

Unspoken Voices: Using Silence and Feminine Imagination to Rebel against the Patriarchy in Campion's *The Piano*

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Abstract

Constrained for submissiveness, Victorian women were supposed to be silent and not to express their opinions, except on command. *The Piano* (1993), written and directed by Jane Campion, is set in the mid-nineteenth century, describing a mute Scottish woman (Ada McGrath), who uses silence to claim her voice and self-assertion. In the patriarchal Victorian society, women and wives are supposed to be submissive, obedient, and silent, Ada chooses to subversively follow the norm to the extreme: by stopping speaking forever. Ironically, while voice acts as empowerment and subjectivity, Ada's silence lets her escape the patriarchal oppression and gain some power and freedom to reach her subjectivity.

Keywords: silence; Victorian morality; patriarchal oppression; intersubjectivity

VICTORIAN MORALITY AND GENDER STEREOTYPING

Written and directed by Jane Campion, *The Piano* (1993) is set in the mid-nineteenth century, depicting a mute Scotswoman, Ada McGrath (Holly Hunter), who, under the arrangement of her father, is forced into an arranged marriage with Alisdair Stewart (Sam Neill), an English settler living in colonial New Zealand. As Ada says in the beginning of the film: "Today he married me to a man I've not yet met. Soon my daughter and I shall join him in his own country" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 1). Though living in a wealthier family, Ada has been forced to leave her familiar Scotland and go abroad to marry a man she has never met and settle in austere environment, accompanied only by with her young daughter Flora (Anna Paquin) and her beloved piano. On the night before leaving, Ada "stands at a window lit by moonlight," with "her mind abstracted, her hands unconsciously performing a farewell." Ada can do nothing to change her destiny, but moving to her piano, "she begins to play strongly. Her face strains, she is utterly involved, unaware other own strange guttural sounds that form an eerie accompaniment to the music" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 7).

Though never appearing in *The Piano*, Ada's father had the power to determine Ada's fate. He sets out the traditional function of marriage as a sexual exchange, in which Ada is regarded as an object, not having any identity as a subject (Bentley, 2002). In Victorian society, it was almost impossible for a woman to live on her own, let alone raise a daughter herself. All Ada can do is submit to the arrangement made by her father (here serving as patriarch), sacrificing herself to marry a man for economic support, not for mutual affection. It is no surprise then that Ada is presented like a sacrificial offering:

Amidst a riotous sea a woman, ADA, is carried to shore on the shoulders of five seamen. Her large Victorian skirt spreads across the men's arms and backs, on her head a black bonnet, around her neck her pad and pen. We should be forgiven if this woman seems a sacrificial offering as the bay they carry her to is completely uninhabited. A black sand backs on to an endless rise of dense native bush (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 9).

Victorian society was notorious for strict morality, valuing high personal moral standards, such as sexual restraint and strict obedience to social codes. Cohabitation without marriage and illegitimate births are severely condemned (Probert, 2012). Being a woman from a 'respectable' family, Ada should have lived up to high standards, but having a child born out of wedlock has violated those standards, embarrassed her family and forced her exile.

DISCOURSE AND SILENCE: USING SILENCE AS RESISTANCE

In “The Cult of True Womanhood,” Barbara Welter (1966) defines women’s ‘proper’ roles and stereotypes, in which womanly virtue should represent “piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity.” Trained into submissiveness, Victorian women were supposed to be silent and not to express their opinions, except on command. In a youthful-sounding voiceover, Ada let us know that she chose not to speak verbally at the age of six, without giving any explanations:

The voice you hear is not my speaking voice, but my mind's voice. I have not spoken since I was six years old. No one knows why, not even me. My father says it is a dark talent and the day I take it into my head to stop breathing will be my last (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 1).

Clearly, Ada has the capacity to speak, but she has willed herself to silence (Hoeveler, 1998). Cixous called such women “decapitated” because they are silenced and victimized by the patriarchal social and religious norms:

Silence is the mark of hysteria. The great hysterics have lost speech, they are aphonic, and at times have lost more than speech: they are pushed to the point of choking, nothing gets through. They are decapitated, their tongues are cut off and what talks isn't heard because it's the body that talks, and man doesn't hear the body. In the end, the woman pushed to hysteria is the woman who disturbs and is nothing but disturbance (Cixous, 1981, p. 46).

Long before Ada’s marriage to Stewart, Ada’s father (the patriarchal figure) had exerted control over her. Ada has apparently closed her mouth to express her submissiveness. However, her true motivations are more complex. Unconsciously she has a desire to run away from her father. On one night when she is barricaded in Stewart’s hut, “ADA is walking in the dark, ghostly in her white nightgown” to her piano, playing loudly and wildly, with her loosen hair. Flora tells Stewart that Ada is sleepwalking, and that when Ada was a young girl, one night she was found “in her nightgown on the road to London,” with her feet “cut and bleeding so badly she couldn't walk for a week” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 100). Willfully choosing not to speak at the age of six, Ada uses silence not to escape the oppression of the patriarchal system, but to defy and rebel against this social absolute (Dalton & Fatzinger, 2003).

As Dalton and Fatzinger (2003) say that while discourses are used as structural instruments of power, ironically, for those oppressed, marginalized, or unnamed, silence establishes a unique power within the dominant patriarchal system. Ada uses silence to claim her voice and self-assertion. According to Jaworski (1993), there are two forms of silence in social science literature: “when speech breaks down” and “when words become irrelevant” (p. 99). When Ada’s speech is made a sign of her subordination within the patriarchal structure of discourse, Ada willfully silences herself is an act of resistance that allows her to re-establish ownership of her voice (Dalton & Fatzinger, 2003). Therefore, Ada decides not to speak, instead of speaking but not being heard and so find her subjectivity (Bentley, 2002). Foucault explains in *The History of Sexuality*,

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1990, p. 100-101).

Ada willfully chooses silence to deconstruct the binaries in the symbolic Victorian order between the active and the passive; subject and object; centralization and marginalization; further dominance and oppression (Bihlmeyer, 2005). Thereby, silence becomes a means to express Ada’s defiance and active resistance against the patriarchal system.

THE PIANO: A RELEASE FROM PATRIARCHY

While Ada uses silence as a weapon to rebel against the norms of patriarchy system, in order to find an outlet to pour out her emotions, Ada must manage to find a voice on her own terms. Instead of using speech, she expresses herself through playing the piano to express her inner self to the outside world. In order to give herself release and establish her identity, Ada uses her piano to imaginatively create herself, giving voice and meaning to her existence. Thus, while mute, Ada does not think that she is silent because she uses her piano as her voice. The piano serves as a companion to give Ada comfort to go through a lonely, austere and abject life in New Zealand. In a scene when Ada is left alone on the beach, and Flora is “asleep at her feet a half eaten biscuit in her hand

ADA has found a gap through the crate so that she might lift the lid and play a few notes. The sweetness and comfort of the piano seem only to exaggerate their isolation and hopelessness" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 12).

For Ada, the piano is her lost voice. Therefore, unlike those who play a piano for amusement, whose playing is "plain and true" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 106), the piano symbolizes Ada's lost voice, a voice she cannot use, allowing her to release her emotions and imaginatively build her own identity in order to escape from the patriarchal oppression. That is why Aunt Morag (Kerry Walker) feels that Ada's playing seems to "have a sound creep inside," mentioning that "No she [Ada] is a strange creature and her saying is strange like a mood that passes into you. You cannot teach that Nessie, one may like to learn but that could not be taught (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 106).

THE FEMININE IMAGINATION AS SELF-ASSERTION AND IDENTITY

According to Cixous (1981), the feminine imagination serves as the identification of an ego, a self-image defined not by the masculine or symbolic order but using fantasy to search for self-existence. While Ada has her piano to imaginatively assert her existence and identity, her daughter Flora also uses her feminine imagination nurtured by fairytales to claim her existence in an ideal parent-child relationship, saying that her natural father, a famous German composer, met her mother, an opera singer, in Luxemburg, and got married in "an enormous forest, with real fairies as bridesmaids each holding a little elf's hand" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 21). Later Flora creates another fairytale, saying they got married "in a small country church, near the mountains. The Alps" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 23). In addition, in order to justify the absence of her father, Ada makes up an imaginary tragedy to justify her father's absence in the parent-child relationship (Chumo, 1997).

One day when my mother and father were singing together in the forest, a great storm blew up out of nowhere. But so passionate was their singing that they did not notice, nor did they stop as the rain began to fall and when their voices rose for the final bars of the duet a great bolt of lightning came out of the sky and struck my father so that he lit up like a torch... And at the same moment my father was struck dead my mother was struck dumb! She-never-spoke-another-word (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 23).

As well as using it to search for self-existence, Ada also uses her feminine imagination as a stage or medium for communication with others. One night at Stewart's hut, Flora, lying beside Ada holding her hand asks her mute mother how she communicates with her father. Ada tells Flora that she uses her feminine imagination to communicate with him, saying that "I didn't need to speak, I could lay thoughts out in his mind like they were a sheet." When Flora further inquires, "What happened? Why didn't you get married?" Ada replies, "He became frightened and stopped listening" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 49). Ada apparently believes or pretends that she can communicate with others through her mind even through this may not occur in 'objective' reality.

In addition to using feminine imagination to communicate with Flora's father, Ada also uses Flora as her imaginary double to reach spiritual and personal wholeness. According to Freud (1990), to avoid castration, people may unconsciously create a double to protect themselves from disobeying the norms of the oppressed system.

The similarities between Ada and Flora in their identical dressing, movements, and gestures demonstrate that Flora is a double or surrogate of Ada's identity. Through the extended identification, Ada can live securely in her feminine imagination while having Flora interacting or negotiating with the outside world, the patriarchal system, as her agent (Hendershot, 1998).

If women unconsciously suffer what Freud (1933) calls "penis envy," the finger may be a surrogate for the penis and by extension, the ivory piano key is too. Stewart's cutting-off of Ada's finger is then a symbolic castration. Supposing that Flora follows Ada's commands, Ada would be secure in her imaginative identity to keep her spiritual and personal integrity. However, once Flora rejects the role as her double, Ada's imaginary identity is endangered or even symbolically castrated. This crisis is initiated when Ada requests that Flora, acting as her double, take to Baines (Harvey Keitel) a piano key engraved "Dear George, you have my heart Ada McGrath," Flora says "No, we're not supposed to visit him" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 112). Refusing to be Ada's double to give the key to Baines, Flora instead takes the key to Stewart, telling him that "Mother wanted me to give this to Mr. Baines. I thought maybe it was not the proper thing to do" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 116).

Ada's imaginary identity and wholeness is deconstructed once Flora refuses to be Ada's double. While Flora not responding to Ada's request to deliver the piano to key to Baines but to Stewart, who then bursts in rage, running home in a heavy rain, with an axe (a phallic symbol) in hand, he grasps Ada "by the neck of her

dregs, then her hair, and pulls her backwards towards the cutting block” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 119). After desperately asking Ada “Do you love him? Do you?! Is it him you love?”, getting no response from Ada, Stewart chops off Ada’s right index finger to punish her, as he says that “I meant to love you. I clipped your wing, that is all” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 133).

Like her father, Stewart is acting as a patriarch to punish Ada, who is having an affair with Baines and is therefore outside of the established order once more. In order to teach Ada, as his wife and subordinate, he chops off Ada’s finger (also a symbol of phallic or authority) to remind Ada to be “aware of lack, to be aware of absence, aware of death” (Cixous, 1981) and to demonstrate that he is “the Absolute.” Also, depriving Ada’s of her ability to play the piano—and thus her secret voice—Stewart takes revenge on her for her adultery. He also gives Baines a gruesome warning not to see Ada again. Wrapping Ada’s finger in a white handkerchief, Stewart gives that to terrified Flora, saying “Take this to Baines. Tell him if he ever tries to see her again I’ll take off another and another and another!” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 119). Through the mutilation of Ada’s index finger, Stewart intends to remind Ada that he is a patriarchal authority, hence a subject, and to remind Ada of her lack of a phallus, and that by being castrated, she is an object.

LUST, SOUL MATE, SOUL COMMUNICATION: STEWART VERSUS BAINES

If the piano represents Ada’s voice and soul, Stewart turns away from listening to her voice first by deserting the piano on the beach. Later, acting as a patriarch and the owner of the piano, which is actually Ada’s property, he trades it (Ada’s voice and soul) to Baines for land (the profit). Furthermore, to punish Ada’s adultery with Baines, taking the patriarchal role to the extremes, Stewart, acting as Bluebeard, silences Ada by cutting off her finger to let her lose the ability to play the piano, hence closing the outlet for her emotion or inner voice.

Ideally, the bond between husband and wife should be based on love and care, acknowledging inner, spiritual, and communication of souls. In an early scene, after Ada has been left alone with Flora for a night on the beach, Stewart, who bought her into the marriage, arrives with some local Maori people and Baines to carry Ada’s property home—except the piano. He complains that there is no space for it, without knowing that the piano is an essential channel for Ada’s soul, her inner passion.

The piano gives Ada the imagination and solace to live securely under the patriarchal norms without breaking them. However, disregarding Ada’s begging “I NEED THE PIANO,” Stewart walks away, leaving her standing beside the piano with her “face angry and defiant, her eyes full of tears. Baines falls back, struck by her show of emotion” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 17). Being a patriarch, while feeling his “Absolute” (Cixous, 1981) is threatened by Ada’s possession of the piano, all he can do is close his ears and leave the piano on the beach to punish Ada for endangering his authority. Stewart’s lack of sensitivity to Ada’s inner world leads to the tragic crisis of their marriage.

Missing her piano, Ada turns to Baines for help. Just after her marriage, accompanied by Flora, she visits Baines to ask him to take them to the beach where they landed to retrieve the abandoned piano. Though initially refusing the request, Baines finally agrees to take them to the beach and spends the day there with Ada playing music excitedly while Flora dances and cartwheels along the seashore.

ADA passes BAINES, walking urgently towards it. Soon, ADA has removed enough boards that she may lift the lid and play the keys. EMNES stays back. ADA takes great delight in feeling her fingers on the keys again. Her whole composition is altered. She is animated, joyful, excited (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 29).

In contrast to Stewart’s insensitivity to Ada’s needs and passion for the piano, having taken Ada and Flora to the beach, Baines is fascinatedly attracted by Ada’s soul and inner passion expressed through her piano playing against the backdrop of the waves, often a symbol of passionate feeling, such as anger, love or creativity.

BAINES views them with suspicion, yet he is magnetically drawn to the spectacle He has never seen women behave with so much abandon. His attention fixes on ADA’s uninhibited emotional playing, and as he watches, he finds himself edging irresistibly closer (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 29).

Baines is soon attracted by Ada’s uninhibited emotion and inner passion. Consequently, he later suggests to Stewart that he could trade land for the piano and lessons for playing it from Ada. Obviously, Baines’ negotiation with Stewart for the piano is not for himself but to satisfy Ada’s desire for the piano. In contrast to Stewart, who swaps the piano (Ada’s voice and soul) for the land (the profit), Baines swaps the land for the piano to please Ada, because of his love and care for her.

When Stewart tells Ada of the exchange of the piano and lessons for “some excellent land,” Ada, breathing heavily with anger and writing on the pad, declares: “No! No! The piano is mine. It is mine”. Disregarding Ada’s

note with disdain, Stewart pounds on the table, saying, “You can’t go one like this, we are a family now, all of us make sacrifices and so will you”. Without further negotiation with Ada, acting as the authority and “the Absolute”, Stewart storms out of the room, commanding “You will teach him. I shall see to that!” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 36). Having no choice but let Stewart exchange her piano for 80 acres of land, Ada once more feels helpless and isolated. Before, she had been defeated by her father (a patriarchal authority), forcing her to marry a stranger. Now she is once again knocked down by the authority (this time, her ruthless husband), who has exchanged her piano (her voice and soul) for the land (the benefit). In fury at one more deprivation, “ADA’s emotions are suddenly removed and she views STEWART blankly, eerily so” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 36). Afterwards, she begins treating Stewart coldly.

Similar to Stewart, Baines acts as a patriarch at first, accepting that the piano belongs to Stewart because of Stewart’s ownership of Ada and this is why the piano can be traded and exchanged between these two men under the patriarchal system, disregarding Ada’s rights or frustration. However, unlike Stewart, who trades the piano for the land (symbolizing property and profit), Baines swaps his land for the piano (symbolizing Ada’s soul and inner voice) only because he cares for Ada’s passion for the piano. Although Baines initially intends to use piano to direct Ada’s desire toward him and gain access to her body, in order to reach equality and intersubjectivity, he is also willing to offer his body to let her choose (Hendershot, 1998).

Knowing that it is futile to take the place of the piano and become the object of Ada’s desire, and envious of her attachment to it, Baines returns the piano to Ada, not to Stewart, telling him that “Well, I doubt I want it very much myself.” When Baines replies, “It was more to your wife and I gave it.” Baines’s justification for Ada’s ownership of the piano subverts the existing economic exchange system in Victorian patriarchy (Hendershot, 1998). Only at this point does Stewart learn that Ada is the rightful owner of the piano (symbolizing Ada’s soul and inner voice), which cannot be exchanged between men under the patriarchal system.

SOUL-TO-SOUL COMMUNICATION: EXPERIENCING INTERSUBJECTIVITY

In contrast to Stewart’ exchanging Ada’s beloved piano for the land without consideration of Ada’s passion for her piano, though initially Baines seduces Ada using single piano keys as a bait for sexual favors, after knowing that he cannot buy her, he does not want to treat her as a whore. Despite his desire, Baines sends the piano back to Ada for care and love, saying

I am giving the piano back to you. I’ve had enough. The arrangement is making you a whore and me wretched. I want you to care for me, but you can’t (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 82).

While Stewart bought Ada into the marriage, Baines rejects Ada as a whore, a woman who is forced to sell her body in exchange of money. Distinct from Stewart and Ada’s father, Baines knows that he cannot buy Ada and treat her merely as a sexual object to satisfy his primitive desire, so he opens his mind to Ada and decides to let her go.

Ada, I am unhappy because I want you, because my mind has seized on you and thinks of nothing else. This is how I suffer, I am sick with longing. I don’t eat, I don’t sleep. If you do not want me, if you have come with no feeling for me, then go! (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 90)

Knowing Ada has no passion toward him, after expressing his feeling to her, Baines walks towards the door and opens it, unexpectedly with his softness turning cruel, exclaiming “Go! Go NOW! Leave!” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 90). Unlike conventional male subjects in the Victorian patriarchal society, Baines, with Maori tattoos on his cheeks, leads a life of in-margin or in-between cultures, colonizing but also colonized. Therefore, in declining to act as a patriarchal subject, and to demonstrate the equality of their relationship, Baines offers himself as a love object, naked in front of Ada. Baines manages to reach intersubjectivity between Ada and himself (Hendershot, 1998). Consequently, Ada can accept him, further releasing her mind, learning to talk, and subsequently entering into a new symbolic order with Baines.

Baines is able to hear Ada’s inner voice and feminine imagination, achieve soul-to-soul communication, while Stewart ignores her soul voice, passion, and demand for freedom. However, there is a moment Stewart does hear Ada’s inner voice.

When Ada is confined to her sickbed, Stewart approaches her, moving his body over her, though speechless. Ada turns her unsympathetic gaze to him, making him back away from her. While he watches her, he found ADA’s lips moving slightly. At this moment, Stewart seems to hear Ada’s mind voice, her inner voice, saying “I have to go, let me go, let Baines take me away, let him try and save me. I am frightened of my will, of what it might do it is so strange and strong” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 136). Finally hearing Ada’s inner voice and passion, in order to free himself and free Ada, Stewart goes to Baines’ hut, his eyes full with tears, begging him to take Ada away:

Understand me. I am here for her, for her I wonder that I don't wake, that I am not asleep to be here talking with you. I love her. But what is the use? She doesn't care for me. I wish her gone. I wish you gone. I want to wake and find it was a dream, that is what I want. I want to believe I am not this man. I want my self back; the one I know (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 136).

At this moment, Stewart begins to fully realize Ada's eagerness for freedom. Though at that moment he can somewhat hear Ada's inner voice, it is too late for Stewart to open his mind to Ada to reach a kind of soul-to-soul communication and intersubjective partnership in their marriage. Therefore, he has to accept his failure to be Ada's soul mate and let her go with Baines.

SINK FOR REBIRTH: RETURNING TO THE SYMBOLIC ORDER BASED ON INTERSUBJECTIVITY

After Stewart lets Ada go with Baines, while departing from the same beach as the one Ada and Flora landed in New Zealand, both wear the same clothes that they wore while arriving in New Zealand. Nonetheless, in contrast with the journey from Scotland to New Zealand, when Ada was transferred from her father's ownership to husband's ownership on her, this time she is carried from male ownership to an intersubjective partnership, in which the husband and wife are in an equal position and both has the right to speak of their opinions.

On the journey across a strait to the town of Nelson with Baines, with the piano in the middle of the small boat, Ada asks the Maori oarsmen to throw the piano, as Maori oarsman calls it, the "coffin," into the sea. While the piano about to sink into to the sea, Ada unconsciously steps into the rope coil fastening the piano and is "pulled by the piano down through the cold water" (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 145). For a while, she lets it pull her down, but changes her mind, kicking off her boot and freeing herself to float above while her piano continues to sink into the deep water (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 146). The abandonment of her piano and her struggle upwards to the surface signals Ada's transition from completely being immersed in a world of imagination(symbolized by the piano) to an embrace of the new symbolic order (symbolized by Baines), as her voiceover begins:

What a death!
What a chance!
What a surprise!
My will has chosen life!?
Still it has had me spooked and many others besides!
(Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 147)

As Hendershot (1998) says, Ada has to give up depending on the object for imaginary wholeness, because the use of the piano as her double to have a connection with the symbolic patriarchal order is symptomatic of a desire for death. Therefore, Ada has to let the piano to the ocean floor in order to let her separate from the double and enter the symbolic intersubjectivity, and to be able to transfer part of her desire to Baines. According to Bentley (2002), the sinking of the piano, her double, signifies Ada's figurative death; her ascent to the sea surface signifies her rebirth in alliance with the new system. Unlike the marriage with Stewart, in which Ada has been silenced and marginalized, in the marriage with Baines, there is no dominance but intersubjectivity and equality (Bentley, 2002).

Only with the recognition of the symbolic relationship in connection with others can Ada negotiate with the patriarchal system (Hendershot, 1998). Unlike Stewart, who had silenced Ada by leaving the piano on the beach, Baines rescues her piano to let Ada maintain her voice and soul. Later, though frustrated with his relationship with Ada, Baines returns the piano to Ada, confirming her ownership of the piano. When Stewart silences Ada by cutting off her finger Baines restores her voice by letting her have a silver prosthetic finger and a new piano in order to give Ada full communication with herself. As for Ada, caring for Baines, she is also willing to relinquish some part of her feminine imagination for wholeness and try to step into the new symbolic order, in which there could be a coexistence of feminine subjectivity and masculine subjectivity (Hendershot, 1998). Hence based on the gender equality and subject-subject intersubjectivity, Ada expresses her inner voice not only through piano but also through her own now legitimated speech.

Having first chosen to close her mouth, using silence to fight against the patriarchal system, Ada experiences a rebirth. Arriving in Nelson, with her new partner and soul mate, Baines and her daughter, Flora, she leads a life of self-fulfillment, giving piano lessons and thus sharing her voice. Also, in order to step into the symbolic order, as said, Ada begins to learn to speak, saying

I teach piano now in Nelson. George has fashioned me a metal finger tip, I am quite the town freak which satisfies! I am learning to speak. My sound is still so bad I am ashamed. I practice

only when I am alone and it is dark (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 149).

SILENCE: FROM RESISTANCE TO LULLABY

Ada chooses to speak in the patriarchal symbolic order only when her voices can be heard. Nonetheless, she would never forget the life using silence as a means to fight against it and using the piano as her double to exist in the patriarchal symbolic order (Dalton & Fatzinger, 2003). However, although caring for Stewart, Ada does not need to relinquish all her imaginative life. Ada says that she imagines her piano in its grave in the sea, as her voiceover reveals that she sometimes thinks of her piano:

At night, I think of my piano in its ocean grave, and sometimes of myself floating above it.
Down there everything is so still and silent that it lulls me to sleep. It is a weird lullaby and so it is. It is mine (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 151).

While suspending above her piano, in the ocean, which is so silent that lulls her to sleep, Ada refers to silence as a lullaby, a cradle song usually used to calm the prelingual children into sleep. At this moment, we can see that “silence” has been shifted from as anger and resistance against patriarchal system to as a lullaby to calm down people into sleep, as *The Piano* ends with a stanza from Thomas Hood’s poem “Silence”: “There is a silence where has been no sound. There is a silence where no sound may be in the cold grave, under the deep deep sea” (Campion, *The Piano*, Scene 151).

Silence has no longer been a defense to the patriarchal symbolic order, but functioning as tranquility to pacify Ada’s anger and further soothe her into sleep. In the conventional patriarchal marriage, in which the man represents authority while the woman is subordinate, Ada would prefer closing her mouth to speaking up but not to be heard in order to present some control over and resistance against the patriarchal norms. Only in a marriage with an equal and intersubjective partnership can Ada willingly to speak in the symbolic order.

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APPENDIX

Silence¹

Thomas Hood

There is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;
No voice is hush'd—no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke, over the idle ground:
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox or wild hyæna calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan—
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone

¹ Arthur Quiller-Couch, ed. 1919. *The Oxford book of English verse: 1250–1900*.