistemic means of contacting the past and the future in the novel. Through this spiritual and telepathic exchange, Flora, who is haunted by Hat's spirit, gains access to suppressed, and erased experiences from Hat's life that have not been included in official historical records. In this way, Flora's spiritual performances serve as a counter-historical narrative technique that enables the reconstruction of suppressed female voices and memories that defy conventional epistemology. In Hat's narrative, she depicts her access to language via her father where her reality is shaped within the borders of patriarchal norms.

We practise writing, every day. Book book book, rows of books in copperplate. Book is small on my slate, big on my lap. The letters come alive: h is a thin man seen sideways seated on a chair, m is a man on all fours, T is my father, arms stretched out to greet me, x is when we do maze marching in the yard swinging our arms. But why is h used for h? Or K for K? I don't dare ask. Why not p or r? Who said? (*In the Red Kitchen* 19)

A space where female existence is molded under patriarchal power relations is revealed through the narrator's acquisition of vocabulary and writing practice through her father's authority. In this framework, learnt symbols and words function not only as a means of communication but also as the regulator that establishes the limits of female experience. Here, the father figure represents the familial control mechanism and also the law of meaning production. In this way, the text demonstrates Hat's exposure to language through the process that represent both the submission and the silence where language serves as a patriarchal tool of expression and of authority that establishes what inquiries are permitted. Hat's inquiry of alphabetical authority undermines the assumed authenticity of language and exposes how patriarchal institutions normalize arbitrary structures via punishment and silence. Hat's phrase "Who said?" implicitly contests masculine power where the female subject cannot find the answers to generate her meanings.

Within this context, it is revealed that language functions not only as a means of communication, but also as a structure in which patriarchal authority is internalized and social power relations are reproduced. A man cannot ascertain his paternity via either perception or logic; the notion that the child, in a sense, a narrative he constructs to rationalize the infant's existence. The fear inherent in this narrative necessitates not only the reassurances of masculine supremacy suggested by patriarchal gender bias "but also compensatory fictions of the Word" (Gilbert and Gubar 5). By seeing and challenging the process of generating meaning, Hat tries to construct her own existence, which inevitably falls into the boundaries of patriarchal order she seeks to resist, revealing both the impossibility of an outside to language and the persistent entanglement of subjectivity with patriarchal structures. However, because her father's power was used as a way of constructing the gender roles, which she bears a sense of inadequacy and incompleteness within herself; as a result, she declares that she is constituted by the lack of female identity.

I have been unwritten. Written out. Written off. Therefore, I am not even dead. I never was. I am non-existent. There is no I. I was a man and a pharaoh and a king. I was mighty because I was male and bore the sacred sign of maleness and of kingship. Now that my name has been hacked off the walls and columns of my tomb the sign of my kingship has been broken off me. I am lacking. I am a lack. I am nothing but a poor dead body that lacks the sign of life: I am female (*In the Red Kitchen* 133).

Hat highlights the ongoing lack of women's stories in historical and cultural narratives by reflecting on having been 'unwritten', 'written out', and 'written off' where female existence is also similarly erased, marginalized, and rendered unintelligible within dominant structures of representation. (*In the Red Kitchen* 133). Roberts draws attention to the gendered power systems that have determined whose experiences are documented and whose are neglected by drawing a comparison between her own nonexistence and the traditionally elevated positions of men; pharaohs, monarchs, and bearers of sacred signs. When these symbols of power are lost, the feminine self becomes invisible and is portrayed in history as a body devoid of authority and recognition. In fact, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar contend in *The Madwoman in the Attic* that writing and literary creation have historically been considered masculine privileges, and that women have been shut out of this discursive realm (56). In the domains of patriarchal literary tradition, women are either positioned as suppressed, 'unwritten' figures or as represented objects; where male agency represent the subject who creates, names, and documents history (*In the Red Kitchen* 133). The ritualistic transformation in the novel that take place between Hat and her pharaoh father illustrates how the patriarchal symbolic order, specifically her bond with the father figure, is the only way for the female subject to gain access to the domain of power as Hat states; "only the high priests and the dark stone gods witness the long

ceremony in the small sanctuary aglare with torchlight. By the power of this mystic marriage I am utterly changed: I become Queen, I become my father's wife" revealing that female identity is characterized not by independent subjectivity, but by its link to male authority within the patriarchal structure (*In the Red Kitchen* 84). Therefore, the transformation of the female subject's into a queen occurs as a transformation of identity articulated with paternal authority, revealing that power is only accessible to the female subject within the patriarchal framework.

The feminine voice in *In the Red Kitchen* is produced through spirituality and mediumship, in opposition to this masculine idea of artistic creation. The Ouija board that Flora utilizes to channel the voices of female spirits substitutes a social, tactile, and fragmented mode of textual and narrative production for the male literary device pen, which function as an alternative, and marginalized writing tool for women. In this case, Flora becomes not as the focal point of the narrative but rather as a mediator who gives a voice to the women that have been marginalized and suppressed. However, this mediation proposes an alternative epistemology that opposes the patriarchal system of knowledge and authorship. Especially when read within the framework that considers the relationship between power, discourse, and death, it is revealed that writing functions not merely as an individual expression but also a tool of power that regulates life and operates against death.

To write is to enter the mysterious, powerful world of words, to partake of words' power, to make it work for me. To write is to deny the power of death, to triumph over it. To inscribe a person's name on the wall of his tomb, to describe his attributes thereupon, is to ensure that he will live forever... Words mean life: the absence of words means death: being forgotten by men for all eternity. (*In the Red Kitchen* 22)

Father's control over words and writing signifies not only a personal, familial authority but also a broader structure of power that governs access to meaning and representation. In this sense, Michel Foucault's discussion of the "pater familias" in *The History of Sexuality* offers a productive framework, as it conceptualizes paternal authority not merely as a domestic relation but as a historically embedded mechanism through which life, death, and legitimacy are regulated within discourse.

For a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death. In a formal sense, it derived no doubt from the ancient *patria potestas* that granted the father of the Roman family the right to "dispose" of the life of his children and his slaves; just as he had given them life, so he could take it away. (Foucault 135). A fundamental foundation for comprehending the relationship between writing and existence in Roberts' novel is provided by Michel Foucault's attribution of the "right to give life and take life" to the father through *patria potestas*, a term he examines in relation to forms of sovereignty (Foucault 135). The purpose of writing in the text; sustaining life and guaranteeing immortality directly overlaps with Foucault's context where the female subject's omission from writing represents both symbolic absence and existential silence. Conversely, in line with Foucault's model of dominance and power, the female subject's existence through writing is contingent upon the acknowledgment and incorporation of paternal power. As a result, the act of writing in the novel function as a mechanism of power that governs inclusion in memory and discursive existence, while also operating as resistance against death. This discursive power embedded in the paternal authority is reflected

The tomb is the first book; the house of life, the body that does not decay. Because it is written. Stone is cut into, cut out; this absence of stone, this concavity, this emptiness, yet means a fullness: the words appearing, their presence overcoming the absence of what they denote, filling emptiness with meaning, creating the world over and over again. Writing, I live; I enter that world beyond the false door of the tomb; my existence continues throughout eternity. I have written my father's name, and I have written my own name underneath. I have joined them. I have enclosed them within a cartouche. My father's hand presses my shoulder. When I lift my eyes, I see him smile. (*In the Red Kitchen* 24)

This passage where Hat demonstrates the link between writing and death establishes writing as a patriarchal registration system that controls the subject's existence and lineage. In this continuity, the subject's act of writing down her father's name and placing her own name beneath it shows how a patriarchal hierarchy establishes lineage and belonging, indicating that the subject is compelled to place themselves within this hierarchical structure rather than in an independent status. Writing, in this sense, serves as a dual mechanism that both makes life possible and anchors that life within power relations. This secondary position, while seemingly promising unification and integration, reveals from a feminist reading that the subject is forced to establish their own existence as a continuation of the patriarchal lineage.

The Ouija board scene in the novel where Hat reveals her name through the letters appears to provide an alternate and spiritual site for female expression, but the fulfillment of the ensuing identity as ‘Hattie King’ suggests that even this alternative space does not result in a fully open discourse allowed by the patriarchy.

Which spirit is this? Will you tell us your name? The glass knocks back and forth between the shiny cards, the big black letters. HA. HA. HA. HA! HA HA!

...

The glass is irritated at my stupidity. It starts again, darting back and forth across the circle of cards. HATTIE. KING. HATTIE KING. (*In the Red Kitchen* 44)

The emergence of a potent ideological framework shows how patriarchal discourse limits and constructs the identity and voice of the female subject. The naming process serves in this Ouija board scene as a basic mechanism that defines the subject's existence; identity is created through language and letters, and this construction occurs within a particular discursive order. “Silently her mouth worked, forming shapes of words. I read her mouth, I read the sounds she could not utter. HATT. HATE. HATTE. HATTIE. HATE. I” (*In the Red Kitchen* 105). It is evident how the female subject's identity construction within patriarchal discourse conflicts with her silenced voice. A woman who is unable to talk tries to communicate through letters, symbolizing the endeavor of a subject barred from language to re-enter discourse; nevertheless, this is an indirect, fragmented form of communication that needs to be deciphered by someone else. The transition from ‘HAT’ to ‘HATE’ and ‘HATTIE’ shows how female identity is formed not as a stable or self-contained essence, but as a shifting product of language, where meaning is continually reshaped through addition, distortion, and external inscription within dominant patriarchal structures. The fluctuating duality of ‘Hate’ and ‘Hattie’ suggests that suppression, rage, and internalized negativity all belong to the part of the female subject's identity construction process. This incident is directly related, as Jeanette King points out, to the fact that a woman can only exist within the patriarchal order through limited forms of identification.

She is therefore faced with two choices. She can identify with patriarchy in one of two ways: she can either identify with the symbolic status of the father, repressing those qualities labelled as ‘female’ and her dependence on the body of the mother, or she can identify with one of the models of femininity validated by the Law of the Father (King 4).

Within this context, Jeannete King exposes what appears to be a choice for female subjectivity is in fact structured within and constrained by patriarchal power. Female agency is positioned either to align with the authority of the father by repressing qualities associated with femininity such as; bodily dependence, emotions, and relationality, or to adopt culturally sanctioned models of femininity already defined and validated within a male-dominated order. In both cases, agency is not autonomous but is preconfigured by patriarchal structures of meaning.

The novel's narrative structure depicts a transformation of the female subject from an initially repressed and invisible position to a female empowerment through the rediscovery of her own voice and language when Ancient Egyptian princess Hat reincarnates through Hattie's body in the 20th century. This resurrection can be read in both political and symbolic means where female agency gains existence with the resurrected literary works that Hattie constructs in the novel. As Sanchez emphasizes, “the process of making the novel is a process of resurrection. And life happens at the end. The novels nearly always end like real life, about finding words. They nearly always end on an image of finding language. So the dead body in the beginning sits up and can speak at the end” (Sanchez 140). The artistic creative process functions as a resurrection of female empowerment of the body and the spirit, initially appearing dead or unable to speak, eventually produces its own voice again. Hattie, a subject condemned to silence and restricted by patriarchal structures in the past, re-activates the act of writing in her resurrected life, in a space specific to women, by writing cooking books. As Christ states; “women's spiritual quest concerns a woman's awakening to the depths of their soul and her position in the universe. A woman's spiritual quest includes moments of solidarity contemplations, but it is strengthened by being shared” (Christ 8). This individual transformation of the female subject also signifies a political rebirth that directly confronts the patriarchal order. The reincarnation of the ancient Egyptian princess Hat in Hattie's body represents the return of the female voice silenced throughout history; this return constitutes a clear intervention into patriarchal historiography by rewriting the erased female experiences of the past. In this sense, the resurrection functions not only as symbolic but also as a political act; the female subject, rejects the position of silence attributed to her, asserts her right over language and narrative. Throughout the novel, Hattie's writing process creates a space of resistance against the patriarchal mechanism of silence by constructing and reconstructing both her own history and women's experiences. “*Eating Me Eating You*, published by a feminist house, did not do quite so well as its predecessor (Colette has never had her due from the English) but I was content. I was following out my vocation” (*In the Red Kitchen* 12). By creating a place of

resistance against patriarchal systems of silence, Hattie's writing method reconstructs both her own history and the collective experiences of women throughout the book. It is especially highlighted, nevertheless, that this opposition is only partially accepted at the social level rather than finding complete resonance. It is evident how women's labour and women's narratives are devalued within capitalist and patriarchal structures when Hattie's book, published by a feminist publishing house, does not receive the anticipated attention or when her production space, such as her cooking class, is disbanded for institutional and financial reasons. "The women who came to me wanting to learn, the ribald stories we told each other as we beat and whipped and chopped. We wrote a cookery book together, mixing stories and recipes; it had a modest success, and I was newly content, even though the cookery class was disbanded shortly afterwards because of the cuts" (*In the Red Kitchen* 13). In a similar vein, the cookbook created by women as a collaborative writing practice that shares tales and experiences in addition to recipes fosters an alternative network of solidarity and knowledge among women. Hattie finds a place of speech that makes a long-lasting break against patriarchal silence, even though the system does not make this kind of creation feasible. Although this mode of production is not made sustainable by the system, the space for expression that Hattie finds creates a lasting rupture against patriarchal silence. Therefore, the novel emphasizes the idea that the female subject, even if not fully recognized socially, can establish her own existence through writing, however, this act of self-inscription is not merely personal expression but a political intervention that challenges the conditions under which recognition, visibility, and subjectivity are granted.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the novel *In the Red Kitchen* presents writing as a radical practice of resistance in which the female subject who is historically suppressed by patriarchal discourse reconstructs herself through her method of expression. Through alternate forms of information and spiritual ways of communication, the novel breaks the silence surrounding the stories of women who have been left out of official historiography. In this way, women may recover and reinterpret their past through writing, which gives them a political voice in the present. In Roberts's narrative, the female subject's reclaiming of language is shown as both a social intervention meant to undermine patriarchal power structures and an individual freedom of expression.

Within this framework, Hat's fragmented, self-negating identity begins to move toward a sense of coherence through the emergence of Hattie's own language and expressive system, which disrupts the authority of externally imposed patriarchal meanings. In doing so, the female subject resists the fragmented female selves produced by patriarchal discourse and begins to reorient language as a site of self-definition. This shift does not simply resolve fragmentation into a stable identity, instead reconfigures it as a process through which meaning is actively produced within subject's own terms. This reclaiming of language thus functions as both expression and intervention which enables female protagonists in the novel to contest the discursive structures that previously defined. In this sense, writing becomes a constitutive practice in which the self is not recovered as something pre-existing, but continuously made and remade, allowing fragmentation to be transformed into a politically charged form of female agency.

Hattie serves as the focal point that facilitates the perpetuation of patriarchal violence, suppression, and gendered discipline throughout generations. The transhistorical connections provide Hattie a site to reproduce her experiences and embrace herself outside the framework governed by the father or a masculine figure. Therefore, the reincarnated female subject, Hat, reconstructs her identity through the lived experiences of Hattie, thereby producing diversifying lives and female experiences that exists across past, present and imagined future temporalities.

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