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**BATILI OLMAYAN KADIN YAZARLARIN ESERLERİNDE
KADIN SORUNSAĞI: ZADİE SMİTH'İN *İNCİ GİBİ DİŞLER* VE
ELİF ŞAFAK'IN *İSKENDER* ADLI ROMANLARININ ANALİZİ**

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**THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NON-
WESTERN FEMALE WRITER'S NOVELS: AN ANALYSIS OF
ZADIE SMITH'S *WHITE TEETH* AND ELIF SHAFAK'S *HONOUR***

(MASTER THESIS)

by

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**BATILI OLMAYAN KADIN YAZARLARIN ESERLERİNDE BATILI
OLMAYAN KADIN TEMSİLİ: ZADIE SMİTH'İN *İNCİ GİBİ DİŞLER* VE ELİF
ŞAFAK'IN *İSKENDER* ROMANLARINDA DOĞULU KADIN TEMSİLİ**

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KISA ÖZET

Bu çalışma kendileri de doğu kökenli olan iki bayan yazarın, Zadie Smith'in *White Teeth* ve Elif Şafak'ın *İskender* eserlerinde doğulu kadın tasvirini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Batı edebiyatındaki doğulu kadın tasviri çoğu zaman önyargılı bir şekilde yapılmış olup, post kolonyal dönem sonrası batılı olmayan kadın temsili batının kendini tanımladığı ikili karşıtlık söyleminin bir parçası olmaya mahkûm edilmiştir. Bu süreç boyunca gelişen feminizmler özellikle farklı kültür ve dinlere mensup olan kadınların haklarının savunuculuğunu yapmak bir yana, batılı feminizmin beyaz kadın seçiciliğiyle doğulu kadını kendi içerisinde öteki konumuna düşürmüştür. Bu analiz sonucunda da Batının vadettiği özgürlüğün ve eşitliğin çoğu zaman doğu kökenli üçüncü dünya kadınlarını kapsamakta sınıfta kaldığının altı çizilecektir.

Üç ana bölümden oluşan bu çalışmada Smith ve Şafak'ın eserlerindeki batılı ve doğulu kadın karakterlerin temsilleri Foucault'un iktidar ve güç söylemleri, Bhabha'nın melezlik ve üçüncü alan söylemleri kullanılarak incelenecektir. Her iki romanda orijinal yazım dilleri olan İngilizce nüshalarında araştırılacaktır. Ayrıca, her iki romanda da doğulu ve batılı kadınların etkileşimleri incelenip, Bahsi geçen karakterlerin çok kültürlü Londra ortamında maruz kaldıkları ötekileştirmeyi gözler önüne sermek içinse Said'in şarkiyatçılık söyleminden faydalanılacaktır. Bu analiz esnasında karakterlerin gelişimini etkileyen erkek hegemonyası, dil, din, toplum etkenleri üzerinde durulacaktır.

**THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NON-WESTERN
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ABSTRACT

This thesis has aimed to investigate the representation of non-Western women in works of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Elif Shafak's *Honour*, who are also Eastern rooted, too. Most of the time representation of Eastern women in western discourse have been prejudicial and in postcolonial term representation of non-western women has been obliged to be a part of the dichotomy through which the West defines itself. Various feminisms that developed during this process, let alone advocating the rights of women belonging to different cultures and religions, they have left the oriental woman as the other because of white female selectivism of Western feminism. At the end of this study, it will be underlined that the promised equality and freedom does not embrace the third world women most of the time.

In this three-part work, representations of Western and Oriental female characters in Smith and Shafak's works will be examined by using Foucault's power and power discourses, Bhabha's hybridity and third space discourse. Both novels will be analysed and quoted in their original English version. In addition, Said's orientalism discourse will be used to demonstrate the otherization process the characters are exposed to in the multicultural London environment. During this analysis, the factors of male hegemony, language, religion, society which affect the development of characters will be emphasized.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to closely investigate two postmodern novels of non-Western female writers, Elif Shafak's *Honour*¹ and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*². *White Teeth*, was translated into Turkish by Mefkure Bayatlı as *İnci Gibi Dişler* and *Honour* was translated as *İskender* in Turkish by Omca Korugan. The similarity between these two novels attracts the attention of readers from the very first day of their publications. However, after a detailed reading of both novels, it appears obvious that although both novels use London as the main setting for the action, the challenges the characters face with are not similar. As it is known, the story of the immigrants in foreign countries is not a new phenomenon. While Shafak offers a portrayal of the Turkish and Kurdish family called Toprak, Smith's novel seems more multicultural in terms of the ethnic backgrounds of the characters including Bengali Iqbals, British and Jamaican Joneses and Jewish Chalfens. Most of the time the difficulties the eastern rooted females confront in *Honour* arise from the patriarchal system of their culture rather than their alienation in the multicultural environment of London. In *White Teeth*, on the other hand, the non-Western characters desperately try to be a part of their new homeland, but somehow they suffer from otherization because of their ethnicities, physical appearances and they appear as the victimized third world women in the heart of Europe. *White Teeth*, when compared to *Honour*, presents a more mesmerizing, qualified, comprehensive and life-like story of the immigrants in London. These two writers particularly represent the third world feminism as they include more non-Western rooted female characters.

Smith and Shafak are both very well-known writers of our day. Both of the novels are deliberately chosen for a detailed analysis as they are alike in terms of the subjects, characters and the setting. Shafak's novel started at the riverside of Euphrates, then moved to Istanbul and London as a final destination. It tells the story of the three families:

¹ Elif Shafak, *Honour*, Penguin Books, London, 2012

² Zadie Smith *White Teeth*, Penguin Books, London, 2000

Berzo's, Tariq's and Toprak's. And in *White Teeth* we are presented with the challenging stories of three immigrant families similar to *Honour*; Iqbals, Joneses and Chalfens. In both of the novels, there are twins Magid and Millat in *White Teeth* and Jamila and Pembe in *Honour*.

This thesis attempts to examine both western and eastern rooted female characters' identity constructions comparatively. The interaction among the women belonging to various cultural and religious backgrounds will be examined as well. The emphasis will also be put on how the non-Western identities are represented in the novels written by eastern rooted female writers rather than the writers who write with their conventional and stereotypical biased attitude the Western towards Eastern, third world women. Thus, this thesis also sets out with an objective to explore how the eastern rooted females are represented in the works of non-Western originated authors.

As both of the novels demonstrate the current situation of the immigrants in London, it is quite necessary to look at the history of immigration to England briefly. After the long-lasting colonial expansion of Britain, England has had to host a multicultural population since the end of the World War II. After the World War II, many colonized countries declared their independency. However, independency does not provide the ex-colonized countries with better life conditions. On the contrary, having been exploited and doomed, most of the inhabitants of the third world countries have found the solution in migrating to the colonizer countries as a result of the imposition of English culture and language. Unfortunately, having been coerced to migration as they have been left good for nothing, they are not welcomed by the Western people.

White Teeth presents a more multicultural environment. Iqbals, for instance, the major characters of the novel, with their Bangladeshi-Muslim identity are frequently exposed to the otherization and racial discrimination. As for the Joneses, with their half British and half Jamaican origin, they have been the victims of the attacks of the racial discrimination. Similar to the history of Bangladeshi, Jamaica has recently been able to gain its independency. But the long-lasting influence of the British culture has not been adequate for Clara and Irie to adapt to their new homeland. And the Chalfens, the Jewish rooted family of *White Teeth*, have a strong sense of Englishness, and with their white skin colour, they epitomize the supremacy of the British over the colonized third world citizens.

In the first chapter of this study, in order to see various feminisms' accordance with the time that they emerge, an overall history of feminisms will be examined through their historical developments. In both of the novels, we are presented with the female figures who are challenged by the male dominancy. Most of the time, the problems that the third world women confront are more complicated and challenging than those of white women. As it is underlined by Spivak in her essay "*Can Subaltern Speak?*" South Asian women suffer from double suppression because of the patriarchal traditions both in their home countries and immigrated countries.³

In the theory chapter, the history of women's struggle to gain a voice against the male power will be presented. Furthermore, the deficiencies of white feminism and the need for a more comprehensive and inclusive feminism to be able to address the problems of women all over the world will be explained. In order to deal with the position of the non-Western women in Europe, third-world and transnational feminism will be touched on. Because, especially after a long history of the colonial expansion, the struggles of the women who came from ex-colonized countries would not be the same. As stated by Jones, "The west/rest divide creates a false sense of easily definable identities for women whose lives are hybrid and complex. There is no easy formula to identify what it means to be "liberated," "empowered," or "repressed" in diverse cultural contexts"⁴.

Before the detailed analysis of the novels, how women and gender are represented in the Western discourse will be examined through the works of self-proclaimed literary feminist critics including Ellen Moers, Elaine Showalter, Betty Friedan, Susan Koppelman Cornillon and Toril Moi. Investigating those critics' works are of significance to understand how the women of various cultures and backgrounds are represented in the *White Teeth* written by a Jamaican-English writer and *Honour* by a Turkish writer. The identity formation of the female characters is another point to be emphasized in this part of the thesis. In both novels, to demonstrate the processes that the women are exposed to during their search of identity are one of the fundamental aims of this study. Michel

³ Slyvia Hadjetin, *Multiculturalism and Magic Realism in Zadie Smith's Novel White Teeth: Between Fiction and Reality*, Anchor Academic Publishing, Hamburg – 2014, p.64.

⁴ Rachel Bailey Jones, *Postcolonial Representations of Women*, Springer, London and New York- 2011, p.34.

Foucault's and Homi Bhabha's theories and concepts are utilized to shed light on the postcolonial female identity formation.

Foucault's theories are mostly associated with the postmodern discourse and his theories have been useful for many feminist critics. Foucault's theories on sexuality, subject and discourse/power/knowledge are made use of during the analyses of the novels. Similar to Butler's performativity, Foucault also asserts that genders are not natural occurrences, they are deliberately created for the sake of serving the ideologies of those who hold the power. This thesis adopts Foucault's views related to subject and subjectivity. In both novels, male power is exercised on the female characters. Thus, female figures in these novels are described either as docilized/self-regulating bodies that willingly submit to traditional gender roles or as the resisting subjects that challenge the imposed gender stereotypes on them. Docilized bodies in the novels seem to be fully subjugated by the male dominancy and they never question the norms of the disciplining institutions. Furthermore, with the term bio-power, Foucault explicitly demonstrates how the power can be exercised over human body to expand its influence. On the other hand, resisting subjects are able to violate the existing traditional gender stereotypes.

In addition to Foucault's theory, Butler's performativity theory will also be explained in the theory chapter. As a postmodern feminist, Butler suggests that gender does not refer to essence:

[t]he subject is not *determined* by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition* that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects ... all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat.⁵

The novels present alternative genderings by offering a critique of essentialist approaches. Lesbian characters will establish themselves as resisting figures in their multinational environment through their rejection of doing the activities repeatedly.

Homi Bhabha is another influential postcolonial theorist referred to in this study. To examine the representation of non-Western women in the multicultural world of London, it is quite necessary to benefit from the theories of postcolonial critics. While dealing with the hybrid characters who are obliged to live in a completely new country, namely

⁵ Vicki Kirby, "*Judith Butler, Live Theory*", Continuum Press, London, 2006- p.45.

England, Bhabha's hybridity is of significance. Especially in *White Teeth*, the second-generation coming from different races may be treated as hybrid characters like Irie and the children of the Chalfens. Young explains that "Hybridity is a making one of two distinct things, so that it becomes impossible for the eye to detect the hybridity of a geranium or a rose"⁶. When two different races come together, the offspring forms a novelty for both of the genes. And after the formation of this new hybrid identity, it is almost impossible trace whether the races were pure in themselves or not. That is to say, Bhabha asserts that hybridity is something positive and creative as it forms a new alternative to the binary oppositions that is formed as a result of postcolonialism. Bhabha defines hybridity as follows:

The discriminatory effects of the discourse of cultural colonialism, for instance, do not simply or singly refer to a "person", or a dialectical power struggle between self and other, or to a discrimination between mother culture and alien cultures. Produced through the strategy of disavowal, the reference of discrimination is always a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different – a mutation, a hybrid.⁷

As it is known, the present multicultural status of Europe essentially results from the postcolonial activities of once colonizer countries. As a result of hybridisation, the third space which celebrates the differences that appears among cultures. And today both the colonizer and the ex-colonized are obligated to live in harmony, which leads to the creation of a new space, which can be labelled as a third space. In today's world, it is almost impossible to speak about pure nationality, as Bhabha asserts that hybridity:

based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity*. [...] the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture.⁸

Particularly in *White Teeth* the eastern rooted female identities who are represented as hybrid characters rather than the one totally assimilated are important in terms of demonstrating the shift related to their representations in the Western context. In the third

⁶ Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, Routledge, London and New York-1995, p.26.

⁷ Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi", *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p.111.

⁸ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London and New York- p. 38.

and fourth chapters, the representations of Western female identities, then the non-Western female identities and the interaction among those characters will be analysed.



CHAPTER I

1.1. Western Originated Feminisms

It has been always arduous to be a woman regardless of nationality, time and position. Throughout history, women have suffered, discriminated against, and considered inferior just because of their gender and this has emerged as a chief problem in women's life. Aristotle declared that "the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities" and he says "We should regard women's nature as suffering from natural defectiveness."⁹. And one another significant philosopher, St Thomas Aquinas considered a woman as the "incidental being and incomplete, imperfect man"¹⁰. Thus, many women have tried to define themselves against the patriarchal definitions of their male-dominated society. Feminism emerged as a women's rights movement to provide equality between men and women. In this first part of our thesis brief information will be given concerning the background of feminism and its first two waves in order to comprehend the struggle of women in a historical frame.

Although feminism started a few centuries ago, it has become much more problematic to come up with answers to the questions like "what is feminism?", "who is a feminist?" as time passes by. Today, it is nearly impossible to define feminism with a certain definition since there are different understandings, perceptions and versions of feminisms. As a term, feminism emerged in the midst of the nineteenth century, especially in the 1960s. At the very core of the movement, there lies a revolt against sexism and the patriarchal order of the society. Chris Weedon defines patriarchy as a term referring to "power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men"¹¹. There lies this revolt of women against the superior position of men along with the hope for the equality between the sexes in the very essential philosophy of various kinds of feminisms.

⁹ Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Vintage Books, New York- 2011, p.25.

¹⁰ De Beauvoir, p.25.

¹¹ Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Basic Blackwell, Oxford and Cambridge – 1987, p.2.

Thus, feminism appears as a social movement for giving voice to the women who have been suppressed, oppressed and marginalized.

Feminism is defined as “a theory and/or movement concerned with advancing the position of women through such means as achievement of political, legal, or economic rights equal to those granted men”¹². In order to clarify the meaning of the movement, we can use Hook’s simple definition; “Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression”¹³. As can be seen in different definitions of feminism, feminism primarily emerges as a reaction to the oppression of women, sexist discrimination and inequalities. Feminism was promoted as a result of women’s suffrage movement.

The 18th century British writer, Mary Wollstonecraft with her convocation “Vindication of Rights of Women” provided a great deal of contribution to the rise of feminism. Later, in the 20th century, Virginia Woolf started to raise women-related issues such as the difficulties and challenges women writers were faced with in writing and publishing their works in her lengthy essay *A Room of One’s Own*.¹⁴

After different feminisms came into picture, there has been an attempt to categorize various kinds of feminisms chronologically in terms of their historical appearances with a series of “waves”. The concept originated with the Irish activist Frances Power Cobbe in 1884 who proposed that movements “resemble the tides of the ocean, where each wave obeys one more uniform impetus, and carries the waters onward and upward along the shore”¹⁵. It is extremely important to underline the fact that each wave of feminism has been shaped in a great parallel with the social, political and economic events of the time they have emerged. Due to these reasons, it is not plausible to evaluate those waves of feminisms irrespective of their historical and social backgrounds.

To start with, the first wave of feminism, as suggested by Freedman is used to refer to the late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century feminist movements that were concerned (although not exclusively) with gaining equal rights for women, particularly

¹² Karen Offen, *Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach*, Chicago Journals, Signs, Vol. 14, No. 1 Autumn, 1988 – p.123.

¹³ bell Hook, *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, South End Press, Cambridge – 2000 p.viii.

¹⁴ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own*, Penguin Books, 1928.

¹⁵ Nancy Hewitt, *No permanent waves: Recasting histories of U.S. feminism*. NJ: Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick – 2010, p.2.

the right of suffrage¹⁶. Even if this first wave of feminism is generally attributed to the suffrage movement, it is of vital importance since it gave voice to the women officially for the first time. Virginia Woolf and Mary Wollstonecraft are regarded as the leading figures of the first wave feminism. However, Margaret Cavendish, a very influential 17th century English philosopher and aristocrat took the earlier steps for feminism in various ways. She strongly supported the education of women and in 1662 she wrote a satire called *Playes and Orations of Divers Persons* for the liberation of women and their need for freedom and equality.¹⁷ She published her works as a playwright even by using her own name, while most of the female writers were producing their works anonymously or under a male pseudonym.

When it comes to the late of the 1960s and 1970s, in addition to providing equality for the women's rights, the main underpinning of the first wave, there emerged the need for the equality in the other areas of the life like family and work apart from the suffrage. In this sense, the second wave feminism is a social movement which brings new dimensions to the constricted attitudes of the first wave. The publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in which she handles the dissatisfaction of the white-middle class American women in 1963 is seen as the beginning of the second wave feminism. Also the foundation of the National Organization of Women is a significant step in terms of providing unity and solidarity among the women in this sense. Second wave of feminism manifested the need of women to have their own unique history along with sisterhood and solidarity among women from different cultures, social classes and ethnicities.

The second wave of feminism has broadened the focus from suffrage to the idiosyncratic experience of womankind both socially and culturally. Reproductive rights, equality in the institutions like family, workplace and sexuality are the significant issues that the second wave feminism embraces. Women's liberation movement is an impetus source for this wave of feminism and the freedom of women both in their sexual life and in the family and society was placed at the very centre. Then, the second wave of feminism fights for many forms of freedom including gay and lesbian rights. Through the hippie movement and struggle for the liberation of gays/lesbians in America in the 1960s and in

¹⁶ Jane Freedman, *Concepts in the Social Sciences ; Feminism*, Open University Press, Buckingham, Philadelphia – 2001

¹⁷ <http://www.lablit.com/article/411>

Britain in the 1970s, the gender was reconceptualised and redefined against traditional sexual behaviours. The ultimate legitimacy of homosexuality as a sexual orientation was demanded through the women's movement. And with the effects of the civil right movement and the formation of National Organization for Women, the self-consciousness arose among the groups. Rampton (2008) draws attention to the difference of the second wave of feminism from the first wave; "drew in women of colour and developing nations, seeking sisterhood and solidarity and claiming 'women's struggle as class struggle'"¹⁸

Simone de Beauvoir, coming to the forefront with her extremely influential book "*The Second Sex*" (1949) set the tone of the movement. Beauvoir's book heavily deals with the materialistic side of the first wave. In addition to the preoccupation of the society by the masculine power and rules, the second wave of feminism hugely takes attention to the great difference between the two sexes and their inner personalities. *The Second Sex*, in this sense, reveals the reality that when a woman tries to define herself, she starts by saying 'I am a woman'; however, no man would do so. Also, it is an underlined fact in the book that, while the man is the "only" and "one", woman has been referred to as the "other" throughout the centuries. And she is profoundly concerned about the construction of a female identity and how it is affected by the social conditions of her community. Beauvoir criticizes the enforcement of the society during this identity formation and her saying "On ne naît pas femme: on le devient" (one is not born a woman, but becomes one) has become one of the milestones of the feminist movements. With that, Beauvoir aimed to make a clear distinction between two hypercritical terms of feminism; sex and gender. Sex is biologically determined and cannot be changed. Beauvoir clarifies in *Second Sex* that one is born with "a sex, as a sex, sexed, and that being sexed and being human are coextensive and simultaneous. Sex is a human attribute and there is no one who is not sexed"¹⁹. Gender, on the other hand, a sexual identity that is culturally acquired and it is a fluid term; it is socially attributed to people through the cultural transmission. Sex does not lead to gender, gender cannot express or reflect sex. While sex is static with no chance to be changed, gender is the variable cultural construction of sex, the myriad and open possibilities of cultural meaning. Beauvoir underlines the excessive effect of the culture

¹⁸ Martha Rampton. *The Three Waves of Feminism*. The Magazine of Pacific University Vol. 41 No. 2. Pacific University.

¹⁹ De Beauvoir, p.28.

and society in the process of forming the gender of women: “it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature [...] only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an *Other*. ‘Women’ still dream through the dreams of men”²⁰.

Another prominent figure of the second wave movement is Kate Millet with her cause-celebre text *Sexual Politics* (1969). The publication of the book coincides with the golden age of the second wave. Millet underlines the reality behind the women oppression in a society. Millet’s argument attracts the attention with her emphasis on the topic of ideological indoctrination as well as on equality in a society which makes women vulnerable to the every form of inferiority.²¹ Millet regards patriarchy as a political institution which paves the way for the formation of female identity as the secondary citizen of the state. Females are subordinated to obey the rules and enforcement that are imposed by the males of the society.

Following Beauvoir’s distinction between sex and gender, Millet makes it obvious that the “natural” sex is oversimplified to the term “gender” by the society for the benefits and self-interests of the vigorous supporters of the patriarchal order: “Sex, like race, is something one cannot really change. It is a sign of a rather superior female to wish herself out of such a case, seeing and aspiring to the virtues of the ruling group”²². Then, females are expected to experience their femininity within the boundaries that are designated by men. It is nearly impossible for women to be able to express their concerns and desires for themselves under these conditions. Women are expected to define themselves by the predetermined concepts including their representation in literature. For instance, male characters are shaped through romantic actions and adventures while women are epitomized as Rapunzel waiting for the hero to save her. Even if Millet’s work is criticized by some for being one dimensional in terms of selecting the works of male author solely, it is a powerful critique of patriarchy.

Second wave feminists want to be emancipated from the sanctions of the society which stem from the biological difference of women and they want to demolish the patriarchal order of the society. The celebration of women body is one of the other significant

²⁰ De Beauvoir, p.174.

²¹ Raman Selden, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker, *A Reader’s Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, Pearson Longman, 2005, p. 123.

²² Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics*, Doubleday & Company, Inc., New York, 1970, p. 203.

contribution of the second wave. By celebration of women body, women reclaim their right to decide the destiny of their body in the controversial topics like abortion, rape and unwanted pregnancy. Within this context, Food and Drug Administration legitimized using the contraceptive pills. Even if this legitimization seems to be a result of women's requirement for their bodily freedom, the actual reason behind this step is controlling the reproduction of the underclass women. Because, especially after the Second World War in America, there was a sudden increase in American economy. The current workforce was not efficient. In order to fill this gap, women had to be included.

Furthermore, the second wave adds multi-vocality to the first wave. As an example, Asian-American feminism is defined as "paying particularly [sic] attention to Asian American women's voices, texts, experiences, literature, arts, visual arts, histories, geography, theory, epistemology, pedagogy, sexuality, body and life" by Yang²³. Another significant feminist movement is Black/Womanist feminism. Black/ Womanist feminism can be said to be a result of the civil right movement of the age. Women who are African descendants initiate this movement since they believe white western feminist fail to address their problems. The third wave feminism will be analysed under another title since the third wave will be at the very core of the analysis of the novels under study in this thesis.

When it comes to the midst of the 1980s, the term third wave was started to be used and it emerged as the new phase of feminism following the second wave. The third wave feminism came out as a reaction to the limitations, misguidance and imperfections of the first and the second waves of feminism. When we look at the fundamentals of the first wave, it appeals to a limited audience with limited subjects including laws and political processes to gain equal opportunities with men and the main emphasis was on the suffrage. With the second wave, the main focus was shifted from the political equality to the cultural and social equality. While the first wave of feminism is criticized for being ethnocentric, the second wave feminism is more inclusive. However, third wave feminism embraces multiplicity and plurality in terms of ethnicity, nationality and backgrounds of the women more than the first and second waves do and it precipitates the productive ground for the forthcoming forms of feminism. The third wave of feminism can be said

²³ Lingyan Yang, "Theorizing Asian America: On Asian American and postcolonial Asian diasporic women intellectuals". *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 2003, p.141.

to have a tactical approach rather than a unilateral approach. Synder explains that these tactical approaches are a response to the backlashes of the second wave and defines it;

First, in response to the collapse of the category of “women,” the third wave foregrounds personal narratives that illustrate an intersectional and multi-perspectival version of feminism. Second, as a consequence of the rise of postmodernism, third-wavers embrace multivocality over synthesis and action over theoretical justification. Finally, in response to the divisiveness of the sex wars, third-wave feminism emphasizes an inclusive and non-judgmental approach.²⁴

Furthermore, in addition to the political enterprises to have equality in the society, third wave places the main emphasis on language and challenges the stereotypical representations of women on the media. With the involvement of the postmodern, poststructuralist thinking and postcolonial discourse, third wave feminism focuses more on individual experience rather than ordinary and typical “upper-middle white women” practices. Western feminism has its fundamental roots in a Eurocentric mind-set. In contrast to the ethnocentricity of the first wave feminism, the third wave feminism embraces the terms like multiplicity, pluralism and celebrates globalization as well as multi-nationalism which can be studied under the heading of global feminism.

Third wave feminism is influenced and shaped by the historical circumstances, socio-political events and cultural development of its age. In the later twentieth century, which is called as the post-modern era, post-war developments have substantially affected the development of third wave feminism. The four major perspectives have influenced this new course of movement; “intersectionality theory as developed by women of color and ethnicity; postmodernist and poststructuralist feminist approaches; feminist postcolonial theory, often referred to as global feminism; and the agenda of the new generation of younger feminists”²⁵. Deconstruction and decentralization of identity are some of the fundamental concepts of third wave as there are socially, culturally and politically marginalized and disadvantaged women including the blacks, third world citizens, environmentalists and contra-minorities. Adopting the principles of postmodernism, third wave of feminism supports an anti-essentialist view of identity based on individualism rather than the traditional stereotyped women.

²⁴ R. Claire Snyder . *What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay*, The University of Chicago Press Journals, Chicago. 2008, p.175.

²⁵ Susan Archer Mann and Douglas J. Huffman. “The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave” Guilford Press, 2005, p.57.

Global feminism that has flourished in parallel with the third wave has aimed to embrace all women regardless of their ethnicities, religions, and social classes. It is the gospel truth that even if feminism emerged as a movement that tries to provide equality between women and men, this movement has a great tendency to support the view that all women are equal but the white western women are more equal. The Eurocentric approach in feminism has no efficacy except from increasing the dominance of Western hegemony over those women called as the “other” and “Third World”, especially those countries’ women once colonized by the West. So, the discriminative attitude of the western feminist theories have not contributed to the development of feminism but it has hindered the promised inclusionary attitude of feminism. Moraga and Anzaldua underline this reality and the thirst for a new anti-apartheid and anti-discriminative kind of feminism; “Racism affects all of our lives, but it is only white women who can 'afford' to remain oblivious to these effects. The rest of us have had it breathing or bleeding down our necks”²⁶. As it is explicitly stated in the quotation, there was an urgent need for a more inclusive form of international feminism to recognize women’s rights as human rights irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds and global feminism sets out with this aim. One of the shortcomings of the Western - oriented feminism is that still it cannot provide the cultural visibility of “Black and Asian women in the UK, Algerian women in France, Turkish women in Germany, and Arab women in Sweden”²⁷. And then how can Western feminism fight for protecting the rights of women all over the world?

Through the criticisms of pioneers of third world feminists like Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Sarojini Sahoo concerning Western Feminism’s ignorance of the unique experiences of women who belong to third-world countries, a new and inclusive form of feminism emerges under the name of global feminism. As it is stated by Mohanty in her works, instead of creating a sense of solidarity among all the women, Western-based Feminism unfortunately has formed a kind of binary; Western and non-Western women, which seems to be connected to a masculine, that is dualistic way of thinking. In Western feminist theory, third world women are represented as powerless, traditional, uneducated, and backward while the Western women stand for the vice versa features. All in all,

²⁶ Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983, p.62.

²⁷ Kathy Davis, Mary Evan & Judith Lorber *Handbook of Gender and Women’s Studies*, 2006. p. 32- 33

Global Feminism is regarded as a revolt against the essentializing perception of the Western feminisms that all women on earth have to think, feel and experience in the same way.

a) French Feminism

When it comes to the categorization of versions of feminisms, it can be categorized into three: Anglo-American feminism, English Feminism and French Feminism. French Feminism appeared as a reaction against the Anglo-American way of thinking. In order to reveal the essential difference between Anglo-American and French feminists, their conceptualization of women can be taken into consideration. Gambaudo states in her article that;

Anglo-American feminists would be invested in seeking a woman-centred perspective and in defining a woman identity they believe women have been denied. French feminists, on the other hand, (...) believe that woman does not have an identity as such but that the feminine can be identified where difference and otherness are found.²⁸

Despite the fact that, most of the pioneers of French feminism are not originally from France, this movement takes its name where it is basically studied and formed. French feminism can be said to be based on the very essentials of the second wave. French feminism began in the 1970s. This feminism has shifted the interest from the materialist and social issues into linguistic and psychoanalytic emphases. While the previous forms of feminisms were more concerned with the treatment of women in an equal way or political rights for women in every respect, this sort of feminism profoundly engages in specifying the language, forming a new feminine discourse and they undertake the task of redefining the terms sex, gender and body.

Yet, what makes French feminism worthy of integrating into this research is its leading role in feminist theories to reject a phallogocentric language to form a feminine mode of writing in order to subvert the patriarchal oppression and domination. French feminist theorists specifically search for the ways of overturning the male-constructed language and culture along with the traditional gender and sexual stereotypes. So, French feminists' main focus is on the usage of language through which those stereotypes are formed

²⁸ Sylvie A. Gambaudo, *French Feminism vs Anglo-American Feminism*, European Journal of Women's Studies, SAGE Publications (UK and US), 2007, p.97.

because language and literature are of high importance in terms of directing the discourse in a society. Then, as a first step, women should initiate the change within the language to challenge the phallogocentric mind-set.

Simone de Beauvoir provided the inspiration, motivation and impetus for French Feminists with her ground-breaking ideas proposed in *Second Sex*. Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Monique Wittig, Julia Kristeva are the other renowned theorists developed the French Feminism. Julia Kristeva is a significant name in the history of feminism. Her studies concerning sexuality and femininity in addition to psychoanalytic topics make her a milestone in the history of feminism. With a very distinctive point of view, Kristeva points out to the deficiencies of the first and the second waves of feminism by her emphasis on the fallaciousness of women's efforts to identify herself with the society in order to be a part of the social order. Kristeva suggests that beyond of all of those endeavours, what women need is to semitize a psycho-symbolic order which includes both the social and linguistic representation of women. By the term of psycho-symbolism, Kristeva implies the necessity of deconstructing the phallogocentric form of the current language that fails to verbalize the expression of the impulses created by the women body. Kristeva appraises all women as unique. That is to say, beyond equality, Kristeva paves the way for forming singularity.

Feminine genius, as well as singularity is another feature that makes womanhood unique. The most obvious form of this genius reveals itself through the ability of reproduction of women; maternity. But, according to Kristeva because of this potential, man sees women as a means of the continuation of the bloodline and woman is attributed as the "other". On that account, women are distinguished only by their re-productivity, nurturing of the child and satisfying the sexual expectations of the man. What Kristeva heavily criticizes is that there is no value of the vagina and the pleasure of the woman as she does not have the phallus that man has. The term abjection is also of importance in her work. By the concept *abjection*, she talks about the fear and the terror brought about by the incapability of separating "me" and 'not-me' – of which the first and primary instance is the embryo's existence within the mother"²⁹. Thus, the subject looks for a way to gain a new identity

²⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Power of Horrors*, Columbia University press 1982, p.15.

and to be abjected from the body of the mother. Because of that Kristeva sees maternity as a function of woman, but not the ultimate aim of being a woman.

Luce Irigaray, a feminist philosopher has contributed to the French Feminism by utilising psychoanalytic theories to investigate the patriarchy and the feminine identity. Most of her statements challenge the hierarchically constituted Western dualities as nothing can be defined without it. Like the other theorists of the French Feminism, she criticizes Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis since both Freud and Lacan have established phallogocentric and patriarchal theories in their approaches to gender and sex by valorizing men, maleness and phallus. She highlights this binary as “history cannot do without the existence of two human subjects, man and woman, if it is to get away from master–slave relationships.”³⁰

Irigaray also discusses the phallogocentric structure of the language. According to her, language is not a blessing granted by God, but a historical constitution formed by human-beings. Every civilization needs a language to transfer and ensconce the culture including the distinction of the sexes. Thus, Irigaray criticizes the structure of the language including French for its sexist vocabulary. In her book *Je, Tu, Vous* she clearly points out to the male dominated language:

Man seems to have wanted directly or indirectly, to give the universe his own gender as he has wanted to give his name to his children, his wife his possessions. This has a significant bearing upon the sexes' relationship to the world, to things, to objects. In fact anything believed to have value belongs to men is marked by their gender.³¹

So, Irigaray maintains that in such a phallogocentric language system, it is not plausible to expect an exact representation of women; because the singularity of this system does not have space for the other sexes. Thus, women are forced to construct their social gender in accordance with this framework and as a result, women are pictured as the “deficient man” or the “other”. For this reason, there is an urgent need for a new form of language of women in order to construct the female agent politically and socially.

Another significant figure in French Feminism, Helene Cixous emphasizes the importance of female writing and she coined the term “écriture féminine”. At the very

³⁰ Dani Cavallora, *French Feminist Theory*, Continuum, London & New York- 2003, p.1.

³¹ Luce Irigaray, *Je, Tu, Vous*, Routledge, New York& London- 1993, p.31.

heart of *écriture féminine*, there lies Cixous' offer for a new type of writing to deconstruct the established phallogentric form of writing. She remonstrates against the current endeavours of literature for giving privileges to the masculine way of writing. *Ecriture féminine* is not only peculiar to women. However, Cixous maintains that women's writing must reflect women, which has been underestimated throughout the years in a phallogentric dominant literature world. What does Cixous mean by a feminine mode of writing? In "*The Laugh of Medusa*" Cixous explains how women should write: "Women must write her self". Also she states that:

Must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies-for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text-as into the world and into history-by her own movement.³²

Monique Wittig carried out her studies in Oriental languages, literature, history and philosophy and this has contributed substantially to her later career as a writer. Her recognition in feminism has started with her involvement in *Feministes Revolutionnaires*, a radical feminist group. Wittig categorizes women as a social group and in *The Category of Sex* she argues that both sexes, man and woman, are not natural, but they are the results of power and social relations: "There is no sex. There is but sex that is oppressed and sex that oppresses. It is oppression that creates sex and not the contrary"³³. All the social categories including male/female, man/woman and masculine/feminine are created for the sake of creating the appropriate ideological order. Wittig also claimed that "Women's productive role is institutionalized by law through the marriage contract"³⁴ and this has legalized the slavery of women. Furthermore, the act of marriage has increased the abusability of women both economically and socially. On account of these reasons, Wittig has iterated "One is not born a woman" and refused the naturalness of sex categories. Wittig offers a new mode of writing that is based on "materialist lesbian feminism". To Wittig, "Lesbians are not women"³⁵. In that, they cannot be included in the system of

³² Helene Cixous, *The Laugh of Medusa*, Translated by Paulo & Keith Cohen. 1976, p.876.

³³ As cited in Diana Leonard & Lisa Adkins. *Sex in Questions: French Materialist Feminism* Taylor & Francis Publisher, Bristol: 1996, p.26.

³⁴ Kelly Oliver, *French Feminism Reader*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Boston: 2000, p. 121.

³⁵ Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind*. 1981, p.141.

heterosexuality. Besides, lesbianism neutralizes the existence of women and makes women independent from men.

b) Postmodern Feminism

Postmodern feminism is significant for this dissertation as the novels under study here are postmodern novels. Substantially, postmodern feminists “criticize the conflation of sex and gender, essentialist generalizations about men and women, and the tendency to view gender as fixed, binary, and determined at birth, rather than a fluid, mobile construct that allows for multiple gender expressions”³⁶

Postmodern feminism has derived from various forms of postmodern and poststructuralist ideas in order to challenge the dominancy of the binary which provides women with only limited social, political and financial opportunities. The real purpose of modern feminist theories is not to bring equal rights to the women or to grant them significant places in the political arena but to reconstruct the discourse about women by deconstructing hierarchical regulation and power relations.

The most remarkable feature of postmodern feminism can be their refusal of the label “feminism” to avoid being essentialist. By accepting the term feminism, postmodern feminists think a woman has already accepted being the other and the different one. Thus, by discarding the term feminism, postmodern feminism has paved the way for multiple subjectivities, beings and genderings rather than established, fixed and stable identities imposed by patriarchal cultures. Through the high-technological developments of the postmodern age, where the sexual reassignment surgeries are available, the distinction between man-woman has blurred, which has challenged the stereotyped gender dichotomy.

Judith Butler made great contribution to postmodern feminism. Butler suggests that identities are not fixed but rather fluid and human body cannot be reducible into two essentialist genders as male and female. Butler mostly criticizes the essentialist generalizations about the sexes and genders. To Butler, gender is formed through the

³⁶ Clancy Ratliff, “Postmodern Feminism”, Boston: 2006, p.1018.

repetition of the actions culturally imposed. The queer theory is also included in postmodern feminism. Butler tells us that:

queer practices bring about a reworking of abjection into political agency , a politics that wants to give legitimacy to abject bodies, excluded from the social body, which is to say to homosexual bodies, and transform them into ‘bodies that matter’ that is, bodies that are socially recognized as lives ... [that are] valuable, worthy of support.³⁷

Judith Butler’s theory is based on identity politics and identity construction. The fixed, essential identity should be replaced by an identity formed by fluctuating and fluid discursive forces. Thus, Butler considers every woman as unique, one and only, thus the identity construction should not be restrictive but emancipatory. Women should be provided with abundant choices of identities and they can choose the one that fits to them appropriately. What Butler wants to underline is the oppressive attitude of the society in the identity construction of an individual. In order to call a person man or woman, they are expected to perform in certain ways that are socially and culturally constructed.

Butler makes the greatest contribution to gender studies with her concept of performativity. She mentions this term for the first time in *Gender Trouble*: gender identity is “tenuously constituted in time, instituted through an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts”³⁸. So, Butler insists that “identity is performatively constituted”³⁹. Then, women are compelled to be the doers of certain actions, they are expected to take pre-existing roles for the sake of being categorized as women in their societies. And performativity is not a singular act, it needs to be ritualized and repetition. And Butler highlights the repressive side of the performativity because through the implementation of performativity as gender is not the essence but a man-made formulation; “Discrete genders are part of what “humanizes” individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right”⁴⁰. In the analysis of the novels, also we will observe the punitive attitude of the societies to those women trying to subvert the stabilized genders.

³⁷ As cited in Terasa de Lauris, *Figures of Resistance*, Urbana & Chicago, 2007, p.296.

³⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, Routledge, London & New York, 1990, p.140.

³⁹ Butler, p.25.

⁴⁰ Butler, p.190.

1.2. As Alternatives to the Eurocentric Feminisms : Transnational Feminism, Third World Feminism and Their Effects on Identity Formation

Feminism has gained a great ground until it takes its current position today. It has been a women-centred movement fighting for the rights of women. With the emergence of the first wave of feminism, which came to the stage as a women's right convention firstly in America later in England and France, women triggered to create their voice to be heard by the others. Later, the second wave of feminism has been the women's liberation movement with its emphasis on the diversity and deconstructionist attitude of females against the male hegemonic society along with French Feminists. Recently the third wave of feminism, which is especially predominant in the midst of 1980s, has brought a breath of fresh air for history of feminism. What makes the third wave of feminism different from earlier feminisms is absolutely its intense attention to the multiplicity and the plurality of the ethnicities of women that it addresses to. The third wave of feminism is a sort of amalgamation that is formed through the stream of ideas. This new wave of feminism emerges as an anti-racist movement against the oppressive attitude of Western rooted feminisms against the women of colour. Contrary to the second wave that is shaped around a sisterhood formed through the sameness, third wave supporters celebrates multiplicity and they assert the impossibility of having a mere experience of women all around the world just because of their genders. The second wave is criticized and necessity of a new stream of feminism is pointed out by some authors; "the second wave, claiming that it reflects almost exclusively the perspectives and values of white, middle-class, heterosexual women who define themselves primarily as oppressed victims of patriarchy"⁴¹. That is to say, third wave feminists argue that the cultural, racial and economic conditions of women could not be underestimated as they indispensably influence those women's experiences. So, why is there a shift of interest in the third wave of feminism in terms of the ethnicities and backgrounds of the women it appeals to? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look at the formation process of the third world feminism which has been associated with the third wave most of the time.

⁴¹ Helene A. Shugart, Catherine Egley Waggoner, and D. Lynn O'Brien Hallstein. "Mediating Third-Wave Feminism: Appropriation as Postmodern Media Practice" *Critical Studies in Media Communication*. 2001: p.194.

a) Third World Feminism

“Black women have as much in common, in terms of their oppression, with black men as they do with white women”⁴²

Joseph Gloria

Feminism, even if aimed to create solutions to the social and political problems of the women from the beginning of its history, has failed to deal with the realities of all women who belong to different nationalities and ethnicities. In other words, feminism has appeared as a movement which represents and is represented by a white western woman and it has unsuccessfully tried to embrace the non-white women.

To begin with, it is significant to comprehend who are those non-white third-world women. The third world title is employed to refer to “underdeveloped/ overexploited”⁴³. Most of the time governments and the executive group of these underdeveloped countries are male-dominated and corrupted. Dramatically, the countries oppressing these countries are now called the “developed” countries. And the women living in these “developed” countries are now labelled as the First World Women. Thus, it is a universally valid statement that feminism constrained itself as an attempt to deal with the gender discrimination. However, Third World Women have been aware of the fact that the reality behind their oppression cannot be reducible to gender discrimination solely. Even if all of the feminists have regarded the gender discrimination or gender inequality as the basic issue of all feminist schools, it is not the only nor the fundamental problem of third world women. As Steady asserts “in developing world, equality of women is often viewed as linked to national and economic development”⁴⁴. Before dealing with the gender discrimination, third world women have much more critical issues like their security of life, poverty, health problems, financial crisis, malnutrition and the high rates of child mortality. Subsequently, in underdeveloped countries their inequality is not just a matter of unfairness in the distribution of the resources, the real problem is: “not just equal opportunity between men and women, but the creation of opportunity itself”⁴⁵.

⁴² Joseph Gloria. "The Incompatible Menage a Trois" 1981.

⁴³ As cited in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres. *Third World Women and Politics of Feminism*. Indiana University Press. 1991: p. 314.

⁴⁴ Steady, Filomina Chioma. "African Women at the End of the Decade. *Africa Report* 1985, p.6.

⁴⁵ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, p.325.

Therefore, feminism seems to fail although it is expected to be different from women's rights movement, by taking into consideration only the gender oppression as its initial point. Within this context Ferree explains the difference between these two terms as; "Organizing women explicitly as women to make social change is what makes a women's movement, feminism, by contrast, is "activism for the purpose of challenging and changing women's subordination to men"⁴⁶. White women feminism has been unsuccessful in terms of addressing the issues of imperialism, assimilation, race and class which have affected the lives of most of the women of the world more dominantly than gender discrimination. Third world women have been both exposed to the negative sanctions of imperialism and patriarchy within their own cultures.

As a reaction to the suppression policy of the West to the Third world countries, the women living in those countries have developed a new discourse of feminism to support their struggle. This has been a necessity for those women to create their own way of feminism as it has been nearly impossible for them to gather under the same roof as there is no common interest with white western women. Furthermore "women of the developed world seek to define for themselves a leading role both in academia and through development assistance programs in defining the needs, aims, and priority of Third World women" to make their voice much stronger.⁴⁷ To put it differently, even though feminism has fundamentally aimed to bring equality between women and men, the attempt of the women of the first world countries could not even provide equality among the women of different countries. White women have not seen themselves as equal to women of colour. To exemplify it, before the approval of the contraceptives in United States and Europe, the pills were initially tested in the Third World Countries.⁴⁸ As the first world authorities see overpopulation as the primary cause for the poverty in the third world countries, they see this implementation as a necessary step to improve the life conditions and situation of women in those countries rather than a crime against women. The financial status of the third world women also prevent them from making their voice heard. As it is known, the women living in the third world do not have the same accessibility to resources for

⁴⁶ As cited in Manisha Desai."The Perils and Possibilities of Transnational Feminism ". *Women's Studies Quarterly*. The Feminist Press. 2007: p.334.

⁴⁷ Okeyo, Achola Pala. 1981. "Reflection on Development Myths." *Africa Report* (March/ April) p.10.

⁴⁸ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres, p.323.

taking place in feminism since they are the members of mostly poor countries. That is to say, to form a common ground between the first and the third world women feminisms does not seem reasonable under those conditions. And to make an agreement between those kinds of feminisms does not seem applicable unless procuring the same resources and facilities accessible to the women all around the world.

b) Transnational Feminism

In spite of all of the endeavours of the feminists striving to make feminism an embracing movement for all women, feminism has not been able to achieve its intention substantially. Unfortunately, in many countries women and children are still the victims of current global system more than men. Thus, a different feminism has germinated recently as a reaction to the women suffering and gender discrimination all over the world, especially in the third world countries. Though we are living in the twenty first century, still there are a lot of women who have not been able to have the same rights with some other women. Especially now, with the increasing problem of migration to the countries like America and England, the discrimination has become a more serious problem. Jones explains the necessities of being integrated into these communities for a woman “to be part of the dominant American ideal, you must be a native-born, white, middle-class citizen, which excludes the experience of border-crossers and immigrants”⁴⁹. It signifies that unfortunately feminism still tries to survive locally rather than in a transnational form. Feminism still cannot address to the women of colour, immigrants and financially disadvantaged women. Thus, transnational feminism can be said to emerge as a response to the local feminism which is limited to a specific area and the problems of a certain group of women. Transnational feminism has tried to provide and maintain the equality of women across national borders in economic, social and political context.

On the other hand, the women who live in a remote part of the world have their shares in feminism dramatically through the imperialistic actions of those countries. To exemplify, the war between the USA and Afghanistan was claimed to be carried out for the sake of the Afghan women, to bring them human rights and equality⁵⁰. The same situation can be seen in the case of Iraqi women, where America has promised to provide democracy for

⁴⁹ Rachel Bailey Jones, *Postcolonial Representations of Women*, p.17.

⁵⁰ Johanna Brenner, *Transnational Feminism and Struggle for Global Justice*. 2000; p. 27

all women and children in Iraq. That is to say, the countries which are among the top countries in the feminist activities unfortunately brought blood and tears to the women out of their borders, especially to the third world countries, under the masquerade of equality and democracy. All of these hypocritical events bring a question to the minds of people, who determines women's right, needs, interests, for whom and why? With the increasing facilities of the world, the accessibility to the events all around the globe is easier now than in the past. The four conferences on women were held in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing subsequently after the announcement of the year 1975 as the International Women year by United Nations to propose solutions to the problems like inequality, poverty, education and violence against women. Through these conferences, with the gathering of the women across the national borders, transnational feminism has challenged the mono-cultural structure of the first world feminism as it supported the diversity of the nations instead of their sameness. When it comes to the midst of the 1980s, during the preparation process of the third world conference on women, a new kind of organization was founded called TFNs (Transnational Feminist Networks) to bring women from various nations around common purposes and agendas. Mogadham (2005) has explored the types of TFNs;

(1) networks that target the neoliberal economic policy agenda or those policies that endorse free markets and economic privatization; (2) those that focus on the dangers of fundamentalisms and insist on women's human rights; (3) women's peace groups that target conflict, war, and imperialism; and (4) feminist humanitarian networks that address women's practical needs as well as their strategic interests.⁵¹

Later, in 1993 with the World Conference on Human rights, women's groups claimed for the equality of human rights and women rights since violence against women must be regarded also as the violation of human rights. Even though the issue of human rights has been spoken nearly more than half a century, still when it came to women, they can easily be violated since women are persistently denied to be considered as "human".

1.3. Women and Representation of Gender in Western Discourse

To pursue the act of writing and to be included in the literary canon have always been challenging for women regardless of their backgrounds, ethnicity and financial status.

⁵¹ Valentine M. Mogadham, *Globalizing women: Transnational feminist networks*. p.19

From a housewife interested in writing to a member of an aristocratic family, women have a great deal of difficulty writing in compelling circumstances. No matter whether you belong to the West or the East, the act of writing has been an ordeal for the women all over the world. Thus, women have encountered lots of afflictions when they insist on writing. This chapter focuses on women, writing women and how women are represented in the Western discourse through the books of predominant literary feminist critics including Ellen Moers, Elaine Showalter, Betty Friedan, Susan Koppelman Cornillon and Toril Moi.

How to Suppress Women's Writing by Joanna Russ offered the fundamental reasons that are created by male dominated societies to prevent women from engaging into literature. Joanna Russ has categorized the strategies developed by the patriarchal institutions to distract women from writing under nine titles: Prohibitions, Bad Faith, Denial of Agency, Pollution of Agency, The Double Standard of Content, False Categorizing, Isolation, Anomalousness, Lack of Models. At the end of *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, Russ gathers the responses of women writers and scholars to the contention that women cannot write.

The prohibitions reveals the discrimination of the society against women who are discouraged from writing by being reminded of their domestic duties. Bad Faith refers to the female acceptance and internalization of the expectations and impositions of the culture. Denial of Agency emphasizes the inability of women to write, thus it is not her who has written it but a man must have written it for her. On the other hand, Pollution of agency accepts the agency of female but underestimates what she has written by claiming what she has written is rubbish, unacceptable, too subjective and pouring out the private feelings and emotions is considered indecent, immodest and defamatory. The Double Standard of Content explains how the social invisibility of women leads to a similar invisibility of women in literature, too. A woman is expected to write love stories, she is expected to keep away from serious subjects like politics, government or evil things. While man-made evil stories are welcomed, the vice-versa is not tolerated. Furthermore, the evil stories written by women writers are evaluated as the reflection of the inner devilish sides. False Categorizing undervalues women writers who are defined in association with their male relatives as we can see through the example: "Mary Cassatt, sister of Mr. Cassatt, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, returned from Europe

yesterday”⁵². In addition, what women have written are included in literary genres like regional novel what men consider less serious. The seventh strategy is Isolation, in order to undermine the achievement of women artists, only one work of them, generally the least important one, is included in the canon and the rest is completely ignored. Russ describes this kind of literature as phallic oriented literature. Anomalousness is another strategy to depreciate the works of women who are defined as irrational and intemperate, which results in pollution of agency for women. Lack of Models underline the lack of female artists who can create the tradition of women writing to be followed by young generations of women writers.

Madwoman in the Attic by Susan Gubar and Susan Gilbert has presented feminism’s problematic phases it has gone through while trying to form a new living space for all world women. Because of the hierarchically constructed social structures women are usually regarded as inferior while men are seen as superior in every part of life. This system of thought, of course, reveals itself throughout the history of literature, too. Hence, women of literature, who have achieved to be recognized in literature, have had to challenge an ordeal. First of all, representations of women in literary works have been tendentious most of the time on account of the male dominancy in literature. To exemplify, the madwoman, is a prominent symbol in literature all of the world and it brings the question to our mind that “Are the only sufferer of psychological breakdowns the women?” Teresa de Lauretis explains the portrayal of women as follows:

The representation of women as image is so pervasive in our culture... that is necessarily constitutes a starting point for any understanding of sexual difference and its ideological effects in the construction of social subjects, its presence in all forms of subjectivity.⁵³

The Madwoman in the Attic has dealt with the issues of women writers in a male-stream literary world by referring to the writers like Elizabeth Barret Browning, Jane Austen, George Eliot and Charlotte Bronte. Gilbert and Gubar underline the preconception that writing is a literary work and it is a man’s job. Thus, works of women writers are criticized just because of their sexes and labelled as too feminine and emotional to be read. Under these circumstances, women do not have a lot of opportunities; women should either

⁵² Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women’s Writing*, University of Texas Press, 1983- p. 49

⁵³ Teresa De Lauretis, *Figures of Resistance*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago 2007, p.37

imitate male writers or give their messages implicitly. A writer can be distinguished only through his creativity which is peculiar to God the Father and only the male writer appears to have this creativity. To Gilbert and Gubar, Shakespeare, Sidney and Johnson are “lesser God”⁵⁴

In this context, *The Madwoman in Attic* has started with a significant sentence “Is a pen a metaphorical penis?”⁵⁵ This very famous metaphorical sentence underlines how these kinds of essential symbols of sexuality are used to pollute female creativity. Thus, women’s works are not included in a literary canon as they cannot create a literary piece of work: “the text’s author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis”⁵⁶. And this paternity of literature has reached such a point that, the act of writing is seen as an inheritance transmitted by father to son, Harold Bloom describes this in his words; “from the sons of Homer to the sons of Ben Jonson, poetic influence [has] been described as a filial relationship; ‘a relationship of *sonship*’... ”⁵⁷. Gilbert and Gubar refer to this situation as “Bloom’s Freudian theories of patrilineal literary inheritance”⁵⁸

Because of the absence of creativity, women are obliged to remain as shadows or figurants whose ideas are never consulted in the works of male writers. When it comes to the 19th century, women decided to abandon their role as the angels of their houses for the sake of demonstrating themselves in a prohibited area for them; writing. In this context, women can reveal their responses implicitly to their patriarchal society by nominating the madwoman in literary works. While the protagonist female character represents the angel at home, the madwoman as the secondary role reveals herself as a monster and epitomizes the female way of writing. Gilbert and Gubar have aimed to bring into daylight neglected women writers and their works. The reality is clearly visible to the eyes of the readers that many successful women writers and their works are undervalued deliberately by the male consensus.

⁵⁴ Annette R. Federica. *Gilbert & Gubar’s Madwoman in the Attic*, University of Missouri Press, Columbia and London: 2009, p.6.

⁵⁵ Annette R. Federica, p.6.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.6.

⁵⁷ As cited in Jayita Sengupta’s *Refractions of Desire Feminist Perspectives in the Novels of Toni Morrison, Michèle Roberts and Anita Desai*. Atlantic Publishers. Delhi. 2006, p.41.

⁵⁸ Annette R. Federica, p.51.

Images of Women in Fiction by Susan Coppelman Cornillon deals also with the characterization of women in literature. According to Cornillon, both male and female writers of the 19th and 20th centuries, who fail to comprehend the core of feminism, were not able to create women characters in their works. The suppression and compulsion encumbered by society to the women caused them to lose their sexual identity as well as their female identity. Later on, women who are alienated from their societies have to submit to the cultural selves designed for them. A woman who is alienated from her own body physically, sees herself as the other. Cornillon has suggested that women have been exposed to defamiliarization in such a way that; “In fiction female bodies do not belong to females; they are male accessories, male possessions or rejections”⁵⁹. Thus, most of the women in novels are not able to escape from the gender-role stereotyping. Such essentialist categorization and generalization have been shaped by male culture for and about women.

Elaine Showalter, who coined the term “gynocriticism”, the kind of criticism which deals with developing a specifically female framework for focusing on works written by authoresses, has been one of the most important critics to uncover the female tradition in the literary world. Her most known work *A Literature of Their Own* begins with a very convenient comparison of women’s literature, women’s district is depicted as a “desert” and this territory is “bounded by mountains on four sides; the Austen peaks, the Bronte cliffs, the Eliot range and the Woolf hills”⁶⁰

Elaine Showalter examines the characterization of women in literature. Showalter has addressed to John Stuart Mill because of his book *The Subjection of Women*. Mill asserts in his book that men do not desire only the absolute obedience of women but also want to control the feelings and emotions of women. Starting from Mill’s point of view, Showalter claims that women should come out of their shells and they should create their own literature independently from men. Showalter came up with classification of the processes the women writers go through in English Literature these three phases have showed the hardships that women experience through their writing adventure:

⁵⁹ Susan Coppelman Cornillon, *Images of Women in Fiction Feminist Perspectives*, Bowling Green University Press. Ohio, 1973, p.127.

⁶⁰ Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, Princeton University Press, Princeton & New Jersey, 1977, p.vii.

First, there is a prolonged phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of protest against these standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity.⁶¹

The Feminine Mystique (1963) by Betty Friedan has been regarded as one of the feminist classics and major motivation for the beginning of feminism in Western countries. Friedan has a distinctive argument related to the freedom of women. While most of the feminist critics have the contention that freedom for women have existed only recently or never existed, Friedan suggested that women has recently lost freedom once women had. All of the endeavours for the women's emancipation from the inequality and other lack of opportunities (education, vote...) seem to be futile in the present situation for Friedan. Friedan blames Freud for the current position of women because of his description of women as "a strange, inferior, less-than human species"⁶². A Freudian way of thinking proposes "Anatomy is destiny"⁶³ and this judgment is indoctrinated to the women through education. Friedan has showed the dramatic result of this way of thinking with the dropping of marriage age to 20. She also sarcastically reveals how women have abandoned their search for self-expression and self-realization: "A century earlier, women had fought for higher education; now girls went to college to get a husband"⁶⁴. Women once struggling for a career now pursue their career in household duties, wifhood and motherhood. Additionally, Friedan proposes that the media is responsible for creating the feminine mystique. Women have been brainwashed through advertisements, how-to books, popular novels and magazines. As a result of those stages, women are subdued in their mystique. And now, as stated by Friedan, women constitute the greatest portion of unused brains in America.

⁶¹ Elaine Showalter, p.13.

⁶² Rachel Bowlby, 'The Problem with No Name': Rereading Friedan's "The Feminine Mystique", *Feminist Review* Palgrave Macmillan Journals, 1987, p.62.

⁶³ Sylvia Fleis Fava, *The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan*, American Sociological Association 1963, p.1053.

⁶⁴ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, W.W. Norton Company, New York & London 1963, p.16.

After all of these developments, in 1957 Friedan made an extensive research among American women in Smith College and found out the rising unhappiness in the middle class. She has explained the results of her findings in *Feminine Mystique*. To Friedan it appears that the feminine fulfilment of American women seems to be not satisfactory for them from their statements; “I feel empty somehow ... incomplete”, “I feel as if I don’t exist”, “I feel like crying without any reason “⁶⁵. Thus women’s involvement in life only as the mother of their children and the wife of their husbands have limited their life opportunities and has caused their dehumanization.

Ellen Moers, another significant contributor to gynocriticism, has been mostly known with her work “*Literary Women*” published in 1976. Moers has traced the unknown female poets and authoresses starting from the 18th century, most of whom have already been forgotten. By keeping the literary analysis at the centre, Moers has aimed to explore the ignored feminine subculture and literary tradition. Before the publication of Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique*, Moers embraced the idea of the treatment of the women writers as a separate group from the male stream. But later, Moers has described women literature as an international movement which cannot be reduced to a local discourse. Moers has also dealt with the relation between money, job and the women. Money has long been associated with man and power, Moers mentioned this feature’s peculiarity to the women as we can see in the works of Jane Austen’s. In the second chapter, under the subtitle of heroinism, Moers deals with the deliberative formation of a female protagonist versus the male one. She asserts that by doing this, the female protagonists can be the voice of the female writers. Moers categorized heroinism under various headings like Travelling Heroism, Educating Heroism and Loving Heroism with direct references to the heroines of the recognized authoress including Jane Austen, Willa Cather and Louisa May Alcott.

Another work that needs to be mentioned through the feminist literary criticism is Toril Moi and her work *Sexual/Textual Politics*. Moi’s book consists of two parts, the first part is allocated to Anglo-American feminist theory, while the second part deals with the French Feminist theory including the fundamental proponents like Kristeva, Irigaray, Cixous and Beauvoir. At the very beginning of the book, there is a chapter dedicated to

⁶⁵ Friedan, p.23.

Virginia Woolf under the title of “Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf?”⁶⁶ with a lot of references to her ground-breaking essay *A Room of Own*, which is mostly praised in terms of being the first feminist literary criticism. Moi adopts a critical attitude towards the American feminist criticism because of their stand against Woolf. According to Moi, most of the American feminists failed to comprehend the importance and contribution of Woolf to the feminist literature. Moi especially recalls Elaine Showalter who is predominantly criticizes Woolf for “being too subjective, too passive and for wanting to flee her female gender identity by embracing the idea of androgyny”⁶⁷. Moi vindicates Woolf with her statement; “What feminists such as Showalter ... fails to grasp is that the traditional humanism they represent is in effect part of patriarchal ideology”⁶⁸

1.4. Identity Formation

The concept of identity has always remained as a philosophical matter, and has been investigated by several scholars until now. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, identity is “the set of behavioural or personal characteristic by which is a recognizable as a member of a group. The distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity, individuality”⁶⁹. Hall defines identity as follows:

Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space, or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses. ... [Until recently, we have incorrectly thought that identity is] a kind of fixed point of thought and being, a ground of action ... the logic of something like a ‘true self.’ ... [But] Identity is a process, identity is split. Identity is not a fixed point but an ambivalent point. Identity is also the relationship of the Other to oneself.⁷⁰

To say it differently, since women’s existence have been destined to be subordinated to the existence of men, women have failed to develop an authentic and individual identity. Their existence, unfortunately have been depended on men. In most of the male dominated societies women have been restricted into their houses and neighbourhood and as a result, their identities have been shaped by the culturally and socio-economically and

⁶⁶ Toril Moi. *Sexual Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 1985, p.1.

⁶⁷ Moi, p.8.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.7.

⁶⁹ Webster's II New College Dictionary, Third edition, p.562. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity>)

⁷⁰ Hall, Stuart. “Ethnicity: Identity and Difference.” *Radical America*.1989, 23:9–20

ideologically assigned gender roles that imposed on them. In many patriarch societies, identity is gained through stereotyped and approved attitudes, and behaviours of the society. Identity cannot be thought as a fixed concept. It is fluid and in flux. Unfortunately, when the construction of a female identity is concerned, the culture and the society that she live in has not offered a wide range of options to choose. Joanna Russ criticizes this:

Culture is male...What it does mean is that the society we live in, like all other historical societies, is a patriarchy. And patriarchies imagine or picture themselves from the male point of view. There is female culture, but it is an underground, unofficial, minor culture.⁷¹

Today, feminists have turned their attention to the fourth wave of feminism which is still in the process of formation because of the limitations and problems of the existing feminisms. But still the women oriented identity formation and identity politics maintain their contentious continuity. The global feminism, transnational feminism and national feminism also fail to provide a satisfactory solution to the identity problems. In spite of a relatively long history of feminism, identity remains as an unsolved issue, as stated by Hekman “Despite more than a decade of discussion, the problems raised by identity and identity politics have, far from disappearing, become something of an obsession among feminists.”⁷²

Maybe because of the existence of different feminisms, a collective identity which will include all women cannot be developed. There exist contradictions and differences between different forms of feminisms, especially the discrepancy between Western Feminism and the Third World Feminism is obvious. While the former one focuses on the differences among the women, the later one is relatively more inclusive and tries to deal with the common problems shared by women all around the world. So, how can feminism be established on a common ground which can promote the inclusion of multiplicity, plurality and differences among women all over the world? Yet, despite all these cultural differences, women still have common problems like childcare, abortion,

⁷¹ Susan Koppelman Cornillion, *Images of Women in Fiction Feminist Perspectives* Bowling Green University Popular Press Bowling. Green , Ohio,1973, p. 4

⁷² Susan Hekman, “Beyond Identity: Feminism, Identity and Identity Politics”. *Feminist Theory*. Sage Publications. London, 2000, p.289.

discrimination, violence, reproduction and homecare, which can bring women around a common cause.

Feminist critics and writers have offered different solutions and approaches concerning the identity formation of women. For instance, Ferguson has emphasized the necessity of a kind of solidarity among women:

An identity we find ourselves assigned to by social definition, usually by opposition to another social category, such as “women” = “not-man”. . . . Instead, we can constitute our politics by agreeing with others defined by a similar positionality to fight for certain social justice demands, such as abortion rights, freedom from male violence, affordable childcare, or adequate research on women's health issues.⁷³

Ferguson highlights the importance of forming solidarity and sisterhood in challenging the traditional definitions of women and in opening up new subjectivities for women. Western oriented feminists fail to comprehend the imperfectness and unfeasibility of white women-centred feminism. New feminist movements have placed an emphasis on multiplicity and diversity in the definition of women.

Another approach to the construction of identity is the individual identity. Individual identity is structured around the question of “Who am I?” This question seems more plausible than investigating who we are since the collective identity ignores the uniqueness of experiences of different women from all over the world. Charles Taylor explains what he means by individual identity as follows:

To know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.⁷⁴

Those approaches that aim to provide insight into the formation of women identity are predominantly associated with the white and western women. Therefore, the third world women and other eastern-origin women cannot identify themselves with these approaches. In this sense, the definitions of these western women oriented identities will

⁷³ Ann Ferguson. *Resisting the veil of privilege: Building bridge identities as an ethico politics of global feminisms*. (p.200-201)

⁷⁴ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*.1989, p.27.

not be sufficient and useful while dealing with the circumstances of non-Western women characters in the novels *White Teeth* and *Honour*. Hence, to analyse the female characters' struggle to gain their identities, a postcolonial approach is needed to have sympathy for the women in the countries that were exposed to colonial activities. Because, particularly in *White Teeth* most of the women characters' countries have a colonial history and now, they try to survive and exist in once the colonizer country, England. And, when it comes to the *Honour*, although the female characters are Turkish - Kurdish rooted and they have never had the colonial experience, it is possible to tackle with the identity problem of those female characters within a postcolonial identity discourse. Because of the dissimilarities, the controversies and the clashes between the Eastern and Western civilizations, Turkey has come to be considered as an Eastern and colonized country especially after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire through the perspective of Western powers. The concept of women does not only effect the relationships between the Muslim Eastern countries and the West, but also it has determined how the Western countries perceived the East.⁷⁵ Thus, with their Muslim identity, the Eastern countries women, including Turkey, can be discussed under the postcolonial identity approaches.

a) On a Foucauldian Terminology

The French philosopher Michel Foucault is the first name to be utilized in this part with his ideas and theories that can be adopted into postcolonial and postmodern studies, especially his ideas on discourse, power, knowledge, domination and sexuality. Homi Bhabha is the second critic to be benefited from with his ideas hybridity and third space to form the ground related to the identity of third world women in the novels to be analysed.

Chris Weedon and Jack Sawicki have argued that an appreciation and appropriation of Foucault's work is necessary for the continued flourishing of feminist political practices.⁷⁶ Foucault has been one of the milestones of the researches related to identity of postmodern age. For Foucault, power, discourse, knowledge and resistance play central roles in developing an identity. Power for him, is a set of relations between various groups and areas of the society which forms itself according to circumstances and time period.

⁷⁵ Nilüfer Göle. *Modern Mahremiyet*. 1992: p.49.

⁷⁶ Amy Allen. *Foucault on Power: A theory for Feminists*, chapter 11, 1996: p. 265.

Foucault does not ascribe any negativity to the concept of power. On the contrary, because of its productivity like resistance and the recognition of the subject itself, power is a highly positive term. Knowledge and truth are the two basic terms that have changed the conception of identity. Knowledge comprises of narratives, ideologies, perspectives and explanations which are obtained through the application of various scientific principles into disciplines, fields and institutions. Foucault proclaims that both knowledge and truth do not appear naturally but rather systematically produced to the advantage or disadvantage of the social groups

Discourse is another term used by Foucault to describe acts of a language; the ideas and statements that permit individual to make sense of and see things around us. Discourse has two main functions: to convey the existing knowledge and to produce or construct a new body of knowledge. And the ones holding the power can construct a discourse for their own benefits and interests. Because producing knowledge is an empowering act for the producer of the knowledge. In this way, power is performed over free subjects and there is always a possibility for resistance.

The conceptualization of subject and subjectivity of Foucault is also adopted in this dissertation. Because the characters in both novels *White Teeth* and *Honour* can be considered docilized and self-regulating subjects or resisting subjects. In this respect, bodies of women are seen as utilizable means of forming “docile bodies”. These docile bodies are worked on through the activities of discourses, institutions and power relations. When some of the docile bodies rather choose to resist to their imposed gendered identities, they emerge as resistant subjectivities. This act of either abiding or resisting demonstrates the righteousness of Foucault’s ideas related to the improbability of forming a self in a society naturally independent of relations of power, game of truths and forms of relations. Foucault claims that our subjectivity is no more self-governing and product of our conscious but rather it is the product of discourses and ideologies. For Foucault, subjects are factitious and they tend to take the form of various historical courses. As human beings, we are all products of power relations and discourses within the socio-historical context of our time. Foucault emphasizes the impossibility of the pre-existence of subject before the social order as it is formed by dominant social rules itself. All in all, the ultimate agreement between the feminists and Foucault is their dissertation related to

the subject that it is cannot be constituted independently of existing discourses, institutions and practices.⁷⁷

Both Foucault and feminists draw attention to the constructedness of the body: “body as not simply given, but as culturally constructed, as the field of inscription of socio-symbolic codes”⁷⁸. Foucault’s ideas can be useful to explain how women identities are reduced to feminine bodies. Foucault’s proposition suggests that “lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project to rediscover and re-evaluate the experiences of women”⁷⁹. Because the malleability of the body is mostly determined by the gender in a society and it makes women vulnerable to many calamities including anorexia nervosa.⁸⁰ As indicated by Foucault regimen, diet and regulation of sexual pleasure are some of the ways of the cultural constitution of the subject with the concern for an appropriate body according to the desires and taste of patriarchy.⁸¹

“Bio-politics” by which Foucault discusses the relation between the human body and institutions of power is another term adopted by feminists. The point that becomes more of an issue for feminists concerning the bio-politics is how the states manage human bodies in order to use population as a resource: “Governments produced the body, in their discourses, as an object of social concern, and used tools like social policy to produce particular types of populations”⁸². Because bio-power requires that “a population be not simply passive, but productive and reproductive”⁸³. The term panopticon redounded by Foucault, was firstly introduced by Jeremy Bentham. This panopticon system is based on the persuasion that the prisoners are always under surveillance by making them convinced to monitor themselves rather than a surveillant power. Associating this structure to the social lives of women and feminism, it surely has a great tendency to limit the freedom

⁷⁷ Danaher Geoff, Tony Schirato and Jen Webb. (2000). *Understanding Foucault*. Australia: Sage Publication.

⁷⁸ Margaret A. McLaren, “Foucault and the Subject of Feminism” *Social Theory and Practice* Florida State University Department of Philosophy, 1997, p.114.

⁷⁹ Lois McNay, “The Foucauldian Body and the Exclusion of Experience” 1991, p. 125.

⁸⁰ McLaren, p.115.

⁸¹ Michel Foucault, “The Use of Pleasure”, New York, Vintage Books. 1978, p.251.

⁸² Danaher, Schirato & Webb, p.125

⁸³ Shane Phelan “Foucault and Feminism”, *American Journal of Political Science*, 1990, p.426.

of women extensively. To state the panopticon and its impact on women's daily lives within Bartky words:

it is women who practice this discipline on and against their own bodies. . . . The woman who checks her make-up half a dozen times a day to see if her foundation has caked or her mascara run, who worries that the wind or rain may spoil her hairdo, who looks frequently to see if her stockings have bagged at the ankle, or who, feeling fat, monitors everything she eats, has become, just as surely as the inmate of the Panopticon, a self-policing subject, a self-committed to a relentless self-surveillance. This self-surveillance is a form of obedience to patriarchy.⁸⁴

In both of the novels when the panopticon male gaze and power do not exist, there is a great difference in those characters' attitudes and behaviours. Most of the time, existence of the panopticon eye has caused the characters to be more careful about their way of behaving. This restrictive power appears through the norms of the society and sometimes it emerges as a result of women's subjugation to the desires and devotion to the male power. Foucault's influence on feminist theory is indisputable. Foucault's influence on Butler's formulation is clear in her claim:

If the inner truth of gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies then it seems that gender can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity.⁸⁵

Rather than clinging to fixed notions of femaleness as necessary for feminist praxis, Butler suggests that identity should be reconceptualised as "an effect" in order to destabilize gender and open up new, unforeseen possibilities for agency.⁸⁶ Like Foucault, Butler suggests that sexual identities are constituted by regulatory practices and draws our attention to the instability of sexual categories. Butler pursues that in order to construct the naturalization effect of identity the gender norms need to be acted repetitively over time otherwise in the case of the failure of repetition, to transgress and reject the imposed gender identities would be possible and it opens up a space for resistance, too. Thus, Butler argues that identity is never fixed, unchangeable and stable. On the contrary, it is always in flux and open to revisions and changes.

⁸⁴ Sandra Bartky, "*Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power*," New York : Routledge. 1990, p.80.

⁸⁵ Susan Hekman, p.223.

⁸⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 31-32, 136,147.

b) Bhabha and Hybridity

Homi Bhabha is another critic to be referred in the theoretical formation of the thesis. Like Foucault, Bhabha has been one of the key people to deal with identity in twenty-first century. Bhabha's Indian identity and his attachment to colonial history has enabled him to reveal effects of colonial perspectives over the once colonized agencies. From his point of view, the colonization process has not been over yet, but it has just transitivized. This can be particularly observable when both the colonizer and the colonized gather on a common ground. This time, the act of colonialism appears in disguise with polarization and otherization processes of the colonized. It restricted the non-Western societies financially, politically and specifically socially.

Bhabha organized his works around the cultural and linguistic aspects of those effects. Hudhart states in his book that "Bhabha's work explores how language transforms the way identities are structured when colonizer and colonized interact, finding that colonialism is marked by a complex economy of identity in which colonized and colonizer depend on each other"⁸⁷. Bhabha's works have offered challenging approaches that are central to post-colonial theory along with his basic terms such as hybridity, mimicry, difference, ambivalence. These concepts are extremely crucial to demonstrate in which ways colonized people have resisted against the power of the colonizer, a power that is never as secure as it seems to be.

Bhabha's most noticeable contribution to this field has been the term *hybridity*. Especially for the two novels under examination in this thesis, the term hybridity is of crucial. As both novels take place in London including people from various diasporas, hybridity is surely one of the indispensable part of the key issues especially to deal with the identity problems of second-generation immigrants, that is to say the hybrid identities. Likewise, another author who tackles with the immigration problem to London, Andrea Levy also mentioned the impossibility of sustaining a pure English identity anymore; "Any history book will show that England has never been an exclusive club, but rather a hybrid nation"⁸⁸. Concordantly, Bhabha believes that contemporary identities are the results of

⁸⁷ David Hudhart, Routledge Critical Thinkers, *Homi K. Bhabha*, London and New York, Taylor and Francis Group. 2006, p.1

⁸⁸ Andrea Levy, *This is My England*. 2000, The Guardian.

colonial history, that is to say they are the consequences of historical processes experienced.

Bhabha put forwards that “hybridity is camouflage related to a process of translating and transvaluing cultural differences. Hybridity is the third space of the in-between”⁸⁹. To Hall, hybridity is “the contaminated, yet connective tissue between cultures” and “hybridity can be a chimera produced in a lab but also racial or cultural mixing”⁹⁰. And for Bakhtin hybridity is:

the collision between differing points of view on the world that are embedded in these forms [...] such unconscious hybrids have been at the same time profoundly productive historically: they are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new ‘internal forms’ for perceiving the world in words.⁹¹

For Bhabha, hybridity challenges the conventional analysis of post-colonial term and it creates the third space as a connector between the colonial and post-colonial terms.

Bhabha explains ‘third space’ as follows:

F]or me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.⁹²

In that sense, it is possible to say that London is the capital of hybridism due to its multicultural and multi-ethnic condition. The formation of hybrid identities has been shaped mostly by the combination and fusion of culturally and ethnically impure identities. Especially second generation hybrid identities, who are the up-brings of multi-ethnic parents, like Irie, Magid and Millat in *White Teeth* have experienced the conflicts connected to hybridity.

⁸⁹ Homi K Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

⁹⁰ Stuart Hall. “Ethnicity: Identity and Difference.” *Radical America*. 1989, p.7.

⁹¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, ‘Discourse in the Novel’ [first written 1934-35], cited from Homi K. Bhabha, ‘Culture’s In-Between. p.360.

⁹² David Hudhart, p.126.

CHAPTER II

WHITE TEETH

2.1. Representation on Women in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

This chapter seeks to explore the representation of both Western and non-Western women in one of the best novels of contemporary literature, *White Teeth*, first published in 2000. The author Zadie Smith has made a tremendous impact with its newsworthy subjects like multiculturalism, hybridity, race and migration. *White Teeth* is of capital importance for analysing the present situation of non-Western rooted women in a postcolonial British society, after a period marked by decolonization and their struggle over defining themselves against the masculinity.⁹³

In this chapter we will both see whether ethnicities of those eastern or western female identities are influential or not in the process of identity formation. The main aim of this chapter is to testify both the personal and historical journeys of non-Western female characters in order to account for the difficulties experienced by these women during their adaptation to British life and a country with a very forceful and unforgettable history of colonization. This chapter also intends to demonstrate the literary representation of non-Western women in a non-Western originated female author.

Zadie Smith is a very well-known contemporary writer of the recent years with her astounding novels. She is from Afro-Caribbean origin. She has published four novels until now; *White Teeth* (2000), *The Autograph Man* (2002), *On Beauty* (2005) and *NW London* (2012). *White Teeth* has been the fictional debut novel of the author and it is her first great achievement in literature. She started her novel when she was an undergraduate at Cambridge University, but it is an excellent piece of literature. After the very moment of

⁹³ Taryn Beukema, McMaster University, *Men Negotiating Identity in Zadie Smith's White Teeth*, Postcolonial Text, Vol 4, No :3 2008, p.1.

its publication, it has been such a great success that it is the winner of the Guardian First Book Award and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for Fiction.⁹⁴ As a daughter of a Jamaican mother and an English father, it is also noteworthy to mention Smith's success in reflecting herself through her characters, she holds up a mirror to those torn between the East and the West. Chiefly through the character Irie, (also Smith has a dark skin colour), Smith has demonstrated the immigrant life experienced by three various family sagas.

White Teeth is concerned with identity, space, cultural alienation, racism as the author herself is an upbringing of an immigrant family and in parallel with that we see characters of mixed cultures, ethnicities and languages. The novel successfully displays how racism reaches its peak point recently in Europe, especially in England and it is the story of those stuck in-betweenness. The novel takes place in the north part of London, it mainly deals with the story of the three different families; Iqbals, Jones and Chalfens. All of these three families belong to different nationalities and faiths; the Iqbals are Bengali rooted and Muslim, the Chalfens are British and the family members turned to atheism and Judaism, while the Jones are both British and Jamaican rooted and Christians. Namely, the novel presents us the multicultural world of London, how the immigrants are treated socially and psychologically, and how hybridization and assimilation work, which may also lead to the alienation of the characters in the novel. *White Teeth* reflects the bitter reality of the immigrants in the 20th century. Smith underlines the catastrophic dilemmas the immigrants confront while trying to integrate into the British culture: "But it makes an immigrant laugh to hear the fears of the nationalist, scared of infection, penetration, miscegenation, when this is small fry, *peanuts*, compared to what the immigrant fears - dissolution, *disappearance*." ⁹⁵

White Teeth's story spans the years from 1975 to 2000, but Smith has achieved to make her readers set out on a discursive journey in the past that the readers sometimes end up in 1907 through the thriving usage of flashbacks. Also the story takes place in different places including Jamaica, Bangladesh and England. The novel opens in a rather dramatic suicide attempt of Alfred Archibald Jones and his decided-upon suicide is about to occur in an urban street since "country people should die in the country and city people should

⁹⁴ www.penguin.com

⁹⁵ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*, p. 127.

die in the city”⁹⁶. But like everything in his life, this attempt is a failure, too. The story follows upon the coincidence of two veterans of the Second World War in London, Archibald Jones a middle-class working British man (who will later re-marry a much younger Jamaican woman, Clara) and Samad Iqbal (who is married to Alsana, a much younger woman) a Bengali rooted first generation immigrant working in an Indian restaurant. The readers’ confusion related to Englishness has started from the very beginning of *White Teeth*. Because, Samad Iqbal, as a Bengali rooted veteran of the Second World War, proudly talks over his involvement in this war on the side of the British Empire. Herein, about the literary representation of Indian immigrants in London, we see the ineffaceable history of the British people in most part of the south Asia especially including India and Bangladeshi. That is to say, the long-lasting colonial existence of Britain in these geographical regions somehow created a sense of belonging to Englishness among those colonized people. As it is stated by Taryn Beukema, “the Indian vision of the United Kingdom as a home country, in other saying, the transformation of Indians into English identities, has been achieved through “internalized [...] values and social codes of England”⁹⁷.

Samad’s and Jones’ lives overlap when they start to share the same neighbourhood and both of the men have children of the same generation. Their wives got pregnant in the same period, Jones’ little baby is Irie and the Iqbals welcome their twins Magid and Millat. The three children of those families are the first British-born children in their families and their reactions to this foreign culture and society is presented from their birth to the adolescence. Irie is the only and problematic child of the Jones, while Magid and Millat are the twins of Samad and Alsana. The events escalate upon the inclusion of the Chalfens who appear as a typical English family at first sight (they are Jewish immigrants also). Chalfens’ deep interest in Irie and Millat has caused both of the mothers, Alsana and Clara to scrutinize the relation with their husbands and children. Because they think the Chalfens affect their children negatively and they think they are losing them. As opposed to their way of living, Chalfens believe in the power of science, thus they underestimate all of the religious faiths. Samad Iqbal appears as the archetypical and the conservative Bengali trying to adhere to rules of his religion and the customs of his

⁹⁶ Smith, p.3.

⁹⁷ As quoted in Gardner, Barbara J., "*Speaking Voices in Postcolonial Indian Novels from Orientalism to Outsourcing*." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2012, p. 187.

culture. His life turns out to be a life full of disappointments, hypocrisies and perversions. Upon realizing the impossibility of having a pure Muslim Bangladeshi identity in England, he decides to send one of the twins, Magid to his country with great expectations to restore the distorted and lost family, society and faith values. This decision fully causes a great lack of communication between Iqbals. Unfortunately, his decision in sending Magid to Bangladesh turns out to be a total failure; he comes back to London as an “English more than English” and Millat dedicating himself to KEVIN (Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic National), a radical Islamist group, upsets Samad deeply. By the way, Irie is experiencing an ordeal to have an identity, she is stuck in betweenness of the cultures. Her attraction to Millat causes some changes in her physical appearance but at the end she abides by her genetic codes, and accepts her own Jamaican self-identity. Irie ends up in having a fatherless baby and it isn’t known whether it’s sired by Magid or Millat. As stated before, the debut novel of Smith sheds light on the unnoticeable condition of those multi-ethnic immigrant families once colonized by Britain and their struggles to have an identity in that country today.

To summarize, the general plot of *White Teeth* demonstrates the living conditions of Bengali Muslims, Jamaican immigrants, English Protestants and Jewish scientists in one of the most multicultural cities of the world, London. As it is stated by Moss, “Smith has created characters of mixed races, mixed cultures and mixed languages; in short, she has created a portrait of hybridity in a North London borough”⁹⁸. What makes *White Teeth* noteworthy to analyse in our thesis is its abundancy in character formation of various backgrounds, especially of the female characters, which enables us to make a comprehensive examination related to the representation of Western and non-Western female identities through the novel. Arikan underlines this multiplicity of the characters in *White Teeth*:

Her characters include Brits of Bengali, Jamaican, Polish, German, Saudi Arabian, Barbadian, and plain old English descent; Muslims, Hindus, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Secular Jews; closeted gay men and out lesbians; adolescents, mid-lifers, and octogenarians who may be fat or skinny, drop-dead gorgeous or genetically cheated.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Laura Moss, “The Politics Everyday Hybridity: Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*”. *Wasafiri* 2003: p.11

⁹⁹ As Quoted in Seda Arikan, “History and Root In Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*”. *International Journal of Social Science Volume* 6 Issue 2, 2013; p.1681.

In the further parts of this chapter, also Bhabha's concepts of hybridity and third space for mixed-race identities, the binary oppositions generated by orientalist discourse to essentialize the identities of the once colonized and most obviously Foucault's concepts of power, discourse and resistance will be utilised to reveal the background of the characters' identity and culture constructions. Foucault's episteme is also effective and beneficial in comprehending the identity formation of the characters. Foucauldian episteme, the controlling texts over the immigrants is defined as "certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape—a great body of legislation written once and for all by some anonymous hand"¹⁰⁰

2.2. Representation of Western Women in Western Societies in *White Teeth*

White Teeth, with its abundant characters of various ethnicities and religions and with the events taking place around those people, forms an excellent field of study to investigate the current position of the immigrants, especially after the Second World War. *White Teeth* provides a critical presentation of female identities, including both Western and non-Western, Christian, Muslim and Jewish, African, Caribbean and Bengali rooted. At this point, it will be useful to review the historical development of western women within their own context.

As discussed earlier, Western women were allowed to participate in the social life with certain limitations, they were the victims of the patriarchal system up to the 20th century. They were strictly forbidden to express themselves: "Women who spoke out against the patriarchal system of gender roles, or any injustice, ran the risk of being exiled from their communities, or worse; vocal unmarried women in particular were the targets of witch-hunts"¹⁰¹. In the seventeenth century, there were not radical changes in favour of women. Women were not be able to involve in the political life directly. They were partly allowed to involve in the political system through their inclusion in family and local community. Still, women were punished when they dared to challenge the social norms of the society. When it comes to the eighteenth century, the middle class gained an increasing voice in the British culture under the influence of consumerism which encouraged the involvement of women by supporting their husbands. Additionally, women started to

¹⁰⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1972, p.191.

¹⁰¹ Jessica Bomarito, Jeffrey W. Hunter. "Feminism in Literature" *A Gale Critical Companion* Volume 1: Antiquity–18th Century, 2005, p.101.

have an extensive market for releasing their written products in spite of the lower rates of literacy among women. Women writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft started to deliver speeches related to the women's right including education and marriage laws frankly.¹⁰² And within the midst of the twentieth century, feminism came to the stage. *White Teeth* spans between 1975 and 2000, which is relatively new and current. Thus and so, the novel is of significance for analysing the Western women in their own land. There are several Western female characters in the novel, but we will firstly deal with the mother of four children, Joyce Chalfen.

a) Joyce Chalfen

The Chalfens emerge as a perfect English family and epitomic superiority of the sense of Britishness although their ancestor descend from Jewish as stated in the novel: "The Chalfens third generation, by way of Germany and Poland, nee Chalfenovsky"¹⁰³. It is underlined in the novel that the patriarch of the family, Marcus Chalfen has rooted from Poland, while the matriarch, Joyce Chalfen rooted from Irish Catholic. However, their way of living in London is depicted in such a way that they are perceived by other immigrant identities as if they "were more English than the English"¹⁰⁴. They display particular behaviours which are attributed to the Britishness, which is emphasized by Oaklandin; "being arrogant, patronizing, cold and considering themselves having all the virtues to them"¹⁰⁵. They are first introduced to the reader with their different way of dressing at a meeting; "an ageing hippie couple both dressed in pseudo-Indian garb"¹⁰⁶. Both of the couple are very intellectual. The significant point highlighted by Smith about the Chalfens is that their attitudes peculiar to English people do not make them pure English. In line with the assertion of Bhabha, having a pure identity is not possible anymore: "Does hybridity in an ethnic definition suppose that the two ethnic identities joined together were formerly pure in themselves?"¹⁰⁷ Hence, nowadays it is hardly impossible to talk about the existence of a culture that is self-reliant and self-developed.

¹⁰² Jessica Bomarito, Jeffrey W. Hunter, p.102.

¹⁰³ Smith, p.328.

¹⁰⁴ Smith, p.335.

¹⁰⁵ John Oakland. *British Civilization: An Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1998. Print. p.66.

¹⁰⁶ Smith, p.131.

¹⁰⁷ As Quoted in Antony Easthope. "Bhabha, hybridity and identity, Textual Practice "*Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)* 1998, p.342.

Behind this adoption of the Chalfens as British, there lies the peculiarities attributed to their family and their uniqueness in their own environment. In comparison to other non-Western immigrants around them, their weirdness and superior self-perception has caused their lifestyle to be labelled as “Chalfenist”. Because they do not need any other people, they just form a kind of community within themselves:

They referred to themselves as nouns, verbs and occasionally adjectives: It's the Chalfen way, And then he came out with a real Chalfenism, He's Chalfening again, We need to be a bit more Chalfenist about this. Joyce challenged anyone to show her a happier family, a more Chalfenist family than theirs.¹⁰⁸

The Chalfenist style brings light on two critical aspects of the multicultural context of the story. Firstly, Chalfenism represents the exclusion of others, who does not fit into their family, an isolated culture. Secondly, the Chalfens show the potentiality and possibility of creating their own unique culture within British culture.¹⁰⁹ Within a Foucauldian approach, it is possible to suggest that Chalfens are trying to exercise power over the immigrants who perceived them as pure English. Through hiding their origins, they create a kind of superiority to otherise the immigrants simply because their white skin colour. And also Chalfens can be said to exemplify Edward's Said orientalism, which establish the identities on the basis of binary opposition like us and them. Seeing the Easterners as the other, Chalfens do not welcome them into their own society.

To get back to the main point, Joyce Chalfen, the matriarch of the family, absolutely meets the required qualifications of being a member of Chalfen family. She is a horticultural expert and as a western woman, she is depicted as the super-mother and wife. Her self-confidence has reached such a peak point that she sees herself like a woman with supernatural powers, she cannot tolerate to be kept in background, and she always wants to be in front of the public: “She needed to be needed. She'd be the first to admit it. She hated it, for example, when one after the other her children, pop-eyed addicts of breast milk, finally kicked the habit”¹¹⁰. Thus, when Millat and Irie come back to the Chalfen's house as a punishment, she considers them as a chance, new people who are in urgent need of her. She has internalised the sense of Britishness in such a way that it reaches up

¹⁰⁸ Smith, p.314.

¹⁰⁹ Rihan Jawich, “Hybridity and Multi-Culturalism in Zadie Smith's White Teeth,” 2014, p.8.

¹¹⁰ Smith, p.315.

to the point of racial discrimination against others. When she see Millat for the first time, she makes an inquiry about his origin:

“you look very exotic. Where are you from, if you don't mind me asking?”

"Willesden," said Irie and Millat simultaneously.

"Yes, yes, of course, but where originally?" [...]

"Whitechapel," said Millat, pulling out a fag. "Via the Royal London Hospital and the 207 bus."¹¹¹

Here, what makes Joyce excited about Millat is not his qualifications but rather his weirdness that makes him a mystique and exotic figure. Even if she may be perceived a stereotype of the white family helping immigrant children, in fact Joyce is searching for new victims to display her self-superiority. Accordingly, the distinction between the superior and inferior has blurred. As Bhabha suggests “hybridity is camouflage related to a process of translating and transvaluing cultural differences. Hybridity is the third space of the in between”¹¹². At this point, Joyce appears as the Westerner who cannot tolerate to those Easterners creating a kind of hybridity for themselves. Thus, Joyce is the epitome of the arrogance of Britishness. She has just accepted training Irie and Millat, non-Western up brings as if they were the burden of white man. Another example for the representation of Joyce Chalfen as a Western woman is her assumption of Irie’s intelligence cannot be inherited from a non-white ancestor, it must be passed down to her from her grandfather by her father’s blood. Similar to the hypothesis of scientific racism¹¹³, Joyce supports the assumption that inferiority or superiority of races can be interconnected in terms of intelligence. Joyce’s child rearing progresses in parallel with her acceptance of themselves as pure English and results in children’s denial of their roots. Oscar, the youngest of the Chalfens, claims most of the time: "I hate brown strangers"¹¹⁴. Paradoxically, the theme of hybridity is delivered through Joyce’s new book named *New Flower Power* via the concept of cross-pollination:

¹¹¹ Smith, p.319.

¹¹² As Quoted in Derya Yağcı, "The Comparative Analysis of Motif in *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith and *Honour* by Elif Shafak". SDÜ, Isparta 2013, p.47.

¹¹³ <https://study.com/academy/lesson/scientific-racism-definition-examples.html>

¹¹⁴ Smith, p.326.

Now we are more adventurous, positively singing the praises of cross-pollination [...] The fact is, cross-pollination produces more varied offspring that are better able to cope with a changed environment. It is said cross-pollinating plants also tend to produce more and better-quality seeds. If my one-year-old son is anything to go by (a cross-pollination between a lapsed-Catholic horticulturalist feminist, and an intellectual Jew!), then I can certainly vouch for the truth of this.¹¹⁵

Another point that needs to be underlined about Joyce Chalfen is that how much she has tried to remove her ancestors' traces, her biology cannot reject her hybridity. Even if she appears as a successful horticulturalist and a writer, what makes her decisive and successful is her roots that she betrays most of the time and Smith deliberately displays the impossibility of existence when one gets completely disconnected and uprooted from one's own culture:

Joyce was descended from the kind of bloody-minded women who continued through the African swamps even after the bag-carrying natives had dropped their load and turned back, even when the white men were leaning on their guns and shaking their heads. She was cut of the same cloth as the frontier ladies who, armed with only a bible, a shotgun and a net curtain, coolly took out the brown men moving forwards from the horizon towards the plains. Joyce didn't know the meaning of backing down. She was going to stand her ground.
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b) Poppy Burt – Jones

The second character to deal with related to the representation of a Western women is Poppy Burt-Jones. She is the music teacher of Magid, Millat and Irie at an elementary school. Jones is a pure and white English woman. Being a seductive white woman, she is quite similar to Roxana in *Honour* who has a relationship with a married man; Adem. At this sense, also the resemblance between Samad and Adem has become obvious through their sexual affairs with the white western women. From the very beginning of Poppy's inclusion into the novel the Smith pays close attention to her physical appearance, which will later be the source of trouble for the Samad Iqbal:

She was what you would call effortlessly pretty. About twenty-eight, maybe thirty-two at most. Slim, but not at all hard-bodied, and with a curved ribcage like a child; long, flat breasts that lifted at their tips; an open-neck white shirt, some well-worn Levis and grey trainers, a lot of dark red hair swished up in a sloppy ponytail.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Smith, p.309-310.

¹¹⁶ Smith, p.350.

¹¹⁷ Smith, p.132.

Thus, Jones, as a white British woman, comes into prominence with her attractiveness and sexuality that affects Samad Iqbal deeply. Her existence throughout the novel becomes the reason of corruption of an Eastern man. As a Western woman, she is depicted as a free, modern and an educated female. In contrast to non-Western third world women who are forced to be the docilized bodies, Poppy emerges as a woman who has her own decisions related to her body and sexuality. Samad and Poppy come across at a parent-teacher conference for the first time and later they started to have a relationship because Samad cannot resist the charming beauty of Poppy: “Samad saw clearly that he wanted her more than any woman he had met in the past ten years”¹¹⁸. His disappointment in his wife, his children and especially in himself leads him to the hands of Poppy. His dissatisfaction with his occupation and his dilemma between culture, religion and assimilation make him the “other” among the chaotic lives of people in London.

At the beginning, he seems to underestimate his sexual desire for his sons’ teacher, but later his obsession with the lady becomes irresistible. And this desire brought the worst days of his life; “Masturbation recommenced in earnest. Those two months, between seeing the pretty red-haired music teacher once and seeing her again, were the longest, stickiest, smelliest, guiltiest fifty-six days of Samad's life”¹¹⁹. As a self-defence mechanism, Samad creates a new motto for himself: “Can’t say fairer than that”¹²⁰. That is to say, in spite of all his efforts not to lose his identity and his faith in his religion, he cannot withstand the “corruption” of Britain and British people. And during those processes, Poppy functions as the epitome of a seductive British woman and British culture. When he unburdens himself by speaking to his friend Shiva about his secret affair, he reveals the bitter reality that causes suffering in him; “I see. Is she Hindu? Muslim? She ain’t Sikh? ‘That’s the worst of it’, said Samad, his voice breaking. ‘English. White English.’”¹²¹. Shiva’s response to the bitter reality that Samad has a forbidden love affair with a white women is quite representative in terms of reflecting the inner thoughts of Easterner man related to white Western women:

¹¹⁸ Smith, p.133.

¹¹⁹ Smith, p.140.

¹²⁰ Smith, p.139

¹²¹ Smith, p.146.

Don't talk to me about white women," groaned Shiva, wondering how many generations of Iqbals he'd have to give the same advice to. "It's got to the point in the West where the women are men! I mean, they've got the same desires and urges as men – they want it all the fucking time. And they dress like they want everyone to know they want it. Now is that right? Is it?"¹²²

Upon being seen in a park with Poppy by his children, Samad has decided to end the relationship. Because he has seen the reality that he himself has been a victim of the Western society and their norms by breaking nearly all of his religion's rules, and betrays his own culture. As a result, he feels guilty and determines to do something for his future generations, that is, his children:

I looked at my beautiful boys. And my heart cracked no, more than this it shattered. It shattered into so many pieces and each piece stabbed me like a mortal wound. I kept thinking: how can I teach my boys anything, how can I show them the straight road when I have lost my own bearings?¹²³

After this disgraceful relation, he decided to send one of his twins to his homeland: "I am corrupt, my sons are becoming corrupt...I don't know what is happening to our children in this country"¹²⁴. Samad's fear of assimilation causes him to see Britain and British people as the source of all the corruption that he is experiencing. Hence, Poppy is the main reason why Samad has sent Magid back to Bangladesh.

4.2. Identity Formation and Representation of Non-Western Women in Western Societies in *White Teeth*

The concepts of womanhood and the identity formation of women have always been one of the challenging topics that have occupied most of the scholars and researchers independent of time and place. The multi-layered complexities of a culture, society and ethnicity render the identity formation process a more multifaceted matter. Thus, the processes of identity formation of women differ greatly depending upon their socio-cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, an identity construction at an individual

¹²² Smith, p.373

¹²³ Smith, p.88.

¹²⁴ Smith, p.190.

level requires both personal and group identities to develop.¹²⁵ That is to say, while analysing a woman's identity formation, it is of great significance to take into consideration the political, cultural, social factors that women are subjected to. While studying non-Western women's identity formation, particularly third world women living in Western society, their historical backgrounds cannot be ignored. Especially in *White Teeth* most of the non-Western originated women belong to the once-exploited countries and now, they are trying to develop identities in a western society that is built through exploitation those women's countries in recent past. Therefore, while examining these third world women's identity developments, the postcolonial history cannot be ignored.

In *White Teeth*, Smith presents us with various cross-cultural identities, specifically those women of non-Western root. As stated by Barbara Schaff, Smith has "discarded holistic or homogeneous concepts of nations and identities, and have replaced them by stories of flexible and transgressive global urban identities, living in the creative contact zone of the in-between"¹²⁶. Smith, as a postcolonial writer, through the use of humour and irony, has tried to make her characters find appropriate identities for themselves. Within this context, *White Teeth* displays how Eastern originated female identities strive to sustain their existence. Being a female immigrant in England is more complicated than being a male one. Because most of the time the non-Western females bring the male-dominant social structure along with them and it causes injustice against women.

a) **Alsana Begum Iqbal**

Alsana Begum Iqbal is the first noticeable female character from a non-Western country. She is a Bengali rooted immigrant and mother of twins; Magid and Millat. She is the young wife of Samad Iqbal and their marriage is a traditional arranged marriage. Alsana was promised to Samad even before her birth and thus the age difference between them is quite high: "Samad had come to England, a middle-aged man seeking a new life with his twenty-year-old new bride, the diminutive, moon-faced Alsana Begum with her shrewd eyes"¹²⁷. As an Eastern rooted woman, her pre-arranged marriage has shown the

¹²⁵ Jean S. Phinney "Identity Formation across Cultures: The Interaction of Personal, Societal, and Historical Change" California State University, Los Angeles, Calif., USA, 2000: p.28.

¹²⁶ As quoted in Gardner, Barbara J., "Speaking Voices in Postcolonial Indian Novels from Orientalism to Outsourcing." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2012, p.282.

¹²⁷ Smith, p.12.

incompetence of many non-Western women in choosing a marriage partner. The practice of an arranged marriage is mostly associated with the Eastern tradition and Muslims. Within a Western perspective, this kind of marriage implacable; Abrar (2007) declares that an arranged marriage is like “jumping into a well with no water”¹²⁸ Although arranged marriages have been proved to be long-lasting (only %3 divorce rate¹²⁹) in comparison to love marriages, its lack of a female individual decision making process makes the woman as the victimized side of these marriages. In the following parts of *White Teeth*, she also feels as the victim of her pre-arranged marriage: “Now, every time I learn something more about him, I like him less. So you see, we were better off the way we were”¹³⁰.

Alsana Iqbal, being a Bengali rooted immigrant acts as the strongest female identity representing the third world women. At the beginning, she is properly the personification of the ignorant, poor, uneducated, domesticated, tradition-bound, family-oriented and victimized average third-world women.¹³¹ She draws attention of the reader from the very beginning with her feisty and ill-tempered characteristics. Yet, the living conditions of the Iqbals in London cannot be belittled while analysing the identity formation of Alsana. She seems a submissive Bangladeshi woman at first, but later she has experienced a remarkable change in her conception of the world, especially in her attitudes towards her husband, Samad. Thus, at the beginning of the novel, Alsana, as an Eastern rooted identity, appears as a docile, self-regulating identity. In the further parts of the novel, in contrast to her submissive side, she resists against the masculine power and the lack of communication between the couple leads to domestic violence, too.

Alsana was exposed to intense cultural and religious otherization in London. Although she gained a degree in engineering in her own country, now she is sewing for a shop called Domino Soho to earn her life. Originally, she comes from a “respected old Bengali family”¹³², but now she is working in a low-paid job. She came to London in 1973 with

¹²⁸ <http://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/spring07/zuffoletti/love.html>

¹²⁹ <https://www.larsonjewelers.com/culture-and-history-of-arranged-marriages.aspx>

¹³⁰ Smith, p.109.

¹³¹ Mohanty, p.261.

¹³² Smith, p.62.

the hope of providing a better future for their children and themselves but their current situation shows us that their attempts have brought just disappointments.

Coming to England at a very young age has caused Alsana to have great difficulty in forming her identity. In this process, she has developed subaltern identities to satisfy the expectations of her environment. As a non-Western originated woman she has the fear of assimilation and she cannot answer the question who am I. In one of the scene, upon her discussion with Samad about the Bangladeshi culture, Alsana looks at the definition of Bengali in an encyclopaedia; “Vast majority of Bangladesh’s inhabitants are Bengalis, who are largely descended from Indo-Aryans who began to migrate into the country from the west thousands of years ago and who mixed within Bengal with indigenous groups of various racial stocks”¹³³. As Bengali people are also one of the descendants of European people, it is nearly impossible to call someone as a “pure English” man: “Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It’s a fairy tale!”¹³⁴ It is summed up by Alsana:

You go back and back and back and it’s still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It’s a fairy tale!” [...] “Oi, mister! Indo-Aryans ... it looks like I am Western after all! Maybe I should listen to Tina Turner, wear the itsy-bitsy leather skirts. Pah. It just goes to show,” said Alsana, revealing her English tongue.¹³⁵

Thus, having a mere and pure nationality is not comprehensible for Alsana. Much as she was traditionalist and conservationist, when she came to this western country she has grasped the notion that; “any history book will show that England has never been an exclusive club, but rather a hybrid nation”¹³⁶. Because of Alsana’s changing attitudes towards England and Englishness, she starts to think and feel differently from Samad. Although she has appeared as one of the Islamic characters at the beginning of the novel, as readers we have witnessed how she has gradually adopted a secular attitude towards life. Because of Samad’s and Alsana’s conflicting ideas about their lives in England, the alienation between the couple has become more obvious. Alsana is of the opinion that London provides with them better life conditions and she has a tendency to go beyond the rules of Islam. However, Samad hates his life in London; he wants to get rid of London

¹³³ Smith, p.196.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p.196

¹³⁵ Smith, p.236.

¹³⁶ Andrea Levy, *This is my England*.

while Alsana has become a supporter of their life in Britain. Alsana has seemed to lose her faith in the religion, while Samad puts into his Muslimism in every occasion; “No, Samad. [...] I don’t call myself anything. I don’t make claims. You call yourself a Muslim. You make the deals with Allah. You are the one he will be talking to, come Mahshar. You, Samad Miah. You, you”¹³⁷. Fundamentally, Alsana thinks that London provides both the freedom and power that she needs. And their ideas about the concept of “pure Englishness” are totally different. Samad is substantially obsessed with becoming the “other” because of his root and religion in Britain but Alsana interrogates what that means to be pure English.

Samad has tried to retrieve his old customs and wants to bring up his twins according to his culture and religion. For Samad, the source of the corruption is the country they live in: “I have been corrupted by England, I see that now my children, my wife, they too have been corrupted”¹³⁸. Alsana, with her increasing awareness in her environment, acknowledges that having been born in Britain, the boys are logically different from them but Samad claims: “Don’t speak to me of second generation! One generation! Invisible! Eternal!”¹³⁹ Hence, Samad has found the solution to in sending one of his twins to his homeland to retrieve their genetic codes. As a traditional Eastern man, he has made this decision without consulting his wife, Alsana. With this step, as an Eastern woman Alsana is represented as the oppressed one, she learns the departure of Magid after he has already gone. This act of Samad has caused an irreversible problem and deep conflicts between the couple. Alsana makes an oath to keep silent and not to give concrete answers until Magid has come back home, she always replies Samad’s question; “Maybe, Samad Miah, maybe not”¹⁴⁰. In other saying, Alsana started to show a sort of passive resistance to the patriarchy holding the power. In a Foucauldian sense, Alsana, through her resistance, tries to subvert the pre-determined self-disciplinary identity for herself by the male domination. One of the greatest challenges for the marriage of Samad and Alsana is the difference between their senses of belonging. Samad is the only member of the Iqbals still trying to keep alive his ties with his history, while Alsana and his children have already put away their history and roots.

¹³⁷ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*, p. 167.

¹³⁸ Smith, p.146

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.289.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.p.213.

Furthermore, when Alsana cannot tolerate the male hegemony in her family, this passive resistance turns into the physical violence against the patriarchy: “Second round. Samad slapped Alsana. Alsana right hooked him in the stomach and then followed up with a blow to the left cheekbone”¹⁴¹. In some situations, as Alsana is stronger than Samad, she overcomes him, which can be evaluated as the subversion of the male power and resistance in a Foucauldian term:

Samad pressed Alsana's hand. She kicked him in the ankle. He stamped on her toe. She pinched his flank. He bent back her little finger and she grudgingly raised her right arm while deftly elbowing him in the crotch with her left.¹⁴²

From the very beginning of the novel, Samad has desperately made efforts to remind their history through his great-grandfather, Mangal Pande and his tremendous success in the Indian Mutiny. He tries to regenerate the family pride in his family again, yet he cannot considerate the effects of growing up in a totally different environment, the second generation of children reckons Mangal Pande just as a story, he is a hero of the past that has not a connection with their current situation. Alsana always undermines the stories about Pande; "It's going to get oh so boring if we have to listen to old warhorse big mouths all night"¹⁴³. But it has turned out that all endeavours Samad are futile, Magid turns back to England through the help of Marcus Chalfen as “English more than English”. Magid has become more European after his education in India. With his immaculately white dressing and he does not see any inconveniency in eating bacon. That is to say, neither Alsana nor his children could meet Samad’s expectations to survive their past and traditions now. The reality that Samad cannot grim is that “One cannot escape the satire of the postcolonial world without acknowledging it first!”¹⁴⁴ As a result, Samad is punished with losing both of her sons:

There are no words. The one I send home comes out a pukka Englishman, white suited, silly wig lawyer. The one I keep here is fully paid-up green bow-tie-wearing fundamentalist terrorist. I sometimes wonder why I bother,’ said Samad bitterly, betraying the English inflections of twenty years in the country.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Smith, p.200.

¹⁴² Smith, p.130.

¹⁴³ Ibid,p. 230.

¹⁴⁴ Patricia- Dorli Dumescu, “Colourful Teeth: A New Postcolonial Reality in Zadie Smith’s Novel”, *Journal Of Romanian Literary Studies*. Issue no: 10/2017, p.594.

¹⁴⁵ Dumescu, p.414.

In *White Teeth*, Smith puts emphasis on multiculturalism as something to celebrate. However, to be able to completely adopt to an environment shared by various ethnicities is not an easy ordeal. The life Alsana is experiencing in multicultural London has caused her to develop a kind of superiority over the black immigrants. When Samad mentions his close friend Archie and his wife Clara, Alsana's reaction is very dramatic:

Who are they? She slammed her little fist on to the kitchen table, sending the salt and pepper flying, to collide spectacularly with each other in the air. I don't know them! You fight in an old, forgotten war with some Englishman... married to a black! Whose friends are they? These are the people my child will grow up around? Their children –halfy black-white?¹⁴⁶

As it can be understood, Alsana is quite prejudiced against other nationalities. Right from the wedding ceremony of Archibald and Clara, Alsana disesteems Clara because of her physical appearance: “seemed to disapprove of Clara somehow [...] said only ‘Oh yes, Mrs. Jones’ or ‘Oh no, Mrs. Jones’, making Clara so nervous, so sheepish, she felt compelled to put her shoes back on”¹⁴⁷. In other saying, excessive cross-cultural awareness may result in discrimination against the other. Alsana seems assimilated from a lot of perspectives, despairingly tries to keep her genetic codes pure, that's why she is annoyed by the existence of “half blacky- white “ Irie around her sons as she can be a threat to their ‘pure eastern’ identities ¹⁴⁸. But later, she has changed her mentality against the black people; “Black people are often friendly, thought Alsana, smiling at Clara, and adding this fact subconsciously to the short ‘pro’ side of the pro and con list she on the black girl “¹⁴⁹. We can make such an inference that today, seeing one another person as the other within the society owing to their differences in ethnics, cultures and skin colour is not only peculiar to English people. It is a problem even within immigrants themselves.

As a last point to be mentioned about Alsana is her description as a non-Western and Muslim woman. According to the discourse of Edward Said's Orientalism¹⁵⁰, she has formed the Muslim woman versus the Christian one as a binary opposition for the Westerners to define themselves more definitely. And her oppression is associated with

¹⁴⁶ Smith, p.61.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p.61.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 61.

¹⁴⁹ Smith, p.65.

¹⁵⁰ Edward W. Said. Orientalism, 1979

her religion, unfortunately Islam is depicted as a religion encumbering women just because of her sex and giving priority to men over them. During a parent-teacher association board meeting, Alsana gets annoyed because of the stare of other British people around her: “looked over to her with the piteous, saddened smiles they reserved for subjugated Muslim women”¹⁵¹. Even though she is still wearing trainers under her sari and headscarf representing her own culture and Islam as a Muslim, her increasing confidence in English institutions and unquestionable belief in BBC have proved that she has heavily been influenced and captivated by the British culture. Nominately, Alsana achieves to create a third space for herself in this hybrid city. Bhabha assures that through the third space “we may open the way to conceptualizing an internal culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture’s hybridity”¹⁵². Because she has come to this multicultural city by trusting the colonial imaginary promising new opportunities for the ex-colonized, like a second mother country. With her increasing self-awareness, as she gives up being a yes woman. With the alternatives she is bestowed within the Western culture, she embraces new possibilities offered for her. She celebrates newness and multiplicity instead of feeling like a total outsider who is not welcomed.

Alsana, with her Muslim identity, is very much like Pembe in *Honour*. Both of them desperately try to hold together their family in the chaotic and multinational London. However, as we see in *White Teeth*, the challenges that both of the women experience are quite different in terms of the source of the problems. For Alsana, not only the patriarchal family that tries to oppress her but also assimilation makes her lose her faith in her culture and religion. On the other hand, in case of Pembe the problem is not assimilation or a sense of inferiority or the process of otherization in the British society but she cannot overcome her own male-dominated culture in the heart of England.

b) Clara Bowden

Clara Bowden Jones is another character to deal with in order to demonstrate the representation of non-Western women in *White Teeth*. Her father Darcus had come to England fourteen years earlier before Clara and her mother came in search of a better life

¹⁵¹ Smith, p.131.

¹⁵² Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1994, p.38.

conditions. However, like most of the immigrants, he ended up in spending the whole of that period in the far corner of the living room, watching television.¹⁵³ She is the wife of Archibald Jones, a middle aged British man who earns money by folding papers. The Jones display the notion of hybridity and they symbolize both/and, Western and Eastern, white and black, common and exquisite, modern and traditional, all at the same time.¹⁵⁴

Clara is a Jamaican-Caribbean rooted immigrant in London with his mother Hortense Bowden. Like Alsana, she comes from a British colony. Her mother is a vigorous participant of Jehovah's Witnesses denomination¹⁵⁵, that's why Clara is raised through tough love, apocalypse and God. Her ex-boyfriend, Ryan, converted to Jehovah's by her mother, could not live up to her expectations. When she defied religious principles of her denomination, she had to break up with Ryan, too.

Clara's introduction into the novel coincides with the unsuccessful suicide attempt of Archie's. Clara is a nineteen years old young woman when she first met Archibald. With her missing teeth in her mouth, her physical appearance is portrayed in a very attractive way from the point view of Archibald upon their encounter descending the stairs:

And not only was she the most beautiful thing he had ever seen [...] She smelt musty, womanly, like a bundle of your favourite clothes. She wore her sexuality with an older woman's ease, and not [...] like an awkward purse, never knowing how to hold it, where to hang it or when to just put it down.¹⁵⁶

Archibald is a working class British man of forty seven years old, who divorced from his Italian wife Ophelia after thirty years of marriage. Gorgeous Clara appears as a solution to all problems of Archie and six weeks later they got married. Literally, she does not have any affection for that old desperate man. But like Archie, also for Clara this marriage is a way of emancipation from her mother and the community:

Clara saw Archie through the gray-green eyes of loss; her world had just disappeared, the faith she lived by had receded like a low-tide, and Archie, quite by accident, had become the bloke in the joke: the last man on earth.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Smith, p.30.

¹⁵⁴ Dumescu p. 594.

¹⁵⁵ Jehovah's Witnesses are a Christian denomination with many beliefs that stand out from mainstream Christianity. They are known for their potent evangelism and their unique translation of the Bible. <https://www.jw.org/en/>.

¹⁵⁶ Smith, p.24.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, p.38.

From the first day of their relationship Clara has been aware of the fact that they are not a good match, even the registrar compares the couple with “cat and dog” during the wedding ceremony.¹⁵⁸ It is easy to comprehend from their wedding scene that the interracial couple does not obtain approval from their environment; there are only two guests for witnessing, the Indian Iqbals. Because the community around a white man, Archibald, is not yet ready to embrace this interracial marriage and he feels sorry for Clara as the ceremony; “wasn’t a bigger reception. But there was no one else to invite. All other relatives and friend had declined the wedding invitation; some tersely, some horrified; studiously stepping over the mail and avoiding the phone”¹⁵⁹. Most of those people perceive Clara as a kind of threat to their purity, thus they do not welcome her. Song (2003) declares that “Mixed marriages have been regarded as one of the biggest threats to racial and ethnic groups, so intermarriage can be seen to threaten their purity”¹⁶⁰. Archibald is heavily criticized by his co-workers just because of marrying a black woman. Even though he defines himself as an antiracist individual, the company director Kelvin Hero is an obvious racist. He accepts the beauty of Clara and congratulates Archibald for her legs but Mr. Hero does not let Archibald attend the dinner with the Sunderland team, as it will not be appropriate for their prestige to have an employee whose wife is black. It is noticeably clear that the inhabitants of the “Occident”¹⁶¹ exhibit typical coloniser’s behaviour of wanting the exotic other. It becomes obvious although the men would not admit it as they are ashamed of their attraction to an Afro-Caribbean.¹⁶²

Clara’s mother, Hortense Bowden, does not approve of this marriage either, she “was fiercely opposed to the affair, on grounds of colour rather than age”¹⁶³. At first glance, Hortense’s negative attitude toward their marriage can be related to Clara’s renouncement of Jehovah’s and Ryan. Because Clara “had deserted the church and all its biblical literalism for Archibald Jones”¹⁶⁴. But later it turns out that old Jamaican woman has a

¹⁵⁸ Smith, p.56.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 51.

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Noora Katisko, *Englishness Revisited: “The Construction of Hybrid National Identities in Zadie Smith’s White Teeth*, Pro Gradu Thesis, University of Tampere,2011,p. 62.

¹⁶¹ Edward Said, *Orientalism*,1979

¹⁶² Sylvia Hadjetian , p.86.

¹⁶³ Smith, p.47.

¹⁶⁴ Smith, p.53.

lot of things to tell about the British man. Actually, Clara has noticed that “Archibald Jones was no romantic hero”¹⁶⁵.

When we look at the personal background of Hortense Bowden, seeing a black woman’s prejudiced attitude toward a white man is not surprising. She always reminds her granddaughter Irie that “A little English education could be a dangerous thing”¹⁶⁶ by referring to her mother’s, Ambrosia’s story. Hortense is one of the living witnesses of the postcolonial era, which still has an effect on the lives of ex-colonized individuals. *White Teeth* essentially highlights the changing relations between the cultures. Hortense's response to the process of change refutes the assumption that the transition among the cultures is a smooth process.¹⁶⁷ She says to her granddaughter about her parents, Clara and Archie:

Black and white never come to no good. De Lord Jesus never meant us to mix it up. Dat's why he made a hoi' heap of fuss about de children of men building de tower of Babel. 'Im want everybody to keep tings separate... When you mix it up, nuttin good can come. It wasn't intended. Except you', she added as an afterthought.¹⁶⁸

Ambrosia, Clara’s grandmother, was impregnated by her English teacher, Captain Durham. At this sense, Hortense seems to have more awareness than Clara. Hortense realizes that their existence is always dependent on the great colonizers’. The superior whites need the inferior blacks to keep their sovereignty. Thus, Hortense knows that it is not a simple and pure love affair between an English and a Jamaican, but a relationship based on self-interests: “oh, he loves her; just as the English loved India and Africa and Ireland; it is the love that is the problem, people treat their lovers badly”¹⁶⁹.

In Smith’s novel history and root are very crucial. Actually, Clara, like her grandmother’s rape, represents the history of the colonization. Clara, like the Iqbal couple, still experiences the cultural legacy of colonialism in modern England. According to Foucault, for the subjectification of an individual we need first an episteme, an episteme is “a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p.47.

¹⁶⁶ Smith, p.364.

¹⁶⁷ Moss, p.13.

¹⁶⁸ Smith, p.330.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p.361.

cannot escape—a great body of legislation written once and for all by some anonymous hand”¹⁷⁰. When it comes to the situation of the immigrants in London, the episteme they have to struggle is the episteme of racist colonialism. Foucault’s two basic concepts that shape his discourse, truth and knowledge organize and regulate power relations. Britain, the primary imperial power, constitutes the episteme of colonialism through the texts of truth and knowledge.¹⁷¹ The immigrants are established as the other as a result of the colonial history of England.

In other saying, the seeds once sown by the colonizer now have caused great difficulties for the current generations in their relations and interactions. Ambrosia was left by this English man, in the middle of a great earthquake, resulting in an early birth. This scene is portrayed in the book in an embellished way; a young Jamaican woman holding a baby in one hand and a Bible in another. After that moment, she realized that a Bowden woman should not rely upon anyone but Bible to survive. As we see, the religion in the novel somehow presented as a means of managing their lives in a non-religious society. Hortense does absolutely everything to be one of those 144.000 people “sitting near Jesus” on the doomsday. From a different viewpoint, religion is displayed as an instrument for those non-Western characters to compensate for their social inferiority in this world because of its promise of being the most dignified and elite in here-after.

Above all, Clara is a deliberately created character by Smith to provide the novel’s name; *White Teeth*. Clara’s teeth appear as one of the most striking images of the novel, they represent the individual otherized by the society as well as how the society ostracises the individual because of her lacking features.¹⁷² From the very beginning, Clara is represented as the other in the British society. Her otherness is much more obvious than the Iqbals; she has nothing to do with her skin colour, which Smith regards as the greatest defectiveness that she:

was beautiful in all senses except maybe, by virtue of being black, the classical. Clara Bowden was magnificently tall, black as ebony and crushed sable, with hair plaited in a horseshoe which pointed up when she felt lucky, down when she didn’t.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 1969, p.191.

¹⁷¹ Gardner, p.193.

¹⁷² Moss, p.17.

¹⁷³ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*, p.23.

As obvious to everybody, the coloured people first attract the attention of other people with their pearly white teeth. But in case of Clara, to emphasize her otherness in the society the first thing drawing attention is lack of teeth: “She gave him a wide grin that revealed possibly her one imperfection. A complete lack of teeth in top of her mouth”¹⁷⁴. Smith deliberately uses Clara’s deficiency to deliver the message that in the root of her otherness, there lies racial causes.

c) Irie Jones

Irie Jones, the only daughter of Clara and Archibald, is a successfully depicted character in *White Teeth*. Irie Jones can be said to be similar with Esma in *Honour*. While Irie reflects Smith, Esma reflects Elif Shafak, the writer of *Honour*. But their challenges are quite different as Esma’s greatest obstacle is her gender that is ascribed to her by the male dominated familial system while Irie seems to be obsessed with her roots. Smith describes Irie as a character “intent upon fighting her genes”¹⁷⁵. Moss defines Irie “As a character born of a black Jamaican-English mother and a white father, she is the figure of racial and cultural hybridity who best reflects the everyday nature of hybridity in the present”¹⁷⁶. Being descended from an English father and a Jamaican mother, she is a second generation immigrant and the one who harshly experiences bitter situation of an identity belonging nowhere. She is the most obvious symbol of both cultural and racial hybridity; today’s irrefutable reality of multicultural societies. Although born and grown in England, she feels neither Jamaican nor English. When her age reaches puberty, the life has become unbearable because of her distinctive physical appearance that preventing her from mingling into the society that she lives in; “Pale, sir! Freckles an’ every ting. You Mexican?’ ‘No.’ ‘Arab?’ ‘Half Jamaican. Half English.’ ‘Half-caste’, Jackie explained patiently. ‘Your mum white?’ ‘Dad.’ Jackie wrinkled her nose. ‘Usually de udder way roun.”¹⁷⁷. On the contrary to her mother Clara’s skinny body, (the European proportions) Irie has her grandmother Hortense’s “substantial Jamaican frame, loaded with pineapples, mangoes, and guavas; the girl had weight; big tits, big butt, big hips, big thighs, big teeth”¹⁷⁸. Although she seems to get used to her life in London, the multicultural and

¹⁷⁴ Smith, p.24.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, p.227.

¹⁷⁶ Moss, p.13.

¹⁷⁷ Smith, p.273.

¹⁷⁸ Smith, p.265.

racist attitude of this city has always alienated her because of her skin colour; “There was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection. A stranger in a stranger land”¹⁷⁹.

No matter how hard she has tried to lose weight, she could not achieve it. Thus, she tried to change herself to fit into visual British standards by changing her hair style. The underlying reason behind Irie’s desire to have straight hair is to look more Western and also to be able to get attention of her secret love, Millat, who flirts mostly with white girls: “Instead of her kinky Afro, Irie wants straight hair. Straight straight long black sleek flickable tossable shakable touchable finger-through-able wind-blowable hair. With Bangs”¹⁸⁰. As stated by Toplu, “black identity and British identity conflict primarily because of the society’s inability or unwillingness to recognize the black girl’s right to be treated like any other British-born citizen, irrespective of race and colour”¹⁸¹. At hairdresser’s, she sees a lot of other black women who endures painful processes to have a more western look by paying an excessive amount of money. However, Irie’s attempt nearly results in a catastrophe; she is nearly bald and fake hair added to her head. This moment brings an epiphany for Irie. While looking at the mirror she is “tearing out somebody else’s hair with her bare hands”¹⁸². Irie is the embodiment of rootlessness throughout the novel. Especially after becoming acquainted with the Chalfens, her desire to trace her history reaches the peak point. She craves for learning everything about her past and her ancestors. But Archibald cannot meet the expectation of her daughter in this sense: “To have a bit of history in your blood like that. Motivates you, I’d imagine. I’m a Jones, you see. ‘Slike a “Smith.” We’re nobody... Not that I’ve ever been much bothered, mind. [...] Good honest English stock”¹⁸³. As she is not be able to get enough information about her roots, she gets frustrated:

To her, this was yet another item in a long list of parental hypocrisies and untruths, this was another example of the Jones/Bowden gift for secret histories, stories you never got told, history you never entirely uncovered, rumour you never unraveled... These parents were full of information you wanted to know ... She was sick of never getting the whole truth.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, p.222.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, p.228.

¹⁸¹ Quoted in Seda Arıkan, *Individual and Social Conflict in Multicultural England: Zadie Smith’s White Teeth and Monica Ali’s Brick Lane*, MA Thesis, FU, Elazığ, 2008, p.49.

¹⁸² Smith, p.289.

¹⁸³ Ibid, p.99.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p.379.

The more she wants to be like white people, the more difficulties she has gone through which have discouraged her. Being a black immigrant at the heart of England is very a challenging and overwhelming experience. Although she is daughter of a white father and a mother brought up in England and she does not know even any other country than England, she unavoidably gets exposed to the same question “Where are you originally from?” She is neither English nor Jamaican. That is to say, the source of all problems Irie confronts is not being white. Unfortunately, the racist attacks against those immigrants have become a daily routine for most of them. And for Irie, a teenager black immigrant, those attacks become very influential in her identity crisis. Clara, being a hybrid individual herself, is aware of the danger that her only daughter come across in that white culture:

From Irie’s bedroom shrine of green-eyed Hollywood idols to the gaggle of white friends who regularly trooped in and out of her bedroom, Clara saw an ocean of pink skins surrounding her daughter and she feared the tide that would take her away.¹⁸⁵

In one of the instances, Irie, with Magid and Millat, while going to old Mr. Hamilton to deliver his harvest donation, receives the same kind of treatment on the bus: “*If you ask me,*” said one disgruntled old age pensioner to another, “*they should all go back to their own . . .*”¹⁸⁶ After their arrival, Mr. Hamilton started to talk about their past colonial experience in Congo. As stated by Gardner, Mr. Hamilton’s racist and colonialist attitude actually represents the majority of the colonizing countries which does not recognize any potential and capacity for cleverness in black niggers¹⁸⁷:

the only way I could identify the nigger was by the whiteness of his teeth [. . .]; See a flash of white and bang! as it were . . . Dark as buggery [. . .]; poor fools didn’t even know why they were there, what people they were fighting for, who they were shooting at.¹⁸⁸

Upon this conversation, Millat has tried to convince this old man that his father Samad Iqbal, with Irie’s father, attended the Second World War for England and he has sacrificed one of his arms for this country. However, Mr Hamilton’s reply to his claim reveals the inner thought of those internalizing colonization: “There were certainly no wogs as I

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p.328.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p.137.

¹⁸⁷ Gardner, p.194.

¹⁸⁸ Smith, p.144.

remember—though you’re probably not allowed to say that these days, are you? But no . . . no Pakistanis . . . what would we have fed them”¹⁸⁹. As it can be seen clearly, for the immigrants their participation in the world wars legitimate their demand to call themselves as a British identity. But for the racist it does not mean anything; these immigrants are just the white man’s burden. Barbara Korte maintains that *White Teeth* has formed a kind of reinvigoration related to the existence of Asian people on the side of Britain during the Second World War.¹⁹⁰

Irie and Millat are sent to the home of the Chalfens to gain inspiration by them after their involvement in a marijuana – smoking event with Joshua Chalfen. With the introduction of the Chalfens into the story, the struggle between the East and the West has become more obvious as the Chalfens are white, middle-class and an academic family.¹⁹¹ For Irie, the Chalfens are very different from the people she has met until now. With their intellectual side, they represent the pure English identity that Irie craves for, although they are immigrants, too. The Chalfens have formed such a vision that Irie thinks they “are more English, than English”¹⁹². With their intelligence and sophistication, the Chalfens represent the ideal English identity for Irie;

She wanted their Englishness. Their Chalfenishness. The purity of it. It didn’t occur to her that the Chalfens were, after a fashion, immigrants too (third generation, by way of Germany and Poland, né Chalfenovsky), or that they might be as needy of her as she was of them.¹⁹³

At first, the Chalfens are white well-wishers trying to help immigrants’ children. Both Millat and Irie seem affected positively in terms of their grades in their school. However, the real intention of Joyce Chalfen is quite different. These two brown-coloured children function as new victims to satisfy Joyce’s ego that “she needed to be needed”¹⁹⁴. Here, it can be said that with a Foucauldian approach, power and knowledge that is created by the discourse of Chalfens are exercised over the once colonized generation. To make those Eastern rooted children as the subject of their discourses, with their dominant sense of

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, p.172.

¹⁹⁰ Outed in Gardner, p.95.

¹⁹¹ Sara Nichols, “Biting off More Than you Can Chew: Review of Zadie Smith’s “White Teeth”, *New Labor Forum*, No.9, 2001: p.64.

¹⁹² Smith, p.273.

¹⁹³ Ibid, p.328.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, p.321.

British superiority, Chalfens exploit and repress both Irie and Millet. Here, the Chalfens attitude actually embodies the British past imperial. As a result of the colonial past, now the English dominancy would not able to tolerate its outcome: hybridity. As declared by Bhabha, hybridity forms a kind of "resistance against a dominant cultural power"¹⁹⁵. In other saying, Chalfens as the dominant English tried to regiment those hybrid and once colonized people to make them docilized and disciplined bodies.

Joyce Chalfen seems to be infatuated by Millat's exotic look: "God, he's gorgeous, isn't he? Like Omar Sharif thirty years ago"¹⁹⁶. And also the speech of Marcus Chalfen related to Irie's hips makes both of the teenagers perplexed as they did not use to talk about sex and similar topics. But actually, the Chalfens are not really interested in Irie and Millat for children's sake. For the sake of maintaining their superior position in their environment, Joyce starts psychotherapy sessions with Millat and Marcus charges Irie with his files. Marcus Joyce use these children to assert their sense of superiority and power by satisfying their high level of self-importance in a condescending and patronizing manner. While Irie organizes a file about the family tree of the Chalfens, she starts to interrogate her rootlessness again:

Chalfens actually knew who they were in 1675'. However, his father ,Archie Jones could give no longer record of his family than his father's own haphazard appearance on the planet in the back-room of a Bromley public house circa 1895 or 1896 or quite possibly 1897'. Her mother ,Clara Bowden knew a little about her grandmother, and half believed the story that her famed and prolific Uncle P. had thirty-four children, but could only state definitively that her own mother was born at 2.45 p.m. 14 January 1907, in a Catholic church in the middle of the Kingston earthquake. The rest was rumour, folk-tale and myth.¹⁹⁷

At that exact moment, Irie realizes that she cannot deny her root and history no matter how much she has tried to do so. Instead of declaring war against her genes and history, she started to search for her root through the help of her Jamaican grandmother, Hortense. She has decided to visit her grandmother in Jamaica to resolve all the inner conflicts and dilemmas she suffers from. Eventually, she comes to reconciliation with her roots and history:

¹⁹⁵ As quoted in Slyvia Hadjetin, p. 55.

¹⁹⁶ Smith, p.320.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p.337.

No fictions, no myths, no lies, no tangled webs this is how Irie imagined her homeland. Because homeland is one of the magical fantasy words like unicorn and soul and infinity that have now passed into the language. And the particular magic of homeland, its particular spell over Irie, was that it sounded like a beginning. The beginning est of beginnings. Like the first morning of Eden and the day after apocalypse. A blank page.¹⁹⁸

Irie is a hybrid individual, representing diverse cultures and encompassing contested cultural spaces, who can successfully navigate the changing dynamics of British society.¹⁹⁹ And, “In reality every person and every culture has hybridity in one way or another. No tradition is pure or original, and it is more apt to talk about the hybridization of all things”²⁰⁰. Thus, at the end Irie seems to create an appropriate space for herself, the third space, as Bhabha puts forward. She demonstrates how two different cultures can go hand in hand if the people of the multicultural societies can celebrate and welcome differences and heterogeneity without discrimination and exclusivity. Also, her fatherless baby, either sired by Magid or Millat, has shown the multicultural and hybrid future environment of England.

d) Neena Begum

The last Eastern rooted female character is Neena, the niece of Alsana Iqbal. She seems a minor character in the novel, but her representation is quite interesting for a non-Western character. Her sexual choice, being a homosexual, singles her out in both *White Teeth* and *Honour*. Most of the time, female characters with different sexual orientations are western characters, as can be seen in *Nightwood*, *Affinity* and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. In this sense, Neena is a very controversial character. She represents the subversion of heterosexual and patriarchally constituted and imposed identities in a society. To put it differently, she epitomizes the destruction of social genders that appear as a restricting taboo in a society. Because of her sexual choice she is called as “niece of shame” by Alsana.

As declared by Wittig, the concepts of woman and womanhood are unnatural terms to serve the purpose of men.²⁰¹ She defines heterosexuality as a political system serving the

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p.408.

¹⁹⁹ Outed in Yağcı, p.50.

²⁰⁰ As Quoted in Yağcı, p. 60.

²⁰¹ Janet Kourany, James B. Sterba, Rosemarie Tong. *Feminist Philosophies Problems, theories, and Applications*. New Jersey. 1992: p.77.

benefits of the patriarchy enabling them to exploit women. According to Wittig, “there is no sex but only oppressed sex; women”²⁰². Thus, Neena, as a lesbian character, tries to subvert the male power by establishing herself outside of the naturalized womanhood. Wittig asserts that “lesbians are not woman”²⁰³. Smith deliberately creates such a character like Neena in response to Samad who otherizes women just because of their gender. In contrast to Samad, Neena has a tendency to see man as the other in the society.²⁰⁴ She reveals her excessive feminist thoughts as follows:

I mean, I just think men have caused enough chaos this century. There’s enough fucking men in the world. If I knew I was going to have a boy” – she pauses to prepare her two falsely conscious friends for this new concept- “I’d have to seriously consider abortion.”²⁰⁵

Neena has also supported Judith Butler’s performativity theory that “gender is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free-floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence”²⁰⁶. That is to say, gender is formed through the repetition of activities over time. Thus, human body cannot be reducible into two fundamental genders as male or female. As an alternative to those essentialist gendering, Neena is presented as the third gender in the novel. The French feminist author, Wittig, wrote a critique related to heterosexuality through arguing the category of sex; “the advent of individual subjects demands first destroying the categories of sex . . . the lesbian is the only concept I know of which is beyond the categories of sex”²⁰⁷. To Wittig, the lesbian appears as the third group that is to say they are excluded from the institutionalized hegemonic and heterosexual system of a society. One another eccentricity about Neena is that even if she is described as a source of shame the people around her seem to get used to Neena’s and her girlfriend Maxine’s existence around them. In other words, most of the Eastern rooted characters normalize Neena’s lesbian choice. And in the novel, with her deep interest in pursuing feminist studies, Western context seems to provide her with the freedom that she needs. That is to say, in *White Teeth*, the West is represented as a source of freedom

²⁰² Monique Wittig, *The Category of Sex*, p. 48.

²⁰³ Monique Wittig, “The Straight Mind”, p.141.

²⁰⁴ Emel Aksoy, “Zadie Smith’in *White Teeth* adlı Romanın Çevirisindeki “Öteki” Kavramına İmgebilimsel Yaklaşım”Muğla University, 2007, p.114.

²⁰⁵ Smith, p.78-79.

²⁰⁶ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 34.

²⁰⁷ Monique Wittig, “One is Not Born a Woman,” *Feminist Issues*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter 1981, p. 48.

for this eastern rooted character to gain self-knowledge and self-confidence that she would not obtain otherwise.

Neena emerges as a character who observes the communication problems in a heterosexual relationship through the eyes of a lesbian, who sees man as the other in the society. She is the one trying to urge Alsana to be more self-assured against her husband. She is aware of the fact that Samad, as a traditional fundamentalist man, does not respect Alsana. He only expects her to fulfil her basic duties and commitments like being reproductive, cleaning and cooking. And Neena has realized Samad's attitude towards women through his treatments towards Alsana. As we know, in both of the novels, while the Eastern rooted women have tried desperately to perform their duties, they are cheated by white woman in return. Thanks to Neena's warnings, Alsana can acknowledge that she does have another opportunity to resist against her husband:

Oh yes, Auntie, yes, the little *submissive* Indian woman. You don't talk to him, he talks at you. You scream and shout each other, but there's no communication. And in the end he wins anyway because he does whatever he likes, when he likes. You don't even know where he is, what he does, what he *feels*, half the time. It's 1975, Alsi. You can't conduct relationships like that any more. It's not like back home. There's got to be communication between men and women in the West, they've got to listen to each other, otherwise...²⁰⁸

2.4. Dialectical Connection and Interaction among Western and Non-Western Women in *White Teeth*

White Teeth, having included both Eastern and Western rooted female characters, has formed a magnificent ground to see impressions of various women on each other. Women of Iqbals, Chalfens and Joneses are the descendants of various races. Each of the families have ended up in England for a better life for their future. Smith, with those women of diversified ethnicities, religions and cultures, has aimed to bring light to the difficultness of the life in London. Unfortunately, women and children are the greatest victims of the colonial activities of the colonizing countries, which can be clearly seen in London. That is to say, countries of women once colonized have been left as good for nothing and as a result, they are forced to migrate to other countries. And now, in the postcolonial era, they are not welcomed in England, a country built through the tears and blood of the third world countries.

²⁰⁸ Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*, p. 76.

One of the aims of this thesis is to demonstrate the necessity of a more inclusive feminism against exclusive white feminism which marginalizes the third world women just because of their colour and ethnicity. For most of the immigrant women living in Europe or the United States, white feminism is far away from touching on their real problems or producing solutions to these problems. A system which sees masculinity and essentialist gendering as the ultimate problems of a society has forced the colonized women to be placed at the bottom of the colonial hierarchy. Western feminism malfeasances its real purpose and it takes an active role in the maintenance of biased and victimized representation of women in other cultures.²⁰⁹ Hence, new feminism for those Third world women is necessary to deconstruct their misrepresentation in contemporary novels. In *White Teeth*, in addition to the portrayal of third world women, their interaction with the people around them highlights their heart-breaking situation.

In *White Teeth*, the multicultural environment of London provides a very appropriate place for readers to be able to observe the interaction between the Eastern and Western rooted female identities. Even in this post-modern era that we live in, the racial discrimination against those coloured women does not disappear. Furthermore, the discrimination against the other solely due to their skin colour has reached the peak point recently through the provocation of the governors. In case of the Muslim women, the situation is not less complicated since September 11th. The legislation related to the banning of veil was a hot topic in many countries. In other saying, these events demonstrate that the oppression against the Eastern rooted countries' women doubles when the discriminations against them are joined to the patriarchy in their own culture. Jones criticizes the endeavours to make the women body the focal point in the modernization of discourses: "During colonial times, the male elite of Muslim countries worked with the European men in charge of the administration of the colony to determine the role that women would play in the modernizing and 'civilizing' of the country"²¹⁰. And the current situation of those women is represented in a very realistic way. Most of the time the women of ex-colonized countries are the focal point in their environment

²⁰⁹ Chandre Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practising Solidarity*, 2003.

²¹⁰ Rachel Bailey Jones, *Postcolonial Representation of Women, Critical issues for Education*, Springer, Newyork, 2011, p.135

through their different physical appearance as in case of Clara and their traditional way of wearing as in the case of Alsana.

The most obvious scene to recognize the otherization process of Eastern women is seen through the treatment of Joyce Chalfen. When Alsana's and Clara's children are sent home of the Chalfens as a mediation after their involvement in using illegal substances, both of the mothers feel irritated by the Chalfens' intense interest in their children as they comprehend that the family influences the development of their children deeply. Alsana realizes that she has lost her son: "these people are taking my son away from me! Birds with teeth! They're Englishifying him completely! They're deliberately leading him away from his culture and his family and his religion"²¹¹. When Alsana shares with her niece that she feels rather uncomfortable about this situation, Neena suggests to visit the family with her girlfriend in order to get to know them better. When Neena arrived and spent a night with them, she realized that her aunt was absolutely right about Chalfens. All night, Chalfens talked about Muslim and coloured women in a negative and prejudiced way: "Afro-Caribbeans seem to find it hard to establish long-term relationships. That's terribly sad, isn't it?"²¹² Moreover, without having adequate information, Joyce criticizes Islam as she thinks it oppresses women through the polygamies. And Neena has to tolerate all those humiliations. As a last solution to save their children from the indoctrinations of Chalfens, Alsana and Clara tried to speak with Joyce. Joyce visits Iqbals to talk with them. It was difficult for Joyce to convince Alsana to speak as Alsana sees her as the source of losing both of his sons. She has tried to convince his sons about the Chalfens: "The English are the only people, she would say with distaste, 'who want to teach you and steal from you at the same time'²¹³. Alsana's mistrust for the Chalfens was no more or less than that. Alsana and Joyce Chalfen discuss about Millat's attitude, Alsana blames Joyce, as she is the one epitomizing Britishness that captures her country and family:

Mrs. Iqbal, with all due respect, the problem in your family began long before either my husband or I had any involvement... I think this has been going on for a very long time. Millat told me that some years ago you burned all his things. I mean, it is just an example, but I don't think you understand the trauma that kind of thing has inflicted on Millat. He's very damaged²¹⁴

²¹¹ Smith, p.354.

²¹² Smith, p.324.

²¹³ Ibid, p.365.

²¹⁴ Ibid, p.443.

Alsana is determined to dissuade Joyce from involving in their familial problems; however, Joyce persists in her involvement in both Magid and Millat. However, the life that Alsana experiences has enabled her to find both a third space and more freedom to express herself. Alsana, presented as a third world woman at the beginning of the novel, now seems to expand her awareness related to their current situation. Now, she is able to criticize this woman representing Western versus Eastern:

There are two rules that everybody knows [...]. The first is, never let your country become a trading post. Very important. If my ancestors had followed this advice, my situation presently would be very different, but such is life. The second is, don't interfere in other people's family business.²¹⁵

As it is clearly seen in *White Teeth*, Joyce Chalfen symbolizes the attitude of the Western women who underestimate the possibility of hybridity and who are obsessed with the idea of the dichotomy “us” and “them”. Thus, she still envisages hybridity as something exotic and exciting and she does not welcome it as a real part of their daily lives. And by using stereotypes about both Muslim and African rooted women related to the source of their oppression, she has tried to strengthen and intensify her so-called Europeanism. On the other hand, the third world women Alsana and Clara dramatically endeavour to break the cultural and social taboos by opening a new space for being a part of the London society they live in.

²¹⁵ Ibid, p.441.

CHAPTER III

HONOUR

3.1. Representation of Women in *Honour* by Elif Shafak

This chapter is an attempt to explore how non-Western oriented female characters are represented in both western and non-Western contexts in the novel of *Honour* (2012) by Elif Shafak. In parallel with the ultimate aim of the thesis, the real purpose of this chapter is to be able to examine the construction of Eastern rooted women identities by the writers who are also non-Western originated. This thesis starts with the analyses of *White Teeth* by Smith as it was written earlier than *Honour*. Similarity between these two novels makes it necessary to analyse the female characters' sociological, ideological and sexual developments in a socio-historical and cultural framework. Thus, this chapter starts with an introduction to the writer and a brief presentation of the novel to be analysed.

Elif Shafak has been one of the promising contemporary Turkish women authors all around the world. In spite of her young age, she has been a widely- known author. Since the publication of her first novel *Pinhan* in 1998, Shafak has achieved to be a well-known writer in Turkey and throughout the world. Particularly with her creativeness in the plot and characterization in her novels, she takes her place among the widely-debuted Turkish women writers internationally. Especially recently, her novels have been translated in different languages and Shafak has gained wide international readership.

Shafak has particularly dealt with the problems of women identity, women subjectivity and womanhood not only in her books but in her articles and academic writings since the beginning of her career. In addition to the social limitations that are imposed for women, in Turkey and especially in other Third world countries we come across the rigid ethical rules, cultural taboos and social restrictions, which put Turkish women at a disadvantage

because of the dominancy of the male over the female. And those sanctions over the women make the life unbearable for them and most of the time those women find the solution in suicide, unfortunately, as can be seen in the novel.

Even if Shafak has lived her life away from Turkey, she has always been pertinent to the happenings of her country and tried to make women a current issue through her novels. With her great skill in the observation of the women in Turkey and other various countries, Shafak aims to increase attention and awareness about women position and the difficulties and problems they suffer from in a hierarchically constructed patriarchal society. Thus, education and women have always been foregrounded in her works in which it is possible to see numerous women having different backgrounds, problems and ethnicities.

Similar to the rest of the world, also in Turkey, where we can see the male dominancy self-evidently, Shafak has particularly touched on virginity (which appears as the most poignant point of the discrimination between being a maid and woman), honour, honour killing and suicide. And her recently published novel *İskender* (2011) named in English as *Honour*²¹⁶. Shafak explains the underlying reason behind this adaptation:

In Turkey the novel is called Iskender, which means Alexander. Honour I could not name it Alexander in English as people would think it was great Alexander the great. So instead of focusing on a character I focused on the theme and chose *Honour* as its name.²¹⁷

The remarkable novel of Elif Shafak, *Honour*, published in 2012 was completed in one and a half year. The book is regarded as the most successful book of the writer by some of the critics. Themes of *Honour* are noteworthy in respect to the publication timing of the book. The book tells about the pathetic situation of the immigrants through the eyes of half- Turkish and half-Kurdish Toprak family. The story of the book stretches from the Euphrates, Istanbul to the suburbs of London respectively. *Honour* is a very affluent book in terms of its richness in multiculturalism, ethnicities and religions. It brings together a great deal of mixed races and cultures and the women, of course. Elif Shafak mostly

²¹⁶ It is the winner of the 2013 Prix Relay des voyageurs in France; nominated for 2012 Man Asian Literary Prize, 2013 Women's Prize for Fiction and 2014 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. (<http://www.socialstudies.org.uk/contributors/detail/8345/Elif-Shafak>)

²¹⁷ Gazala Gayas , *Suffering of Women characters in Elif Shafak's Novel Honour*, International Multidisciplinary Research Journal Volume III Issue II: April 2016, p.13.

reveals the importance of the concept of family which is of extreme significance both for the Turkish and Kurdish in spite of its disappearing existence in Western culture.

It explores the tragic story of an honor killing that took place in London, the son İskender kills her mother Pembe (actually her twin sister) for the sake of honor. The book was written in English originally, it was later translated into Turkish by Omca A. Korugan.²¹⁸ While the Turkish version of the book is classified as five chapters, the original book contains various sub-sections under different headings. At the very core of the book, there lies the social and the familial position of women who have been the victim of the sanctions of their society for years. The conflicts the characters suffer from both in their inner worlds and in an English society demonstrate how the patriarchal traditions frame the roles of women conspicuously. The novel starts with an everyday reality experience of the writer's herself:

When I was seven years old, we lived in a green house. One of our neighbours, a talented tailor, would often beat his wife. In the evenings we listened to the shouts, the cries, the swearing. In the mornings we went on with our lives as usual. The entire neighbourhood pretended not to have heard, not to have seen. This novel is dedicated to those who hear, those who see.²¹⁹

Honour is the heart-breaking story of the Toprak family in London, Adem, Pembe and their three children İskender, Esmâ and Yunus. The story begins when Adem and Pembe coincidentally meet and marry although Adem has wanted to marry Jamila instead of Pembe in a distinct village of Şanlıurfa, a south-eastern city of Turkey, heavily populated by the Kurdish. Life in İstanbul, where Esmâ and İskender have spent their early childhood, does not meet their expectations, especially those of Pembe's, with a house with no sunshine but plenty of rain. After a short time, when Adem has lost all of the money because of gambling and heavy drinking, Pembe is obliged to work to earn money. As she cannot find a qualified job, she starts to go to the rich people's house for cleaning and taking care of their toddlers. In spite of all these problems, Pembe, as an ordinary Kurdish housewife, tries to obscure and ignore all these problems just for the sake of her children. What is worse, she does not have any other place to go. All in all, the half-Turkish, half-Kurdish Toprak family moved to London in 1979 in search of a better life ,

²¹⁸ Omca A.Korugan is also the translator of *Call of Wild* by Jack London. <https://canyayinlari.com/Kisiler/12507/omca-a-korugan>

²¹⁹ Elif Shafak, *Honour*, the prologue.

without knowing that this fatal step would lead to the tragic collapse of the family. Upon their arrival, Adem turns into a total irresponsible man since he feels more severely his lack of love towards his wife Pembe day by day. Likewise, Pembe is not happy in England, she misses her twin sister Cemile and village. Both of Adem and Pembe realize that they do not have any affection for each other. After all, Adem abandons home and starts to live with Roxana to fulfil his lust, a dancer girl in a club who will betray him for the sake of money. Simone de Beauvoir especially underlines one of the inconveniences of the marriage: “The curse which lies upon marriage is that too often the individuals are joined in their weakness rather than in their strength, each asking from the other instead of finding pleasure in giving”²²⁰. In case of Pembe and Adem, as they do not have anything to give each other anymore, their marriage ended dramatically.

İskender has substituted the place of his father at home; thus, he starts to exercise male power in the family. Upon learning the secret affair of Pembe with Elias, İskender kills Cemile by assuming she was Pembe. The story ends with the family completely torn apart: İskender is jailed for 14 years, Cemile is in the grave, Adem dies in Abu Dhabi while looking for Roxana, Pembe goes back to her village, Esma is married with two daughters and Yunus is a successful musician in London.

3.2. Representation of Non-Western Women in *Honour*

Honour has female characters both from the West and East to demonstrate the clashes among those cultures. The main female characters in the novel are Pembe, Jamila (twin sister of Pembe) and Esma (Pembe’s only daughter) who appears as the narrator of the novel. Although Naze, the mother of Pembe and Jamila, seems to be a secondary character, she has an important function in the story which is to display the representation of the traditional woman in a traditional society. Hence, it is likely to say that *Honour* brings the position of Eastern women to light rather than their Western counterparts and this makes the novel more appropriate to demonstrate the Eastern women’s position in the West. And the representation of the Western women is achieved through the perspective of the Eastern women.

²²⁰ Simone De Beauvoir. *The Second Sex*. Trans and Edit H.M. Parshley. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.

From the very beginning to the end of the novel, as readers we are presented with the struggles of the female characters to adhere strictly to their cultural identity which has been imposed on them and which they have internalized in *Honour*. Contrary to *White Teeth*, where the characters are shaped in line with a complete English identity as a result of assimilation, the female characters of *Honour* seem not to be affected prominently by the British life style except for some minor characters. In order to maintain their cultural identity, the characters are always on alert against assimilation. And in *Honour*, it is both possible to witness gender crises, which is mainly observed through Esma and identity crisis that we have also observed in *White Teeth*.

Identity construction is another significant theme in the novels of Shafak: “The notion of ‘identity’ holds a significant place in Shafak’s narrative. It is possible to observe various types of national or cultural identities ‘dynamic’ (Hecht 76), ‘overlapping’ (Lützel), constructed and reconstructed by external factors”²²¹. In a Foucauldian approach, it is likely to categorize those characters who try to exert power as resisting subjects²²² and those who submit themselves to the ultimate power as the self-regulating and docile entities.²²³ The female characters in the novel are established as docile subjects but they undertake the task of building their authentic identities later in the novel by showing resistance against patriarchal power structures and relations.

a) Pembe

Within this context, Pembe is the first female character to deal with. She is the main character epitomizing the tragic end of a non-Western woman who get stuck in between conventionalism and modernism in London. Before investigating the character’s identity construction process, it is necessary to comprehend the background story of her that initiate the events. During this process, we will touch upon Pembe’s mother, Naze, to uncover the position of the traditional Kurdish woman.

Pembe is one of the daughters among the eight of Berzo and Naze, a Kurdish family. Pembe was born as an unwanted baby, as her mother Naze wanted to give birth to a baby

²²¹ Pinar Karartı, *The Notion of Identity in Elif Shafak’s work*, Published Master Thesis in English Language and Literature, Fatih University, İstanbul, 2010: p.7.

²²² Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality, vol. 2, The Use of Pleasure*. Trans. Robert Hurley. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987. p.28

²²³ Foucault, p.141-143.

boy. Even though Naze has occupied a minor role in *Honour*, she is of cruciality to present the conviction of women to their cultural and traditional identity particularly in non-Western societies. The duties of those Eastern oriented women include household jobs and being reproductive to continue the family's bloodline. As explained in Butler's performativity theory, the repetition of the same acts over a long period of time create the effect of the natural. Naze, as the embodiment of a traditional woman, feels obliged to have a son to fulfil the requirements of a proper wife and woman. With a Foucauldian approach, the bio-power can be said to be effective on the identity construction of the character Naze who acts as a docile body obviously. Because Foucault explains bio-power as a technique that "for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of bio-power"²²⁴. By creating a character like Naze, Shafak wants to emphasize how a woman is expected to display compulsory sex and gender roles for the sake of the continuation of the patriarchy through having a son.

Still, in some parts of the Eastern countries, there is great pressure on women to give birth for a baby boy instead of a girl in spite of the reality that the sex of a baby is transferred through the genomes of the father.²²⁵ Furthermore, for the sake of having baby boys, women have sacrificed their lives by having more delivery. For instance, Naze died during her ninth birth in hope of having a son. Even if the ethnicities are different, to find a middle ground in between the eastern and the western women, to address Betty Friedan could be useful. In *Feminine Mystique*, the traditional American woman's responsibility in child-rearing and the hopefulness for the career and how women are obligated to forsake their ideals for the sake of the continuation of the man's bloodline are emphasized. Hence, it is possible to say that even if their cultures and backgrounds vary, the biological determinacy that is imputing to women make them obliged to be re-productive.

As Naze has already had six more daughters when Pembe and Jamila were born, she cannot comprehend why God "had given them two more daughters when they already had six, and still not a single son"²²⁶. After then, Naze decided not to speak to anybody and pray to God any more until God explained the motive behind His action. When this was heard by the council of elders of the village, she was condemned: "It's against nature

²²⁴ Michel Foucault. *History of Sexuality*. Vintage Books, 1990, p.140.

²²⁵ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7776210.stm>

²²⁶ Shafak, p.5.

for your kind to be quiet. What goes against nature goes against Allah's will"²²⁷. It can be deducible from this statement that womankind is expected to be clamorous instead of being quiet. Contrary to the reactions of Naze upon having two more baby girls, her husband acts in great submission to God, "he had a calm disposition – even if it saddened him profoundly not to have a son to carry his name to the ends of the earth"²²⁸. But it is noteworthy to express the religious characteristic of Naze as a traditional character. Even if she is not completely satisfied through the actions of God, "like a good Muslim, she was resigned to her fate"²²⁹. It can be concluded from her statements how the society's norms have been instilled into her mind socially about the superiority of men over women:

It was all because women were made of the lightest cambric, Naze continued, whereas men were cut of thick, dark fabric. That is how God had tailored the two: one superior to the other. As to why He had done that, it wasn't up to human beings to question. What mattered was that the colour black didn't show stains, unlike the colour white, which revealed even the tiniest speck of dirt... Hence when a virgin gave herself to a man – even if he were the man whom she loved – she had everything to lose, while he had absolutely nothing to lose.²³⁰

Pembe, as a daughter of such a traditional and religious woman, growing up in a distinct village of Şanlıurfa, has never gone out of her small social circle until she married. Even if she has learned how to read and write, she remains as an uneducated and illiterate traditional girl. Pembe starts her education in a school in another village, a one-storey building, forty minutes away from her village. It is most particularly emphasized in the novel as it is extremely unconventional in the East part of Turkey to educate girls: "Pembe knew the exact number because, unlike the other eight-year-old girls in her village, she and Jamila went to school"²³¹. Naze's reaction to this schooling is quiet dramatic, she sees no use in this action, she cannot comprehend how education can contribute to a girl: "How's that going to help my daughters get married?"²³² Surprisingly, it is Berzo, a quite untraditional father, who insists on sending the girls to the school. He is so prescient about the future of her daughters and he states its importance: "What do you know? If one day

²²⁷ Ibid, p.7.

²²⁸ Ibid, p.9.

²²⁹ Ibid. p.7.

²³⁰ Ibid, p. 16.

²³¹ Shafak, p.10.

²³² Shafak, p.11.

their husbands treat them badly, they won't have to put up with it. They can take their children and leave"²³³. However, because of her cultural and religious teaching, Naze acts as a self-disciplining subject who has internalized the panoptican eye who watches her all the time to punish her when she fails to act according to the expectations of the society. Thus, Naze strongly believes that once married, no women can leave their husbands:

Perish the thought,' Naze murmured as she headed to the kitchen. 'No daughter of mine will abandon her husband. If she does, I'll beat the hell out of her, even if I'm dead by then. I'll come back as a ghost!'²³⁴

Naze appears as the character who is extremely attached to the tradition when it comes to the issue of being a woman. "Modesty is a woman's only shield,' she said. 'Bear this in mind: if you lose that, you will be worth no more than a chipped kuruş"²³⁵. As we can understand easily, traditional Kurdish woman is represented as the one whose ultimate aim in this world is to be able to marry and reproduce. Before starting school, Pembe was assuming that everybody on earth was speaking only Kurdish, and this thesis of Pembe is refuted when she comes across a Turkish teacher who does not know any Kurdish. She has only succeeded to finish primary school. Pembe and her father go to the doctor upon being bitten by their dog in case of rabies. Pembe's first outing to the city centrum was a surprising and ground breaking experience for her, which makes her question her gender stereotypes. She has learnt these gender stereotypes as the only reality about women and men, which prevents her from seeing women otherwise. Thus she cannot imagine a women outside home, other than a mother or a wife. She is very much surprised to see the sex of the doctor, because in her culture and surrounding the role of the women is strictly predetermined and cannot be changed:

the girl felt a growing admiration for the doctor she had yet to meet. The man who could provide a cure for so many diseases must be an extraordinary person, she decided. [...] What surprised her even more was that the doctor was a woman –but different from her mother, her aunts, her neighbours. Just as the room was swathed in an absence of colour, the doctor in front of her eyes had none of the female qualities with which Pembe was familiar.²³⁶

²³³ Ibid, p.11.

²³⁴ Ibid, p.11.

²³⁵ Ibid, p.15

²³⁶ Shafak, p.11.

She marries Adem who actually loves Jamila at a very young age and has three children. Pembe has been repentant of this marriage through all her life as Adem wanted to marry Jamila, not Pembe. Upon learning the unpleasant past of Jamila as she was kidnapped because of a disagreement before the wedding of her elder sister as retaliation, Adem decided to marry Pembe, instead of Jamila. Since the kidnappers keep Jamila for some days, most of the villagers think that she has lost her virginity and she has not spoken a word about it. Later, Jamila was wanted as a bride to an old relative, a widower. For this solution, the headmaster of the village says “Her honour is saved”²³⁷. Here, one of the most important messages is delivered through the speech of the headmaster. Her honour (sharaf) is saved; it is a sign of dignity that cannot be attributable to a woman. In other saying, as Shafak states once in her speech about the book:

Honour' was more than a word, it was a name. You could call your child 'Honour,' as long as it was a boy. Men had honour. Old men, middle-aged men, even schoolboys so young that they still smelled of their mother's milk. Women did not have honour. Instead, they had shame. And, as everyone knew, Shame would be a rather poor name to bear.²³⁸

Pembe had a son at the age of seventeen, a son that her mother sacrifices her entire life to have. Pembe is distinguished with her highly superstitious character after the birth of İskender. She is such a superstitious person that she has refused to give a name to her son until the age of five in order to save him from Azreal, the Angel of Death. Also the naming process is also quite interesting. The elders of the village have decided to name the children by asking the first man who got across the river. Ironically, it is an old woman instead of a man who got across first. The old woman is like a clairvoyant and tells Pembe a secret which implicates the problematical future waiting for her with Iskender; “Some children are like the Euphrates, so fast, so rowdy. Their parents cannot catch up with them. I’m afraid your son will break your heart to pieces”²³⁹. Unfortunately, similar to the destiny of her mother, Pembe’s death comes from the hands of her “apple of eye”.

In *White Teeth*, it is also possible to see unenlightened easterner female characters. Related to the representation of non-Western women, in both of the novels, notably in *Honour*, being superstitious is associated with being Easterner and Muslim, rather than

²³⁷ Ibid, p.97.

²³⁸ [Kristin Ohlson, Special to The Plain Dealer](#) on March 27, 2013 at 6:00 AM.

²³⁹ Smith, p.24.

being Westerner. When it comes to other Western originated personalities' unaccountable behaviours, they are mostly explained through science. The most recognizable incident can be seen through the character Joyce Chalfen in *White Teeth*. When her children give up sucking milk, this makes her irritated but this situation is associated with her sense of being needed all the time and a reminder of her superiority. The fundamental cause for Shafak to use this motif could be her own childhood experiences. As Shafak herself explained in one of her articles, *Women Writers, Islam, and the Ghost of Zulakha*, when she:

moved to the house of my other grandmother and thus entered an iridescent universe replete with folk Islam and superstitions. This was an old woman who poured melted lead to ward off the evil eye, read the coffee cups, and taught me not to step on the thresholds where the djinn danced at night. ...For her Allah wasn't a God to be feared but a God to be loved.²⁴⁰

Pembe has stolen Jamila's life but dramatically, it is Jamila who dies at the end of this adventure instead of Pembe. Pembe wants this marriage as she sees it as a solution and a means of going to İstanbul. But all of her life has been a great disappointment for her. Her first experience on a full time job ends up with a sexual harassment without getting her salary. Here, the vulnerability of the woman is represented through Pembe. After this event, Pembe tries to go home with her daughter, they get jealous when they see women on the street strolling with their husbands, which they take as a sign of privilege and protection. When they get home, Adem was waiting for them, in fact for money. This point also reveals the greatest conflicts of the novel, which can be considered as the source of the all events; lack of confidence and affection between the couple in their marriage lives. Adem reacts bitterly when his wife returns with no money: "You come home at this hour and you think I'm going to believe your lies. Where's the money, you whore?"²⁴¹ The woman, who tries to overcome all of the difficulties for the sake of her family is labelled as a "whore" by her husband. Thus, the woman is represented as dependent on her husband no matter she has an income or not. What's more, there is physical violence against women who have both physical vulnerability as well as emotional one. Obviously, Pembe appears as a self-regulating body that has internalized all the sanctions and limitations of the male power and domination. In Eastern societies, unfortunately, most

²⁴⁰ As quoted in Yağcı, p. 59.

²⁴¹ Shafak, p.79.

of the time the physical and psychological violence is tolerated by women as if it is a part of their destiny. Once, by flagging a backscratcher Adem cuts Pembe's neck. As it is stated by Beauvoir in her masterpiece *The Second Sex*, "marriage subjugates and enslaves women and it leads her to aimless days indefinitely repeated, life that slips away gently towards death without questioning its purpose"²⁴². The marriage life has deprived Pembe of her spirit and freedom by turning her into a purposeless woman. She cannot find an appropriate place for herself in her dream city, İstanbul. After settling in London, when Adem abandons his family, she has to take all the responsibility. She starts to work in a hairdresser to earn her life since she has to look after her three children. She even starts to have an emotional affair with Elias, whom she accidentally meets in a pastry shop.

For most of the non-Western women, it is quite problematic to find the balance between their traditions, customs and their life in a western society. Thus, Pembe emerges as the embodiment of the conflict between traditionalism and modernism. Aydoğdu explains the conflicts that Pembe experiences through her life under three headings;

- 1) The conflicts among social values, tradition and identity
- 2) The conflict of the forced marriage with Adem
- 3) The conflict related to herself and her sister (remorse, longing and loneliness). She experiences deep clashes in herself.²⁴³

At the beginning, she even does not approve of working outside home as she grew up in a culture that woman cannot have any other role except for being a housewife and a mother. But at the end, even if it is not a sexual affair, she ends up with a forbidden love with a non-moslem foreign man, Elias. Adem has left his family for the sake of another woman, Roxana, a dancer in a night club in the heart of London. Tariq, elder brother of Adem put the whole blame on Pembe for this rather than Adem, which can be seen as an example for how women are humiliated and oppressed in the marriage life. In patriarchal societies it is woman's main responsibility to keep the husband at home and meet all his needs and his sexual expectations: "Well, what do you expect, if she is not woman enough to keep her husband home."²⁴⁴ Unfortunately, in most of the Eastern countries still there

²⁴² De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p.500.

²⁴³ Yusuf Aydoğdu, *In the Novel of Alexander Fiction, Conflict elements and Characters*, Atatürk University, Phd student at Faculty of Education, 2014, p. 161.

²⁴⁴ Shafak, p. 153.

is a tendency to evaluate some of the events in a misogynistic way under the name of “tradition and custom”. Pembe goes on exchanging letters with Jamila, her twin sister in Şanlıurfa, in which Pembe tells what has happened to Jamila:

*Adem is no husband to me. He doesn't come home any more. He has found himself another woman. The children don't know it. I keep everything inside. Always. My heart is full of words unsaid, tears unshed. I don't blame him. I blame myself. It was the biggest mistake of our lives that I was his bride, instead of you. It's true, he never loved me the way he loved you.*²⁴⁵

Adem is not able to overcome his doubts related to the virginity of Jamila as well as his fears to have a wife, a tainted wife, like his mother who ran off with a man by abandoning them. Adem cannot break with the past when he is reminded of his past by the headmaster of the village that his family also does not have a good reputation and it is better for Adem to marry someone from the village. Shafak makes it obvious for the readers that Adem's past will prevent him from constructing a better future for himself: “Adem was religious about the past, Pembe was faithful about the future [...] Adem was a sad man. He often talked about his childhood, mentioning the same forlorn memories again and again, unable to let go”²⁴⁶. Adem felt obliged to marry Pembe and forgot Jamila for the sake of honour. In certain cultures, honour is treated as a value that is particular to man rather than the womankind. And saving the family's honour is a conventionally conceived idea that it is descended from father to son. In *Honour*, Iskender takes the responsibility of sustaining the family's honour. Unfortunately, at the end the patriarch of the family abandons his family for an exotic dancer. But ironically it is the matriarch of the family who is murdered in order to not to bring stain to the honour of the family. Hence, in this novel Shafak illustrates “a world where women as well men enforce an honour code that results in the social death of men who fail to act like men and actual death of several female relatives”²⁴⁷. As exemplified in this incident how much a female tried to have honour of her own, she is not allowed to do it. Beauvoir strongly criticize this attitude of male-dominated societies and highlights; “man is defined as a human being and woman as female- whenever she behaves as human being she is said to imitate man”²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, p.90.

²⁴⁶ Shafak, p. 109.

²⁴⁷ Quoted in Gazala Gayas, p.16.

²⁴⁸ Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 455

Another drawback Adem has is the problem of ethnicity. He is Turkish and he wants to marry a Kurdish girl. His first impression of the girl was not so pleasant: “probably lice-infested and ignorant Kurdish girl [...] ‘But don’t forget they are poor,’ the headman whispered. ‘Your father and brothers might not approve of a Kurdish bride, a villager.’”²⁴⁹ According to a research conducted by Associated Professor Ertuğrul Gödelik, the gap between the Turkish and Kurdish people related to intermarriages is increasing at an alarming rate.²⁵⁰ Conforming to a survey that has been held four times through twelve years among Turkish and Kurdish citizens, no Kurdish people put a tick for the option “I want to marry a Turk” in 2010 while the percentage of the answer to the same question was %12.8 in 1998.²⁵¹ Particularly, Pembe has always tried to keep her roots in mind. As a daughter of a Kurdish family, she is strictly attached to her roots and she cannot tolerate English culture at the beginning. When Esmâ grumbles about why she has no room of her own, Pembe replies by reminding her of cultural differences: “All my friends have their own rooms, Mum. Their families respect their need for privacy. She arched an eyebrow. ‘You’re not an English girl’”²⁵². For Pembe the English culture and the Western people stand for weirdness in which women and men have a different kind of relationship:

Modern husbands invited their wives to have a drink with them. She had once seen a couple put jazzy music on a machine and dance – which had struck her as sokekin of a shame, for they stepped on the carpet with their dusty shoes.²⁵³

Another instance that reveals Pembe’s desire to keep her traditions alive is her preparation of halva her late sister Hediye who committed suicide as a result of her family’s oppression and pressure upon her: “*The other day I made halva for her soul. I distributed it to my neighbours. They were a bit surprised, not being familiar with our customs*”²⁵⁴.

In the following chapters, the mother and son relationship has gained more importance regarding the representation of non-Western women. In the Eastern countries the role assigned for the male members of the family carries great importance in the social pattern. In this context, the main male character of the book, Iskender, the son of Pembe, plays an

²⁴⁹ Shafak, p.88.

²⁵⁰ Assoc. Prof. Ertuğrul Gödelek, Faculty of Letters, Department of Psychology, Mersin University. <http://addgenelmerkez.tk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/toak.pdf>, p.19.

²⁵¹ <http://t24.com.tr/haber/kurt-ve-turk-evlilik-bitiyor-mu.116721>

²⁵² Elif Shafak, Honour, 2012. p.278.

²⁵³ Shafak, p.75.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, p.91.

important role to demonstrate how Foucault's terms and concepts can be useful to explain the process of the construction of gender identities. Within a Western perspective this mother-son relationship may not be that important but as Foucault discusses in *Power/Knowledge*²⁵⁵ the general politics of truth that organizes the production, functioning and distribution of discourses exclusive to its society also shapes the existing current definitions of sex and gender.²⁵⁶ Thus, the power exercised by the male in the Eastern tradition can be observed even between a mother and a son. When Adem has left home for another woman, Iskender takes on the role and responsibilities of the father. As it is clearly seen, Pembe has created one another male power that limits her through her own hands. At the end, her desire to keep male domination caused a compensation with her life. Thus, Pembe asks her son Iskender for permission to work outside in a hairdresser, which is refused:

*I was the head of the family since Dad had gone off and I didn't want her to work any more. She cried a lot but didn't resist. She knew I had my reasons. People were gossiping. Where there's smoke, there's fire. So I told her to stay home. I had to put out the flames.*²⁵⁷

As the eldest son of the family, Iskender has to shoulder all the burden of his family, which urges him to exert his masculine power to protect the honour of the family. The same male authority is imposed on Pembe by other male members of the family. Tariq who criticizes Pembe's dissatisfaction and ungratefulness as a wife and sees her as the main reason for the break-up with Adem now functions as the honour protector: "Tariq would have to keep a close eye on Pembe and the kids. They shared the same surname. If one of them was disgraced, shame would attach itself to him as the oldest Toprak. Their honour was his honour"²⁵⁸. Pembe, instead of resisting the power exercised by her son over herself, she has emerged as a self-regulating subject since she has internalised all of the sanctions of her society and her son. Unfortunately, those commitments without questioning the culturally assigned female and male roles make her vulnerable. As a result, Pembe has become the embodiment of the womanhood that creates its own killer.

²⁵⁵ Foucault, M. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon, 1980.

²⁵⁶ Banu Akçeşme, "Comparative Discourse Analysis of Gender Constructions in the Novels of Robert Heinlein, Ursula Le Guin, Joanna Russ and Samuel Delany". METU, Ankara, 2010.p.17.

²⁵⁷ Shafak, p.50

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p.154.

İlknur Meşe also mentions how women are conditioned to position themselves as a slave, a docile entity in the masculinized cultural system instead of challenging it:

Woman has tried to negotiate her secondary position by aspiring the power of man. In this sense, we can assess woman's wish for a male child as a wish of legitimate power. Her wish of compensating her helplessness with the power attributed to man has no benefit other than creating another victimhood.²⁵⁹

Thus, the patriarchal structures and relations in a society enable men to establish dominance and control over women. However, men could also be the victim of the patriarchy. Shafak highlights the fact that from the very beginning of the novel Iskender has the struggle between the good and the evil inside as can be seen in the case of a bird: he “caught it between his palms and listened to its tiny heart beat against his skin. He could have sheltered the bird, loved and protected it, but in one swift movement he could also have broken its neck”²⁶⁰. The cultural teaching and ethical codes of a society are very significant for revealing human's good or bad sides. It has been taught to Iskender that even if you love someone deeply, you are also expected to hurt them, when necessary. Even the tenderest minded of the Toprak family, Yunus has learned that he should have no hesitation to hurt his mother if this is what is required. Upon seeing a tattoo on the body of her son, Pembe warned Yunus for not doing this again but Yunus is very critical of his mother as well when family's honor is concerned: *“I am not the stained one... You are stained. I saw you with another man on the street. Actually you have stained yourself”*²⁶¹

Being rebellious by nature, when Iskender is agitated and sharpened by the society, he feels obliged to kill her own mother when he has learned the innocent affair between Pembe and Elias:

Neighbours said, though they remained married, Adem and Pembe Toprak no longer lived together. ‘But when the father is absent like that the mother's honour is guarded by the eldest son, which in this case was Iskender,’ said an eyewitness.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ İlknur Meşe, “Motherhood Creating its Killer: Based on Elif Shafak's Novel Alexander Questioning the Masculinity and Femininity Roles in Turkey”. *International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* Volume 8/3, Winter 2013: p.400.

²⁶⁰ Shafak, p.28.

²⁶¹ Ibid, p.281.

²⁶² Ibid, p.72.

Iskender's uncle, Tariq's incitement seems one of the fundamental motivations behind this murder. Tariq has experienced the shame and disgrace that could ruin the family's honour if his mother ran away with another man. Hence, he does not want the Toprak "family to have a bad reputation as honour was all that some men had in this world"²⁶³. Throughout the novel, Tarık stands for the embodiment of strong traditionalism and blind faith in the cultural practices of his own culture although he grew up in a Western culture: He "never allows his wife to work in a distant place among strangers"²⁶⁴. To instigate Iskender for murder, in addition to providing the knife, Tariq continuously tells about how man is dishonoured when family's honour is stained: "A man who had been cheated of the honour that was his due was a dead man. You could not walk on the Street any more, unless you got used to staring at the pavement"²⁶⁵.

Tariq also shows a great effort to remain loyal to his traditions and cultural codes by praising his own culture and complaining about the corruption in Western culture in his comparison of the two cultures. At the centre of this comparison there is an image of a Western woman: "The English didn't understand these ancient rules. Their wives could kiss other men, drink and dance with strangers, and they would look on smiling."²⁶⁶ And for the Westerners, the Eastern way of measuring the honor of the family through the chastity and purity of the female members of the family is quite a mistake. After the murder of Pembe they evaluate the event in such a perspective: "It is a growing cancer in modern society,' the spokeswoman added, 'given that in numerous communities the honour of the family is deemed to be more important than the happiness of its individuals"²⁶⁷. This highlights the fact that patriarchy cannot be overcome by the non-Western women even if they live in a foreign culture away from their native land.

Throughout the book, Pembe has no specific assault because of her ethnicity except from the racist attitude of the pastry shop. Thus, as a non-Western female character, Pembe has

²⁶³ Ibid, p. 153.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p.150

²⁶⁵ Ibid, p.154.

²⁶⁶ Shafak, p.154.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, p.72.

never experienced racial discrimination similar to those in *White Teeth*, who are always under attack of a discrimination either because of their religion or skin colour:

Now Pembe had never confronted a racist before and the idea that someone could hate one another person because of their skin colour, religion or class was an alien to her snow in August. Not that complete strangers had never mistreated or belittled her, but those instances were all due to temporary flare ups, or so they had seemed, rather than preconceived judgements over which she had no control. ²⁶⁸

b) Esma

Esma is another important character to provide insight into the non-Western female representation in the novel of *Honour*. Esma's position in the novel differs from the other characters, she is both a character and a narrator; we are told most of the events from her point of view. The author conveys her ideas through Esma. In other words, Esma is the mouthpiece of the author throughout the novel and this situation is reflected with her desire to be a writer throughout the novel. Esma suffers from the identity crisis caused by the conflict between the east and the west as well as the familial conflicts, family pressure, especially Iskender's pressure, lovelessness and negligence.²⁶⁹

Esma can be resembled to the character Irie in *White Teeth*. Similar to Esma, also Irie is the voice of the conscience of the writer, Zadie Smith. However, it is not proper to say that Esma is a total replicate of Irie as the former character does not suffer from multi-ethnicity or hybridity but she fails to make herself fit into a patriarchal order. While Irie's problem was her ethnicity and her physical appearance that makes her otherness obvious in the British society, Esma's disorientation arises from her gender crisis since she has been treated as a second class person because of her sex in her family and culture but not from the things that England tries to acculturate.²⁷⁰ Although she has tried to change her gender role many times, she cannot overcome the patriarchy in her culture. Esma is one of the prominent non-Western female characters in *Honour* choosing to be voice of the "those who hear, those who see"²⁷¹. In a literary discourse analysis with Zileli, Shafak reveals her ideas about Esma;

²⁶⁸ Ibid,p.110.

²⁶⁹ Aydođdu, p.161.

²⁷⁰ Seda Arıkan, "White Teeth ve İskender'de Yakınlaşmalar ve Kopuşlar", *Ayraç* 24,2011, p. 9

²⁷¹ Elif Shafak, *Honour*, 2011, Prologue.

(Esma) is of extreme importance for me. In fact she is the narrator partly. She is criticizing her mother, she does not want to be like her. She gets angry with her mum as she does not intervene into the situations. As readers we feel it; if only the women were a little stronger.²⁷²

Esma is particularly chosen by the author to narrate the events through the eyes of a woman. As a matter of fact, Esma is a very essential character to bring the case of non-Western women in the west. In comparison to female characters in *White Teeth* who fail to be part of British culture, the female characters in *Honour* cannot overcome the patriarchal problems that result from their culture. In other words, through Esma we see that in *Honour* the females do not suffer from the problems concerning ethnicity or racism but from the paternalistic system that they have brought to England with them.

Esma is the only daughter of a Turkish – Kurdish family and she is exposed to all sanctions of a male dominated culture. Even if she is represented as “a fourteen – fifteen years old girl”, she is aware of the discrimination that she has been exposed to just because of her gender. Unlike the other male members of the family, she has been restricted and limited in several ways: “Yet she didn’t impose the same rules on my brothers. Yunus was still too little, but with İskender she was totally different, open. İskender didn’t need to be careful. He could just be himself. No holds barred”²⁷³.

Within a Foucauldian approach, Esma is not a docile body that accepts to be managed by the male-dominated system of her culture. As we can see, the power in a patriarchal system is directly associated with masculinity. Esma does not resign herself to the norms and restrictions of the rule-makers, İskender and her mother. She is a resisting subject that rebels against the existing values of her society that obviously supports the male dominancy over female: “After all, snails were hermaphrodite, having both female and male reproductive organs. If only God has modelled us on snails”²⁷⁴. She cannot comprehend why the sex of an individual has to determine who you are. Especially, as she gets older, the strict rules of her mother who also functions as the embodiment of the

²⁷² Irmak Zileli, Elif Şafak’la Söyleşi; En Zoru İskender Olmaktı. Remzi Kitabevi Kitap Gazetesi, Ağustos 2011

²⁷³ Şafak, p.185.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, p.185.

patriarchal system, become more oppressive. After she has her first period, Pembe's unfair attitude towards her increases:

...but all changed the moment my breasts started to bud and I had my first period. The only thing she was interested in now was my virginity. She was always preaching about the things I should never / ever not even in my wildest dream do.²⁷⁵

Esma's observations and evaluations are extremely crucial to comprehend the mother-son relationship between Pembe and İskender and the events that lead to the honour killing. Esma sees her mother as the main responsible for the murder because Pembe herself created the murderer with her hand while trying to make İskender fit into the norms of a male-dominated culture. Yunus, the youngest member of the family also criticizes his mother's way of bringing up her children:

*But he was the eldest, said Yunus. You used to complain, that parents behave you differently, because you are a girl, and I wasn't pleased with being the youngest. But have you thought, maybe those days life wasn't easy for İskender. There was a huge pressure on him. Yeah, it must be hard to be a sultan.*²⁷⁶

The book started with a reference to this event in the narration of Esma: 'My mother has died twice. I promised myself I would not let her story be forgotten'²⁷⁷. When the narrative starts, Esma is on her way to pick up her elder brother İskender, the murderer after his fourteen year of imprisonment for murdering their mother. Esma, a non-Western female character emerges as the opposite character of her mother, Pembe. The author deliberately chooses to create various female characters to shed light on how education, society and culture one grows up in affect the characters' attitude, perceptions, behaviour and philosophy of life. Pembe also points out how different her children are from each other: "While İskender craved to control the world, and Esma to change it once and for all, Yunus wanted to comprehend it"²⁷⁸.

Esma, a second generation immigrant, is represented through performing a different role when compared to her mother. Because, she tries to harmonise with the society that she lives in unlike İskender and Pembe who fluctuate between the Eastern and Western

²⁷⁵ Ibid, p.184.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, p.331.

²⁷⁷ Shafak, p.1.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, p.62.

societies. But it is necessary to underline the awareness of Esma as she is conscious of her otherness in the English society. She is aware of her ethnicity and cultural codes. Still, she manages to be a part of the English society. Thus, it is possible to see Esma as a character who is adaptable and flexible as her own father describes her: “Esma was a Londoner through and through, and loved this country, this civilization”²⁷⁹. For Esma, living in London was not an overwhelming or very complex event but it was simple. What makes her life complicated was rather the discrimination and unjust treatment she has been exposed to in a family where the male supremacy and primacy have been internalized even by her mother, Pembe. No matter how hard Esma has tried to be a part of the English society, she cannot understand their culture completely since these cultures are so different as day and night. Esma’s passion to be a writer makes her a successful student and observer. Due to the attention and interest her parents have shown to İskender, Esma grows the feministic tendency to overcome her family’s indifference to her. Particularly, she cannot comprehend how a woman would grow up a son for the sake of the continuation of the male- domination. She has examined both of the cultures and realize the sharp distinctions between the customs and cultures of the East and the West;

The Barbies occasionally complained about their periods to their close and not-so close friends, to their boyfriends, to their mothers, and some to their fathers-the thought of which was enough to make me flinch. I wondered, and it was almost a scientific inquiry, how these things could differ so much from one culture to another, let alone from one household to another. If I had spoken about my periods to my mother, she would have turned red with shame.²⁸⁰

Although Esma has confronted some radical differences among the British and Kurdish-Turkish culture, she has the potential and ability to question and choose what is good and right for herself. That is to say, on contrary to her docilized and self-regulating mother, she rather chooses to be a resisting subject. Despite her traditional upbringing environment, she has adapted a critical mind to examine the events and happenings around her with more common sense and more objectively. The greatest handicap that she ever confronted is her family’s essentialist and sexist attitude in their child rearing which creates a sense of inequality and injustice: “Mum, this is not fair. İskender has his own room and he’s only a year older than me. Why do you give such privileges to him

²⁷⁹ Ibid, p.272.

²⁸⁰ Shafak, p.182.

just because he is a boy?”²⁸¹ With her questioning mind, she has examined the way the girls and boys are named according to their genders:

I often wondered why female names were so different from male names, more whimsical and dream like, as if women were unreal, a figment of one's imagination. Male names embodied power, ability and authority...women were decorations for this world, pretty trimmings on the side, but not too essential.²⁸²

Gender inequality in Esma's family has reached to such a point that Esma has tried to get rid of her gender identity several times in the novel. She wished to be born as a male instead of a female. The only place that she can be alone is the bathroom; that's why after everyone sleeps, she always withdraws herself in the bathroom. She has tried to change her gender through make-up: "I wondered, for the umpteenth time, what would like had I been born a boy instead. Grabbing a nut-brown eye pencil, I first thickened, then joined, my eyebrows. Next I began to draw a moustache above my lips"²⁸³ and in one another instance she was "Pleased with my moustache. I set out to draw a goatee o my chin"²⁸⁴.

Similar to Irie, Esma has expressed her dissatisfaction with her body. What differentiates Esma from Irie is the source of her obsessions with her body. For Irie, her body is a reflection of her hybridity, preventing her from connecting herself to the Western culture that she craves for. She has tried to adapt a British identity by straightening her curly hair. But for Esma, her body is the marker of her femininity that prevents her from participating in her patriarchal family order on the equal basis and she does not try to make any further changes on her body like Irie:

My nose was bulbous, my hair so curly it refused to be brushed down, and my fore head too wide. I had a mole on my chin, an ugly brown bump. Many times I had asked my Mum to take me to a doctor to have it removed, but it was one of those things she never paid attention to.²⁸⁵

Sometimes her problem concerning her gender identity shapes her future dreams, too. Even in her biggest dream, she wants to be a male writer with a male pseudonym; "I

²⁸¹ Ibid, p.278.

²⁸² Ibid, p.183.

²⁸³ Shafak, p.180

²⁸⁴ Ibid, p.183.

²⁸⁵ Ibid, p.185

wanted to be a writer but not a female one. I had even decided on my pen-name. John Blake ono- an amalgam consisted of my three favourite personalities. ... J. B. Ono. A name no need of bra”²⁸⁶ Within her family, she always feels her otherness. Even her physical appearance makes her feel alienated in her family: “Pembe was a beautiful woman- everyone said so. And my brothers were good-looking. It was unfair that in between two sons, the beauty gene had gone on holiday, skipping me”²⁸⁷.

c) Jamila

Jamila, the twin sister of Pembe is the character that the author deliberately constructed to reveal the endeavours of the female characters to exist and to have freedom in a society in which the dominancy of male is everywhere. It is possible to claim that Jamila is the most altruistic character in the novel in every aspect. Jamila is already thirty-two old, but single. She is rejected by her beloved one because of the uncertainty about her virginity, which demonstrates how Eastern women are idealized through the images of the chaste virgin or the veiled woman.²⁸⁸ It is a well-known fact that after reaching a certain age, it is very hard to marry and found a family. If a girl does not marry at a young age, only old, disabled men or a widower will be interested in her as a spouse: “Jamila was married to her destiny”²⁸⁹. A peasant in Jamila’s village describes her situation as follows: “A *dry womb is like a melon gone bad: fine on the outside, desiccated inside, and good for nothing*”²⁹⁰. By giving up on her own life, Jamila dedicates herself to the happiness of the other people around her. Even if they are twin sisters, Pembe and Jamila have completely different personalities.

Jamila has adopted a totally different manner towards life which has caused her to lose her lover Adem and to be doomed to live in the village until the end of her life. Jamila is the only member of the family that Pembe is still in connection with. Jamila is the dominant character who has symbolized the traditional and Islamic female identity in *Honour*. Religion is at the very heart of Jamila’s life and one of the main differences between these two women is their comprehension and practice of Islamic rules and ethics

²⁸⁶ Ibid, p.183.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p.184.

²⁸⁸ Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo & Lourdes Torres. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Indiana University Press,1991, p. 74.

²⁸⁹ Shafak, p.37.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, p.34.

though both of the characters seem quite religious at first sight. While Pembe's comprehension of Islam cannot go beyond not consuming alcohol or eating pork, Jamila has tried to be a true believer who submits her both soul and flesh to the path of the God.²⁹¹ Pembe's understanding of religion is shallower while Jamila has grasped the essence of the religion. Jamila stands for the enduring tradition while Pembe has tried to reconstruct her identity in between the different cultures - Turkish, Kurdish and British. In the very early part of the story, Jamila refuses to speak any other language while Pembe tries hard to learn Turkish.²⁹²

She has never accused Pembe of marrying Adem, the man that she has loved and desired to marry. Because of her religious side, she abstains from rebelling against God and believes in fate strongly: "If god wants it to happen, it will happen"²⁹³. Jamila is not as superstitious as Pembe, she sometimes consults Islamic tales to offer an explanation as can be seen in the example concerning their mother Naze. Having a son at first birth makes Pembe feel afraid and disturbed as she believes that her mother's soul may harm İskender. Upon having nightmares about her son, Pembe tells the situation to Jamila and she explains those dreams in terms of "djinn jinx"²⁹⁴. Thus, Jamila makes sense of everything in the light of her religious belief.

Both Jamila and Pembe end up in despair and misery in their attempt to make their own way in life. They desperately need each other for support but they only have letters to exchange. Pembe spends her days in a beauty parlour to earn her life while Jamila helps women as a midwife. Jamila lives in a complete seclusion, her sanctuary in the greenwood has no windows only a small trapdoor at the top. She has become a hermit who also provides relief and remedy to the sufferers. Jamila has locally acquired the reputation as the "Virgin Midwife". Since she is believed to be able to speak the language of animals, they call her as "A granddaughter of the Prophet Suleiman"²⁹⁵. With her special abilities, she is able to heal numerous mysterious illnesses. Similar to the situation of women in Western countries, female achievement has ignored and underestimated in Eastern countries, too. And the villagers interpret miracles of Jamila as follows: "It must be the

²⁹¹ Yağcı, p.6.

²⁹² Shafak, p.10

²⁹³ Shafak, p.200.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, p.20.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, p.172.

djinn who gave her the formulas for the remedies”²⁹⁶. This situation serves as an example to fixed attitude of mind of those adopting a male domination in a society. As it is underlined Russ, similar to Jamila’s incident, once female authors were belittled through insistence that “some ‘he’ had to write it, that is: *The man inside her wrote it*”²⁹⁷.

d) Hediye

Hediye is the last non-Western female identity who is mentioned at the beginning of *Honour* as the victim of honour killing before Pembe. Hediye, meaning a gift, is the eldest among the eight children in Pembe’s family. That’s why after the death of their mother Naze, she took all of the responsibility of the household including cleaning, cooking and care of her younger children. Even if she is portrayed as a minor character, she is important to display what happens to a female individual in a male dominated society if she violates the social, cultural and ethical rules. The consequences she is faced with are social exclusion and rejection, humiliation, disownment or death. Even repentance cannot be a solution in this case since those rules are strictly determined: “Hediye regretted what had happened. She was also frightened. But this was the only home she knew”²⁹⁸. After she has realised the mistake she did, compulsorily she turned back to her father’s home, as she did not have any other place to go. But she is aware of the fact that she is wanted to stay at home neither by her father nor stepmother: “But Hediye was different. Insecure, reserved, tongue-tied. Drawing her knees together, keeping her eyes cast- down, she sat at the edge of the divan; in her own house she was like a guest who wasn’t sure of being-welcomed”²⁹⁹.

Because of the conventional beliefs in honour killings, the girl and the boy who get involved in the extramarital affair are required to be murdered by one of the family members with the prosecutor’s own will without the requirement of the family court’s decision.³⁰⁰ And those honor killings unfortunately still subsist especially in the Eastern cities of Turkey. Hediye was forced to commit suicide for having run away with a man. This is her punishment since she has brought humiliation and disgrace to the family. Only

²⁹⁶ Ibid, p.174.

²⁹⁷ Joanna Russ, *How to Suppress Women’s Writing*, p.22

²⁹⁸ Shafak, p.265.

²⁹⁹ Ibid, p.265.

³⁰⁰ Osman Celbis - Bora Ozdemir - Mucahit Oruc - Mustafa Dogan - Mucahit Egri, “Evaluation of Honour Killings in Turkey”, *Medicine Science*, 2(2), 2013, p. 641

in this situation the father, Berzo, feels the absence of a son pathetically: “If I had a son, I’d ask him to kill you and clean our family's good name”³⁰¹. Because, in a male dominated society, in order to clean the dishonour a female member of the family has caused death is much more desirable and preferable: “I’d rather see the corpse of a daughter of mine in the Euphrates than have her bring me disgrace”³⁰².

3.3. Representation of Non-Western Women in Honour

a) Roxana

Roxana is one of the few Western female characters presented in the novel. She is an exotic dancer and prostitutes herself for money. Roxana is the woman for whom Adem leaves his family, which causes tragic results. Although she is actually from Bulgaria, Balkans, she pretends to be a Russian lady. She denies her ethnicity and cultural roots in order to popularize herself among the men in London: “If Roxana said she was from Bulgaria, they would nod tactfully and ask no more. But whenever she remarked she was born and bred in Russia, they would respond with a barrage of questions”³⁰³. She uses a nickname in her workplace to hide her real identity. She does not have an orderly life. Thus, she appears as the female character who cannot hold onto the life.

b) Rita

Rita, an Afro- American woman, is another westerner in the novel. She is not only the boss of the Crystal Scissor but also a dear friend of Pembe. Pembe is surprised of her physical appearance at first, but later she appreciates how friendly she is. She is a typical Jamaican woman with her physical features that perplex Pembe: “a tall black woman with huge bosom, chipped teeth, the biggest afro in the town”³⁰⁴.

c) Katie

Katie is an English girl who is introduced in *Honour* through her relationship with Iskender. She is a friend of Iskender in school, she is impressed by him during a fight caused by an outcast group in the buttry. Later she is heavily effected by Iskender, they

³⁰¹ Shafak, p.278.

³⁰² Ibid, p.194.

³⁰³ Shafak, p.59.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, p.108.

started see each other. Iskender is reflected as the Eastern rooted man who does not know his own culture entirely. His partial selectivity of the cultural codes caused him to be father of a child in his affair with Katie, which is completely in a conflict with the creeds of his religion and culture. Like Irie's child in *White Teeth*, the child of Katie and Iskender is portrayed as a hybrid child because of the different ethnicities of the parents, a Turkish-Kurdish father and an English mother. While Katie tries to find a name for the child "Maggie, Christine, Hilary. If boy, Tom"³⁰⁵. Iskender is uninterested in that. Similar to *White Teeth*, due to Iskender's confinement, Katie gets married to another man in order to take care of her child as Irie does.

3.4. Dielectical Connection and Interaction among Western and Non-Western Women Characters

In a global world, through the wars, catastrophes, climatic changes and because of the other factors, people are obliged to find new living spaces for themselves. And this situation results in one of the agonizing events of the last centuries that is immigration. Migration has caused dramatic changes for the countries. Unquestionably, the migration process affects all humanity but the real victims of this process have been women and children. Countless research have been conducted to reveal how the process of integrating into other cultures has influenced women and their family. Especially for non-Western and Muslim women it has been much more compelling to harmonize with the customs, morals and the ethics of the western world that they are expected to be a part of.

In this part of the thesis, it was aimed to put emphasis on the sociological, cultural and psychological changes that affect the behaviour of non-Western women as a consequence of their interaction with Western women in the novel *Honour*. In the novel *Honour*, there are several female characters whose endeavours to gain an identity can be observable through their actions. Although most of the female characters are Eastern rooted, there are also some other Western female characters, too. In each of those character's identity formation, their backgrounds and ethnicities take an essential place in defining themselves. Similar to Shafak's other novels, *Honour* presents women of different cultures, religions and nationalities even if the emphasis is placed on the Turkish women. Unfortunately, *Honour* does not offer a lot of female characters belonging to different

³⁰⁵ Ibid, p.49.

cultures and ethnicities. Shafak obviously wants to shed light on the current position of non-Western women including Turkish, Kurdish identities rather than western females. Thus, in the novel there are not many examples to compare and contrast Western and non-Western women effectively.

At the very root of this lack of communication between Eastern and Western rooted there lies the lasting male dominancy over the eastern rooted character. The Western context is not be able to provide the freedom, equality and justice that the non-Western women need as they could not surpass the patriarchal family system within themselves. The most obvious example to this problem appears with the Uncle Tariq's wife; Meral who is one of the minor characters of the novel. Although she has lived in London for a long time, still she is not be able to speak and communicate with other as her husband does not let her to involve in social life. For other characters it is not likely to see them in a direct interaction with the Westerners. Most of the time, as readers we see the effects of their own observation through the wWestern society. In the case of Pembe, a similar situation to Meral's can be observable, too. Although having lived in London for years, she still is not be able to express herself easily as she is constrained between her work place and home. However, in comparison with her sister-in-law, Meral, Pembe shows somehow passive resistance against the male dominancy by overlooking the existence of the patriarchy in her family.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, two contemporary novels, *White Teeth* and *Honour* have been studied. Today, in various multicultural countries, the life has been unbearable for many immigrants. Especially for the third world women, along with the sanctions performed by the male power in their own society because of the traditional gender identities, marginalisation that they experience in the immigrated countries has brought about the double oppression. The increasing Islamophobia and racial discrimination against the women of once colonized countries have obliged women to withdraw in their own shells more and more in recent years. The otherization process against the Muslim identities is still conducted through the orientalist attitude of the Western culture. For black women, this otherization is conducted through the racial and ethnical discrimination just because of their skin colour. Women are described as the oppressed and exasperated by the male dominance and need the western for freedom.

In both of the novels under study in this thesis, various cultures, ethnicities and religions coexist which make the novels appropriate for the study of the present situation of those women at the heart of multiculturalism. The characters in both novels are exposed to the otherization process because of the male dominance in their own culture and the marginalization because of the racist attitudes of the Western people. In the Western literature Eastern women have been represented as sexual and mysterious objects that constitute the binary opposition that serves the West to define itself against the East. Starting from the *Arabian Nights* the typology of Eastern women appear as fribble and seducing. Eastern women have been one of the most recurring subjects in the works of the Western rooted female authors. However, there are not a lot of studies concerning the non-Western writers' attitude towards the eastern women. This study has aimed to investigate how the female identities, especially non-Western females belonging to the third world countries are treated in the novels whose writers share non-Western roots.

Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* and Elif Shafak's *Honour* have been examined in order to focus on the representation of non-Western women in the non-Western female authors' novels in comparison with the Western female characters. The tendency has been long to represent non-Western women through the works of western writers. Thus, most of the written products have been shaped with an oriental attitude which sees the non-Western women as the inferior other. While analysing both of the novels, various social interactions are taken into consideration by focusing on culture, race, gender, economy, geography and history as the leading determining forces that shape power and ideological human relations between the European and Non-European characters within the same and across nations. For the analysis of the novels, the theories of Foucault and Bhabha have been utilised.

Foucault sees power as a "complex flow – a set of relations between the different groups, which changes with circumstances and time"³⁰⁶. In this study, it has been figured out that unfortunately, especially in Eastern cultures, the male dominancy is a very preconceived system that is transferred through father to son and unfortunately in some of the cases women are victimized by being a part of this transfer. For Foucault, history is not something single and sole, rather it is quite multiple and overlapping. Foucault suggests that "Women and indigenous people and colonized people have all traditionally been marginalized within such historiography"³⁰⁷. For the analyses of the identity formation of female characters, Foucault's concepts of subject and subjectivity have been utilized while categorizing them as either docile/ self-regulated or resisting identities. The male power exercised over the women have been examined as the institutionalized power. Bhabha has been benefited for his ideas related to hybridity and the third space. The hybrid identities are examined through his idea of hybridity that forms a place for those in between. Also, Bhabha's concepts hybridity and third space are made use of to show the characters development in creating a new living space for themselves in the multicultural environment of London.

At first glance, both of the novels seem to be constructed on the similar ground. However, after a comprehensive analysis of the female identities, it is obvious that there are some striking differences among two novels. The most obvious one is that the source of the

³⁰⁶ Geoff Danaher, Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, *Understanding Foucault*, 2000: p. 86

³⁰⁷ Foucault, p.103.

arduousness experienced by the individuals tremendously varies; while Shafak's female characters suffer mostly from the patriarchy rather than alienation or otherization, Smith's characters have to confront a lot of various problems including racism, east – west clash, assimilation and hybridization. The reason behind these differences may arise out of the writers' own life experiences and their different ethnicities. Shafak, as a white writer who was educated in the Western countries, cannot narrate the real life experiences of discrimination and racism that a black woman is exposed to like Smith. Smith, on the other hand, who has a hybrid identity with a dark skin colour, skilfully and vividly presents the current situation of those people at the centre of racial discrimination. Thus, we can draw the conclusion that while dealing with the representation of non-Western female identities, the writers' own true life experiences and personal histories determine their way of handling the characters. Although the most fundamental issue to deal with emerges as the problems of the immigrants in Europe in both novels, the problems the characters suffer from are quite different. While Shafak's characters mostly fail to overcome their familial problems like gambling and adultery, the main problems depicted in *White Teeth* come out as assimilation, loss of identity and degeneration of the culture.

White Teeth, the first novel examined in this thesis, was published before *Honour*. It is more multicultural and has successfully portrayed the hardships experienced by the non-Western female characters in London. One of the crucial points that is highlighted in *White Teeth* is that colonial activities did never come to the end, as also suggested by Bhabha. However, with all of the problems that the characters are faced with in their identity crisis such as harassments, racial discriminations, verbal and physical attacks, Smith demonstrates the immigrant problems are everywhere and the Western discourse cannot tolerate any other alternative identities including various religions and skin colours. And, unfortunately, for the female characters the maltreatment they are exposed to has doubled. Within Spivak's words, who relates postcolonialism with feminism, there is a "double suppression of South Asian women who were suppressed by colonialism and patriarchal traditions of their home countries."³⁰⁸

White Teeth has presented its reader with an extremely vivid life portrait of those immigrants coming to England in search of a better life and how the host country cannot meet their expectations by always reminding them of their otherness almost in every

³⁰⁸ As quoted in Sylvia Hadjetian p. 64.

situation. *White Teeth* displays a more realistic environment for analysing the representations of Eastern females. Smith, since she herself is a hybrid identity with a dark colour skin, has been able to reveal the third world women's struggles to have an identity. Generally in the Western discourse the third world women are mostly described as uneducated, poor, ignorant, illiterate, and extremely bounded to customs and traditions imposed on them. As a result of these qualifications, women belonging to underdeveloped countries are victimized and they could not go beyond their shells. At the beginning of the novel, as readers, we see a similar attitude towards the non-Western females. However, in the following parts of the novel, the attitude of the author towards the Eastern rooted women has changed. From the Foucauldian perspective, the submissive female identities are changed into resisting subjects. According to Foucault, "one of the reasons that people are able to resist the forces of power is precisely because people recognize this"³⁰⁹. In this thesis the male power is rendered as the dominant group exercising power over the female ones. Because, the knowledge and truth about women are produced out of power struggles of men. And female bodies are mostly utilised through bio-power for the sake of producing more self-regulating subjects. In *White Teeth*, living in the western society has increased self-consciousness among the third world women. Especially through Alsana, who appears as a quite submissive and docile entity at first, her change into a resisting subject is depicted gradually. Even with an ironical approach, Smith makes Alsana a more powerful woman who beats her husband in their fights. Alsana grows into a liberated subject by refusing the conventional social gender construction.

Another female identity, who is at the centre of the discrimination due to her blackness, Clara has shown the readers the ongoing effects of colonialism along with how the Western discourse has sacrificed the Eastern to describe themselves within a system of binary oppositions. Clara is one of the main characters that Smith has intentionally created to show the social and cultural contradictions between the colonizer and ex-colonized. Clara, a black Jamaican immigrant marries an English man to escape from the cultural sanctions and limitations imposed by men and the beliefs of Jehovah's witnesses. The otherness experienced by black women is analysed under the influence of Said's concepts of Orientalism. The marriage between Clara and Archie has increased the racist discrimination against her as she is seen as a stain on the pure English identity. Smith,

³⁰⁹ Geoff Danaher, Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, p.79.

through Clara and other black characters, criticizes those in search of a pure identity after a long – term of postcolonial experiences. As stated by Bhabha a pure identity is impossible to attain in a postcolonial context.

It can be suggested that Irie reflects Smith herself in the novel. With Irie, Smith has revealed the sufferings of the second generation immigrants, especially those of black people. However, in spite of all the challenges the character confronts, at the end she has succeeded to discover her own identity through investigating her roots and history. In other saying, she has created an alternative hybrid identity by building a bridge between her roots and the English culture. And Smith, via the character like lesbian Neena, has demonstrated that non-Western female identities can subvert the social gender roles that are imposed on them when they have the freedom to choose. In line with Butler’s performativity theory, it is underlined that genders are not natural but ideologically and culturally constructed to serve the interests of the dominant groups. That is to say, related to the representation of the non-Western women in *White Teeth*, Smith has adopted not a biased attitude but rather a realistic one. Almost every non-Western female character in the novel has achieved to find a way for herself in this Western context to reconstruct her identity.

In *Honour*, as a feminist writer, Shafak has touched on various problems of the women living in Turkey. At first view, the novel seems to be dealing with the honour-killing which is formed through the sanctions of male-dominated society. Although living in the twenty-first century, there are still people exercising the honour killing for the sake of keeping male domination at the top of their culture. However, Shafak insists that unless there is not any change in the patriarchal structures and mind-set, it is not possible to create a world that is liveable for women. In an interview with Zileli, Shafak states that;

For us, most of the things that we read through the newspapers are only news. They are only ordinary names for us. There are a lot of stories behind those news. In those stories, there is a great deal of melancholy and breaking points. I just want to investigate those things closely.³¹⁰

³¹⁰ Zileli, “Elif Şafak’la Söyleşi: *En Zoru İskender Olmaktır*”. <http://www.elifsafak.us/roportajlar.asp?islem=roportaj&id=366>

Honor killing is used as a symbol of all of the practices and conventions employed to suppress women. Shafak has successfully considered the society's norms, ethics and moralities with various aspects. While criticizing the male dominance that makes the female as an inferior sex within the society, Shafak also portrays men as the sufferers of patriarchy, too. *Honour*, especially through the male characters including Berzo, İskender and Adem, demonstrates how the cultural codes of a society can create strong misogyny against even their most beloved females in their families. Berzo, as a traditional Kurdish man depicted in a very unconventional way. He wants his daughters to be educated and earn their own salary in case of divorcing. And he is not obsessed with the idea of having a son unlike his wife Naze. But the people in his own environment insist on the unnecessary of educating the girls and trusting their daughters as they will abandon him when they get married. And also the society makes him ashamed of not having a son when one of her daughters elope with a man.

And for the case of İskender, he is obliged to kill her own mother for the sake of honour. Because after Adem leaves the house, the social gender role that is attributed to İskender makes him resign to the norms of the society and he ends up in killing his mother. The relationship between Pembe and İskender is noteworthy, Shafak has harshly criticized also this non-Western woman because of her attitude toward his son. From his birth to his attempt of killing her, Pembe has tried to rear her son according to the norms and expectations of the patriarchal society. İskender has always had a privilege over the other children as he fulfils the long-term expectation of Pembe, who is the daughter of a family longing for a baby boy. As her mother Naze died during her ninth delivery, it is really important for Pembe to have a son at her first delivery. Actually, Shafak puts an emphasis on the necessity of altering the mind-sets of women first as they are the creators of the new society. However, the preconceived patriarchy of the Turkish-Kurdish society has been so internalised that desperately women submit to this power. At this point, Esma, as the representative of the second generation immigrant, encourages hope with her self-assured attitude towards this male hegemony. As a non-Western female, she symbolizes the hybridity in which one does not have to leave her own identity. Shafak, as different from the stereotypical description of non-Western female identities in a Western country, presents Esma as an Eastern rooted character who forms a new self for herself through education. She has been aware of the discrimination exercised by her mother among her

children. When İskender attempts to kill his mother, Esma feels very sorry for her mother as she has created her own killer. Shafak has criticized the first generation immigrant non-Western women in *Honour* because of their contribution to the maintenance and the continuation of male dominance in their culture.



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