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LOUISE ERDRICH VE TONI MORRISON'UN ESERLERİNDE
POST-FEMİNİST ÖĞELER

YÜKSEK LİSANS

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VAN, 2019

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VAN YÜZÜNCÜ YIL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

**POST-FEMINIST ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS OF LOUISE
ERDRICH AND TONI MORRISON**

M.A THESIS
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KABUL ve ONAY SAYFASI

LALE SOUKSU MEHRALİYEVA tarafından hazırlanan “ **POST-FEMINIST ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS OF LOUISE ERDRICH AND TONI MORRISON** “ adlı tez çalışması aşağıdaki jüri tarafından **OY BİRLİĞİ / OY ÇOKLUĞU** ile **Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalında YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ** olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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**LOUISE ERDRICH ve TONI MORRISON'un ESERLERİNDE
POSTFEMİNİST UNSURLAR**

ÖZET

Yirminci yüzyılın sonlarında kültürel, akademik ve politik bağlamda ortaya çıkan post-feminizmin belirli bir tanımı yoktur. Aslında, birçok eleştirmen ve akademisyen bu terimin çeşitli tanımları için farklı iddialarda bulunmuş ve farklı anlamlar tahsis etmişlerdir. Bu anlamda, popüler kültürün ve edebiyatın eleştirel çalışmaları, edebiyatın post-feminist kadın ideolojilerini oluşturmasında nasıl rol oynadığını anlayabilmemiz için çok önemlidir. Postfeminizmin nihai bir tanımı olmadığı için, post-feminist bağlamları edebiyatta analiz etmek ve post-feminist kurgunun özelliklerini ve tipolojisini tanımlamak bu bakımdan büyük önem taşır. Yüzlerce kitabın yazıldığı ve çalışmaların yapıldığı feminizmden farklı olarak, mevcut çalışma için kaynak bulmak oldukça zor. Edebiyat alanında, post-feminist edebiyat üzerine yapılan çalışmaların büyük çoğunluğu post-feminist edebiyatını 'yavru edebiyat' veya 'piliç edebiyatı' olarak tanımlanan 'chick lit' olarak tanımladığını fark ediyoruz. Bu çalışmanın önemi, akademik düzeyde kabul edilen yazarların eserlerini inceleyerek eserlerindeki post-feminist yaklaşımları araştırmak ve tanımlamak olacaktır. Bu çalışma için seçtiğim yazarlar - Louise Erdrich ve Toni Morrison - edebiyat alanında ve akademik düzeyde oldukça tanınan ve takdir edilen yazarlardandır. Amerikan edebiyatının en seçkin yazarları olarak bilinen bu yazarların eserlerinde post-feminist unsurları bulmak ve postfeminizmin bu yazarların eserlerinde nasıl temsil edildiğini araştırmak tezin esas gayesidir.

Bu yazarlar, okuyucuya tarihi batılı olmayan gözlerle bakmalarına izin veren ve hakim tarihin çok ötesinde alternatif tarih tasvir ettikleri için meslektaşlarının

birçoğundan farklıdır. Aynı zamanda, feminist ideolojiye birçok açıdan meydan okuyan bahsiçeçen yazarların eserleri postfeminizmin üç ana temasına göre; post-feminist kadınlık, post-feminist erkeklik ve post-feminist annelik temsilini araştırılacak.

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**POST-FEMINIST ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS OF LOUISE
ERDRICH AND TONI MORRISON**

ABSTRACT

Postfeminism as a term has emerged in a cultural, academic, and political context in the late twentieth century. Notwithstanding, many critics and scholars have claimed and appropriated the term for a variety of definitions, indeed, the term has no one single definition. The critical study of popular and culture and literature is necessary in order to understand how popular literary works to establish post-feminist ideologies of womanhood. Since there is no ultimate definition of postfeminism it is important to analyze post-feminist contexts in literature and try to define the characteristics and typology of post-feminist fiction. Unlike feminism which hundreds of books were written and studies are done, it is a bit hard to find recourses for the current study. In the literary context some studies have been done in post-feminist fiction, however, we can notice that these studies are mostly defined post-feminist literature as chick lit – nonserious, popular culture - literature. The significance of this study is that, in this thesis, I will try to analyze the works of authors accepted in academic level. The authors I chose are highly recognized and glorified in the literary and academic level. The post-feminist elements in the works of two prominent writers of America – Louise Erdrich and Toni Morrison - and explore whether and how postfeminism represented in their works. These writers differ from many of their counterparts as they depict alternative history far away from dominant perceived history allowing the reader to see the history through nonwestern eyes. They also challenge feminist ideology in a number of ways. I will analyze the works according

to three themes – post-feminist representation of femininity, post-feminist representation of masculinity, and post-feminist representation of maternity.

Keywords: Postfeminism, feminism, femininity, masculinity, popular culture, maternity

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INTRODUCTION

The foundation of this thesis is the term postfeminism and its reflection to literature. Postfeminism as a term has emerged in a cultural, academic, and political context in the late twentieth century. Notwithstanding, many critics and scholars have claimed and appropriated the term for a variety of definitions, indeed, the term has no one single definition. In the academic level, there are several definitions of postfeminism and plenty of discussions over the issue. The term definition varies from a conservative backlash of feminism, Women Power, and postmodern/poststructuralist feminism. As for Yaszek postfeminism come into existence as original ideas of feminism has been achieved or resolved, and now it seems to be outdated (Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 13). The prefix 'post-' in the term 'postfeminism' implies that postfeminism came after the feminist movement, but in reality, postfeminism has no genealogical relationship to feminism. (13). Angela McRobbie support the idea;

Post-feminism positively draws on and invokes feminism as that which can be taken into account, to suggest that equality is achieved, in order to install a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasize that it is no longer needed, it is a spent force (McRobbie, 2004: 255).

The problem with the definition of postfeminism lies in the fact that unless countless feminist writers there is no self-proclaimed post-feminist writers. Even the writers who considered as post-feminist such as Camille Paglia, Katie Roiphe, and Naomi Wolf, have been labeled so by other people. Before indulging deeply into postfeminism as a theory and literary stream the first chapter will serve as a timeline of feminism and give an overview of its stances. Further, the second chapter analyses the post-feminist theory and introduces possible definitions by prominent scholars and critics such as Naomi Wolf, Susan Faludi, Ann Brook, Angela McRobbie, and others. The third chapter will deal with postfeminism at a literary level. I am going to analyze contemporary American post-feminist women writers and their work. For this purpose, I chose two prominent novels all written by women in the post-feminist period. Louise Erdrich, an American Indian writer and her novel *Tracks*, Nobel Prizewinner Toni

Morrison an African American and her novel *Beloved* will be analyzed from post-feminist perspective.

The analysis of popular and post-feminist culture and literature is vital for understanding how popular literary works to establish post-feminist ideologies of womanhood. Since there is no ultimate definition of postfeminism it is important to analyze post-feminist contexts in literature and try to define the characteristics and typology of post-feminist fiction.

In a literary context some studies have been done in post-feminist fiction, however, we can notice that these studies are mostly defined post-feminist literature as chick lit – nonserious, popular culture - literature. Many scholars define post-feminist literature as contemporary popular literature novels published from the mid-1990s. This literature depicts the shift in woman characters and ideology. We no more see a single victim woman struggling to prove her equality in patriarchal society, or a woman trying to escape patriarchal oppression in her life. Now we read about single lives of free, financially independent women who are in search for Mr. Right and building her family. These novels mostly focus on society and culture, frequently satirically. Novels tie romance with mostly marriage plot and may join subjects in marital union. “Postfeminism trades on a notion of feminism as rigid, serious, anti-sex and romance, difficult and extremist”, in contrast, offering “pleasure and comfort”- postfeminism operates with irony, “rejection of feminist-inflected working women carrier paradigms”, “glorification and commodification of pregnancy” (Genz & A.Brabon, 2009:7)

The significance of this study is that, in this thesis, I will analyze the term of postfeminism apart from chick lit literature. The novels of two prominent American writers will be investigated for the purpose of exploring post-feminist elements in their works.

CHAPTER I

1.1. Outline of Feminism

Although the term feminism is commonly used in public and academic areas, it is still confusing and difficult to define. Despite the fact that many people seem to get influenced by this notion, it has by no means clear definition and identification. The lack of clarity of the term, its diversity and complexity result limited knowledge which in many ways turns to misrepresentations and prejudices. Feminism is about gender equality but what this equality looks like and what is an ideal society for this equality differs as for the variety of approaches to feminism. In fact, feminist writers and scholars often seem to be reluctant to give the term definite identification with the fear of to put the concept into the limited frame with the inclusion of some and exclusion of others.

The term originated in France, began commonly used in the 1890s. The meaning of the term varied over time, and its contemporary meanings differ from those of the 1890s. Glorified by some and denounced by others contemporary feminism appears to be still unidentified and troublesome topic in both academic and public spheres. To get the idea of feminism we must get insights into the approaches of feminism which commonly is labeled as stances of feminism. The stances such as liberal, Marxist/Social, radical, cultural, ecofeminist, postmodern need to be overviewed in order to provide more comprehension of the term. This chapter aims to give a short analysis of the theory along with its criticism of various stances of feminism as well as opposite opinions toward the term. The chapter will provide an overview of historical and theoretical phrases of feminism and important stances of feminism will be looked through. I aim to give a general overview of the term along with its criticism and oppositions.

1.2. Feminism as a Theory

The term and its definition have been widely discussed in an academic level and social level, however, we can observe hesitation by feminist theorists to give the exact definition of feminism because of the fear of drawing a narrow frame of who is

included to movement and who is not. Hence, it resulted in the confusion that led scholars and theorists disputing over feminist theory. In essence, feminism has become an umbrella term for various social and theoretical projects dealing with a concern of women status and condition. In general, feminism can be identified as the struggle for equality among women to as opposed to male domination that excludes women from 'human status', as a struggle for women identifying with women (Thompson, 2001: 14-16). David Simpson suggests that it is the intellectual-political effort beginning from the second wave of feminism (Simpson, 1994: 55).

The challenge in the definition of the term emerges not as a theory but as a conception of feminism in practice with defining principles and facets of feminism. For many, feminism means "to understand that before you are of any race, nationality, religion, party, or family you are a woman" (Greer, 1999: 8). No matter of various definition, feminism based on the idea that women are oppressed class and suffer from social injustices and prejudices and feminism intends to correct these social ills, as Karen Warren expresses: "Something is a feminist issue if an understanding of it helps one understand the oppression or subordination of women" (Warren, 1997: 4). Nevertheless, its relevance to women as a group and the existence of various strands of feminism lead to serious debates in defining the term. Lehrman puts it; "All feminism means the female half of human race should enjoy the same rights and have the same opportunities to fulfill those rights, as the male half" (Lehrman, 1997: 14). However, she also emphasizes that "How women exercise their rights and what they decide to do with their opportunities – these are matters of personal choice (p. 14) Feminism can be considered as the collective school of thoughts that aims to form ideal gender equality. But, what it looks like in reality and practice?"

To understand modern feminism, especially as it links to postfeminism, we need to look through the different strands of feminism, at least broadly. Further, I intend to discuss some key strands of feminism and overview the timeline analysis of historical and theoretical phases of feminism.

1.3. First Wave of Feminism

The era of the first wave mainly concerned with the struggle of women for the right to vote. Seneca Fall Convention held in 1848 is considered as the beginning of the period. In the Convention, the Declaration of Statement drafted by suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott was among the first accomplishments of first wave feminism. The signatories of the Declaration charged the laws and action for discrimination and restriction of women to the basic rights such as custody of their children in divorce case, higher education, property ownership etc. Originally, the movement's main focus was advocating equal contract and property rights for women, better working condition for under-aged and impoverished, later the activism directed mainly at achieving political power, especially suffrage rights for women. It is interesting fact that women suffrage campaign began during the abolitionist movement. Initially, the abolitionists like Frederic Douglas- run-away slave and political activist- Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton rallied for universal suffrage so that both man and woman, white and black would be enfranchised. However, The Fifteenth Amendment allowing only Black men to vote resulted from the conflicts and separation among these three prominent figures of abolitionists and women rights activists. Stanton and Anthony vigorously opposed Black man suffrage with the argument that white women did not want 'inferior' black man to 'rule over' her. This dispute resulted in exhaustion and disorder among members which led to split of American Equal Rights Association (AERA) into two separate groups - National American Women Suffrage Association (NSWSA) with the vast majority of white, elite women - and American Women Suffrage Association – with the majority of colored women. Susan B. Anthony, prominent suffrage activist and president of NSWSA crudely said: "I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman." The battle was ended with the implementation of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. However, as an outcome of the racist rhetoric of white women and their unwillingness to include colored women into the movement, the right to vote encompassed only white, elite women. Women of color such as aborigines and black had been left on the peripheries. From this perspective, beginning from the first foundation feminism lacked in the

practical implementation of its so-called universal principles such as universal sisterhood and corporation, as well as 'equality for all' notion. Consequently, the root of ambiguities of defining feminism as ideology and philosophy started from the first wave of the movement. Claiming equality while simultaneously ignoring the nuances of race, class, and gender continued its legacy in the second wave feminism as well.

1.4. Second Wave of Feminism

The second wave occurred during the 1960s and 1980s is considered the most remarkable period of feminism because most strands and theories of feminism evolve and flourished during the period of second-wave feminism. First, began in America in the early 1960s ultimately affected and circulated in most part of the Western World. Later, it turned out to be worldwide movement with strong roots in Europe and beginning from the 1980s it spread to some part of Asia such as Turkey, Israel (Badran, 2009: 227). While the first wave was dedicated to politics and setting aside legal obstacles of women, the second wave was focused on social, economic justice and fight for equality in all aspects of life, such as sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, de facto inequalities, and official legal inequalities.

Two important books-Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* influenced the ideology of feminism. French writer Simone de Beauvoir in her book examined the conception of women being apprehended as "other" and blamed women for her position in society. She argues the fact that the woman is capable of getting pregnant, lactating, and menstruating is a cause and explanation to place them as the "second sex" (Beauvoir, 1949). In essence, Friedan's arguments on the nature of motherhood affected the rise of the second wave.

Among the most important successes of the second wave was the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex as well as race President John F. Kennedy's Commission on the Status of women and legalizing abortion.

By 1960s feminism two groups, feminists emerged: equal rights feminists judged patriarchy as "institutionalized oppression of all women by all men" (Thornham, 2000: 31), demanding equality in the workplace and home. According to

radical feminists, the main sit of the oppression is the female body with its reproductive, breastfeeding abilities. Thus, as Firestone puts “ feminist Utopia is one in which reproductive technology will have removed the tyranny of sexual division based on biology” (31), and dedicated more radical shift in the patriarchal society like the deconstruction of traditional gender roles and start a literal feminist revolution.

The main criticism of the second wave was its racist attitude towards non-white, non-western women. Indeed, for a number of writers and scholars ‘Women rights movement’ did not recognize non-white, lower-class women. In the books such as *This Bridge Called My Back and All the Women Are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women’s Studies* by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa critiqued second-wave feminism for setting its focal point mainly on the problems and political, social positions of white, well- educated, upper-middle class of women. Indeed, for some critiques, the idea of universal sisterhood and collaboration so-called ‘unified feminist presence’ was, in fact, a false sense of unity. Furthermore, the sexist ideology of the second wave of feminism that perceives man as oppressors and scapegoats for all women problems, as well as degrading femininity and being female, turned out not to be applicable to many women lives. The ineffectiveness and failures of the second wave led the emergence of the new wave in the 1990s which is called the third wave of the movement.

1.5. Third Wave of Feminism

The Third Wave Feminism reportedly began with Rebecca Walker with her statement of ‘ I am the Third Wave’, which signaled the new movement as Noami Wolf states “ what is certain is something critical to the sustenance of patriarchy died in the confrontation, and something new was born” (Wolf, 1994: 5). “The origin of the third wave (...) is sometimes traced to Rebecca Walker's article, *Becoming the Third Wave*, in which she stated, ‘I am not a post-feminist. I am the Third Wave’” (K.Foss, A.Foss, & E.Domenico, 2013: 49).

There are some aspects of third-wave feminism that differentiate it from other waves. Third wave feminism is less focused on laws and political process and more on

individual identity. Without rejecting political activism, more stress is put upon one's "personal empowerment as a starting point for societal change.

Third wave feminism was influenced by academic criticism such as a postmodern and queer theory. Thus, third wave feminist is more aware of their language use and gender construct. As an example, the third wave empowers trans individuals that were ignored by most feminists. The key element of the third wave is intersectionality that previous waves lacked. Intersectionality, the term is defined by The Oxford English Dictionary as the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Intersectionality usually incorporates elements of queer theory and embraces various theory and ideologies including anti-racism, people of color, womanism, girl power, post-colonial (anti-imperialism) theory, postmodernism, transnationalism, cyberfeminism, ecofeminism, individualistic feminism, new feminist theory, transgender politics and a rejection of the gender binary.

1.6. Strands of Feminism

The feminist movement has divided into various 'strands' or school of thought within the waves of feminism. Each of these strands focuses on the problems and dilemmas of women from different perspectives and comes with the different resolution of correcting situation or inequality. There is considerable overlap between several feminist approaches with the variety of views, nevertheless, the distinctions between these perspectives help to clarify some of the major disputes within feminism (Ritzer, 2003: 56). The strands that discussed in this work amply encompass the main differences between feminism and the idea and theory, as well as criticisms behind them, contributes to forming the foundation of postfeminism.

1.6.1. Liberal Feminism

The Liberal feminism holds the idea that "(...) female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance to and success

in the so-called public world” (Tong, 2009: 2). The beginning of liberal feminism is pinpointed by Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

Unlike most strands of feminism that associated with the second wave feminism, liberal feminism based on the first wave suffrage movement. Known as one of the early feminism, it was influenced by natural rights philosophers such as John Locke. Liberalism theory based on the works of liberal theorists who declared equality and primacy of individual as natural rights of man. It was thought that liberalism gives these natural rights inherent to men, thus caused liberal feminism emergence that aimed to grant natural rights to women as well and achieve equality of sexes. In this perspective, the definition of liberal feminism is the equality of the individual regardless of gender. George Ritzer defines liberal feminism:

A feminist theory of inequality that argues that women may claim equality with men on the basis of an essential human capacity for the reasoned moral agency, (...) and gender equality can be produced only by transforming division of labor which is patriarchal and sexist (Ritzer, 2003: 128)).

Betty Friedan and Janet Radcliffe Richard are also considered important feminist figures that contributed to liberal feminist theory. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* stands out as the first popularization of liberal feminism during the second wave. According to liberal feminism, the main reason for women oppression is sex discrimination. A liberal feminist believes it is the lack of opportunity that there are few women in the fields of law, business, and medicine, and in order to eliminate discrimination and correct missed opportunities the woman position needs to be changed from private domestic world to public world (Messerschmidt, 1986: 26).

According to liberal feminism household duties such as childcare and housework degrades women and present an obstacle for women involved in the public sphere. Betty Friedan denigrates housework and encourages women to leave home and involve worthwhile activities in the public sphere. The problem with housework, according to Freidan, is that it is unpaid and valueless as it does not contribute to the marketplace. Housework “is not an adequate substitute for truly challenging work” as it is not “important enough to society to be paid for in its coin” (Friedan, 1963: 36). Susan Brown in her book *The Politics of Individualism* (1993) argues this notion of

what gives work value stating that “(Brown, 1993: 75) value is unmeasurable and therefore a just economic system cannot be based upon assigning relative value to work. In other words, work value cannot depend on the marketplace as it is something valued by an individual: “if work is judged by an individual to be worth doing it becomes valuable simply through that individual's consideration” (75).

Liberalist feminist judges the institution of marriage for existing gender inequalities. This theme is discussed in Jessie Bernard's study *The Future of Marriage* (1972). The author argues the notion that marriage generally benefits man more than women and married women rank high in all stress indicators, including heart palpitations dizziness, headaches fainting nightmares, insomnia, and fear of nervous breakdown, accordingly she proposes the liberal feminist ideal of egalitarian marriage.

A liberal feminist believes that before introduction to feminism women were empowered to be irrational and unthinking. The feminist writer Mary Wollstonecraft in her book *Vindication of the Rights of Women* argues that as women were not permitted to use their mental capacities and thus, they were left in “gilded cage” as prisoners (Whelehan, 1995: 29), and she can be free only when she has choices as people are free to the extent that they are in control of their own destinies, and not controlled by other people or other alien forces (Richards J.R., 1980: 55). In such manner, the aim of the feminist movement is to increase women choices “To give women freedom we must give them more choice, and then if they really do not want the things they are choosing now, like homes and families, those things will just die out without our having to push them” (57). In other words, according to this notion, if women would have been given choices, they would abandon their homes and families, and these institutions would eventually disappear. Liberal feminism is criticized by many scholars and writers for the excessive focus on women becoming like men and for the denigration of the importance of traditional female roles. On the contrary to liberal feminist thought, decades later, when all doors are open and choices are available to women, many women still choose their homes and families over careers. This demonstrates the fact that feminist vision of what women should want about their lives often conflicts with the goals and desires of many real women.

1.6.2. Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism is also rooted in first wave feminism as liberal feminism. Unlike liberal feminism that concentrates on domesticity as the main realm and problem of women, Marxist feminism deals with women's place in the labor market. The main focus is the marketplace economy and other impersonal factors by which cultures and economies built upon. On a whole, Marxism condemns capitalism for the unfair class system and likewise, Marxist feminism charges capitalism for both unfair class system as well as women oppression within the system. For Marxist feminism, biological difference is not the only factor of oppression, while it contributes to determining the social and sexual labor division, there are other social and historical factors that mainly influence the factor of oppression (Holmstrom, 1990: 79). In other words, they are more reasons of women oppression than just being female.

The ideology of Marxist feminism was strengthened during the 1960s within the period of second-wave feminism and demanded to restore and adjusting some parts of Marxist Theory. In particular, as women were imposed to the domestic life under the capitalist system, Marxism can not just concentrate on issues of politics and economics, rather it is transformed by Marxist feminists insisting that production should include not only class relations but gender relations as well (Gottlieb, 1987: 124). So Marxist feminism “In the most general terms it must be to identify the operation of gender relations as and where they may be distinct from, or connected with, the process of production and reproduction understood by historical materialism” (Barrett, 1980: 9).

According to Marxist feminist patriarchy and capitalism are interconnected to the traditional family structure. While exploitation and class division exists in the public sphere, male domination and women exploitation are part of the domestic realm. Male domination in the family leads to authoritarianism in society and the sexual labor division which in its turn results in the politically weak working class (Gottlieb, 1987: 128). Unequally of sexes in class society exist from the very first of its beginning and male “domination has been upheld and perpetuated by the system of private property, the state, the church and the form of family that served men’s interests” (Reed, 1971:

29). So, capitalist society promotes injustice and discrimination in every aspect of life causing inequality of women a natural factor (51).

1.6.3. Socialistic Feminism

Socialist feminism has its root to Marxist feminism but slightly differs from it in a number of ways. Socialist feminism “views itself as stepping in where other feminism ends” (Denison, 2007: 23). A goal of Marxist feminism – consciousness rising was recognized as lacking by socialist feminists and it established its goal to revolutionize the society in order to change women's second-class status. The goal of socialist feminism to raise consciousness about issues such as the origin of oppression and patriarchy and then suggest solutions to transform the capitalistic patriarchal structure.

Socialist feminists attempted to synthesize some aspects of radical feminism and Marxism into the theory that gave priority to neither capitalism (production) nor patriarchy (reproduction) but viewed them as equal (Messerschmidt, 1986: 27).

Capitalism regulates production, and patriarchy regulates reproduction. Capitalism and patriarchy are inextricably intertwined and inseparable. Zillah Einstein (1979) and Heidi Hartmann (1981) connects patriarchy and capitalism as equal interacting ‘dual systems’ and socialist feminists aim to explain the relationship between these two autonomous systems of exploitation and oppression (27). Women’s oppression doubled by capitalism and patriarchy and social feminists focuses these two oppressive mechanisms. Women's freedom lies in the transformation of society such as the destruction of class society and private property since they are tools of oppression for all women not only working-class men. For social feminist true revolution should free women with services such as 24 hours childcare, socially organized domestic duties, free education, and medical care. Thus, it is the society that needs to be transformed in order to gain equality for women. (Jagger, 1983: 186,190).

In a capitalistic society, women are oppressed because as domestic slaves they are forced to non-productive work that has no value in such a society. In this perspective family and marriage viewed as “relationship to slavery” with the women

on giving end (Delphy, 1977: 15). Socialist feminist views family as an oppressive patriarchal society with its ties in class society.

Just as the family is indispensable to class society, so the suppression of women is indispensable to the maintenance of the family system. If women were freed of responsibility for the care of children and allowed to enter the productive life of society on an equal footing with men, the family as we know it would cease to exist (Waters, 1972: 22).

Socialist feminist view family as an odious organization that nature and care current and future generation of workers. Family harms children as they are controlled by parents without the benefits of citizenships. Society is able to handle the needs now met by the family and thus women would free from their familiar oppression (Delphy, 1977: 52).

1.6.4. Radical Feminism

Radical Feminism is a revolutionary stance of feminism that challenged societal notions of womanhood. Radical feminism blame patriarchy in all social relations (Messerschmidt, 1986: 26). Patriarchy is the main cause for women state and status so the fight should be against an oppressive patriarchal system. Men hold primary power and predominate for simply being male is defined as patriarchy that controls everything from labor power to the sexuality of women (32). Men are viewed as the problem and men related institutions such as family and marriage should be abandoned and alternative lifestyles such as communal living and lesbianism promoted. The biology of women are indeed the reason of women discrimination and mistreatment. To be concise, the reproduction ability of women is a source of women oppression. Thus, biology should be eliminated as it is oppressive and causes sex distinctions (Whelehan, 1975: 70-74). In Redstockings Manifesto defines women's oppression:

Women are an oppressed class. Our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings, whose only purpose is to enhance men's lives (...). We identify the agents of our oppression as men.

Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism, etc.) are extensions of male supremacy: men dominate women; a few men dominate the rest. All power structures throughout history have been male-dominated and male-oriented (...). All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy. All men have oppressed women (Morgan, 1970: 533,534).

As the main flaw of the strand is the existence narrow definition of 'enlightened' and 'free'. Many women who do not fit this definition were excluded from the movement. It strictly dictates the lifestyle of women and separate sexes. This, in its turn, resulted in other strands such as Black feminism, Islamic feminism, and Chicano feminism to emerge.

1.6.5. Black Feminism

The failure of women liberation movement embarrassing all women regardless, race, class, religion led other strands to emerge. Black feminism developed to address the concerns of black women. In addition, male hatred and anger presented by radical feminism troubled black women as it was thought to double the oppression towards black men as well as results disunion in the black community which will slow down collective struggle against the racial oppression (Williams, 1972: 47).

Black feminism believes that American black woman is in the “depth of degradation” as the “slave of a slave” (Beal, 20034: 42). Whites oppress blacks, and black men oppress black women. So the black women constantly have to fight racial oppression while at the same time-fighting patriarchy. Even if, black women not oppressed as for race, they are oppressed as for gender by black men. From this perspective, just society for black feminist includes racial and gender equality.

In a black female, community, feminism is considered as unfriendly and irrelevant for black women. Black women issues remain inaudible as many feminists should overcome their own racist tendencies of arguing” that they have a more than superficial comprehension understanding of race, color, and black history and culture”

(Beal, 2003: 452). However, Black feminism continues to be the voice of black women that simultaneously fighting both radical and gender oppression.

1.6.6. Ecofeminism

The term ecofeminism has been coined by the French scholar Francoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Feminisme ou la Mort* (1974). In the late 1970s, the earliest influential books appeared such as Susan Griffin's *Women and Nature* (1978), Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* (1978), Elizabeth Dadson Gray's *Green Paradise Lost* (1979). Later, as many scholars and activists have taken up the issue, many other books were published. Among them, Carolyn Merchant's *Death of Nature* (1983), Charlene Spretnak's *Politics of Women Spirituality* (1982), *Ecofeminism* (1993) by Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Evan Bondi, and other contributions by Ynestra King, Margot Adler, Nany Jack Todd, Riane Eisler, and Leonie Caldecott make important donation to the development of ecofeminist activity and ideas. Ecofeminism based on the idea that women and nature have a particular and significant connection and any oppression of women, people of color, children and poor is related to the oppression of nature. Some ecofeminist characteristics can be highlighted such as:

To apply a gender perspective to the problem of ecological crisis, to math domination of women with the domination of non-human nature, to show the development of science and Western technologies have secularized nature and have deteriorated the environment (Caro, 2015: 66).

Ecofeminism allocates human beings at the same level as nature, not above it. The classical dichotomies of Western thought (culture/nature) that identifies culture with masculinity and nature by femininity are denounced. As culture is regarded as higher than nature, humanity has been defined masculinity, and the feminine has been discarded (Caro, 2015: 67). Ecofeminism gives insights about the connection between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature. A woman that has an organic connection with nature, as both appear, caregiver, nurturer, and life-sustaining, they are subject to exploitation by masculinity culture. Nature is a principle of development deriving from the Latin Word nascere, 'to be born' thus, both nature and the female body turned out to be a territory for a man who wanted to control their potential to

develop. What soil stands for in nature is what the womb does for a woman. Both soil and womb signify fertility in addition to their capacity to give birth to various species. Similarly, woman and the womb became the colonized interior just as the tribes that had been living in accordance with nature became the colonized exterior for the colonizer, the White men. The male need for colonizing activities is not only restricted to the land available to him as he also needs more raw material to fulfill his economic growth. The exploitation of this virgin land includes violence which is very similar to what of the female body through rape.

Ecofeminism mostly developed by women mainly seeks answers to the questions such as; why does patriarchal society want to forget its biological connections with nature? Why does it seek to gain control over life in the form of women, other people, and nature? What can we do about dismantling the process of domination? What kind of society could live in harmony with its environment?

Ecofeminism as other movements is subject to an amount of criticism. Some of these criticisms refer to the fact the struggle of women and nature that are gathered together by ecofeminism indeed, have a different form of oppression with different origins. The oppression of nature begins with Western Modern Age in the 16th century, while women oppression dating back to the origins of patriarchy- five of six thousand years ago. Another criticism directed to ecofeminism for the essentialist view of the movement. Ecofeminist thought of equating women with nature thus accentuating on women fertility and nurturer is dangerous because it groups all women into one category and enforces the very societal norms that feminism is trying to break and weakens the struggle of women in public sphere.

1.6.7. Cultural Feminism

Cultural feminism believes in the existence of separate culture and experience of women. While cultural studies deal with analyzing the establishment of cultural norms and standards, cultural feminism examines how these principles have been gendered. It is mostly assumed that the historical conditions determine masculine and feminine values and it should be taken into account when analyzing of female and femininity, In other words, “being women in the 1920s is different being in the 1940s,

and 1906s, or the 1980s” (Hollows, 2000: 20). Consequently, an ideal society for cultural feminism should deconstruct established feminine and masculine values and meanings and change it with a blank slate that would let women experience their femininity and womanhood free from prepossessed definitions and expectations. The emphasize is as Sheila Rowbotham states “living a liberated life”.

Cultural feminism recognizes essential differences such as biological differences between men and women and sees these differences as a distinctive and superior virtue of women. These differences are not chosen but they are a part of the nature of man and women. Female nature and essence set women apart from men. Rather than forcing women to go against social norms and participate in male-dominated work, cultural feminism focuses on explaining gender differences by biological comparison. Cultural feminists are divided into those who believe that the essential differences of sexes are ingrained by the culture that they are persistent, and the ones who presume these differences as genetic and biological. However, whether these qualities are the product of nature or biology, cultural feminist values these equalities as superior and preferable than the qualities identified with men.

The key ideas of cultural feminism are that they define a traditional male behavior such as aggressiveness, competitiveness, domination as harmful to society, and emphasize that traditional female behaviors like caring, cooperation, egalitarianism would make a better world.

Cultural feminism receives a number of criticism from other stances of feminism. Some feminists denounce cultural feminism as betraying feminist main ideas and depolarization of feminism. Especially, the aspect of essentialism emphasized by cultural feminism is conceived as the devaluation of female “(...) cultural feminism was a countercultural movement aimed at reversing the cultural valuation of the male, and the devaluation of the female” (Echols, 1990: 6).

Liberal feminism critique cultural feminism for essentialism, claiming male and female differences as a product of society. Meanwhile, cultural feminism blames liberal feminism for accepting male values and behavior as a ‘norm’.

1.6.8. Islamic Feminism

The term Islamic feminism emerged in the 1990s in a number of global locations. The term was firstly used by Iranian scholars Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Afsaneh Najmabadeh. In Turkey the term used by Yesim Arat and Feride Acar in their articles Nilufer Gole in her book *The Forbidden Modern* (1991). Muslim women scholars from different disciplines and countries who are committed to their religion and who want to produce an alternative, gender-sensitive religious knowledge are developing the term. Islamic feminism's aim to advocate women rights, gender equality, social justice using Islamic discourse. Islamic feminists deal with developing an ethical reading of Islamic Sacred texts namely Qur'an and Sunnah and reinterpret them by the question of gender and social justice and methodological reform.

The studies critically revisit and unpack dominant religious interpretations that are patriarchal and discriminatory against women, and aim to produce new knowledge that makes the case of gender equality and justice from within an Islamic paradigm (Al-Sharmani, 2014: 83).

Islamic feminism aims to deconstruct traditional Islamic interpretation of gender roles and rights. The basic argument of Islamic feminism is that the Qur'an affirms the principle of equality of all human beings but that the practice of equality of women and men has been impeded or subverted by patriarchal ideology and practices.

While some scholars see Islamic feminism as a great epistemic and political value, other criticize it "as being an unsystematic and heterogeneous body of knowledge, as having weak methodological links to classical religious sciences and being politically insignificant, or even counterproductive, for women" (Al-Sharmani, 2014: 83). Ziba Mir-Hosseini being one of the first scholars of Islamic feminism sees Islamic feminism as "a new consciousness, new way of thinking, a gender discourse that was feminist in its aspiration and demands, yet Islamic in its language and source of legitimacy" (Mir-Hosseini, 2000: 604). Some Islamic female scholars like Asma Barlas rejects the term Islamic feminism because she rejects 'feminism' as an intellectual tradition of Western colonialism.

Many Islam scholars see Islamic feminism as their resistance to the traditional feminist colonial view of ‘saving Muslim women’. Western feminism views Islam and feminism “as exclusive categories that are at odds, argues Noor Al-Sibai in her article at everydayfeminism. While supporting FEMEN Islamophobic activism like Malala Yousafzai, Aliaa Elmahdy they ignore the Western influence on poverty, violence, and instability in the Muslim world. In some extent, feminism feeds ‘White Savior Complex’ that is a term firstly used by writer Teju Cole posits the West ‘white man’ as a hero who saves the Eastern and African world, be it Somali from a dictator regime or Muslim women oppressed by ‘sharia law’.

This racist and xenophobic tendency persists in American and European liberalism and among Western feminists who want to expose Muslim women oppression and “help” them. Muslim women around the world are portrayed as voiceless victims of patriarchal religion. Muslim women are described as a victim of her husband, her father, her brother. She is forced to wear hijab either by sharia law or by her oppressive husband or community. She wants the freedom of Western women. Even if she knows how to read she is not allowed to read anything other than the Quran. And if the West does not save her, she will either have a miserable painful life or die in an honor killing. These stereotypes of oppressed Muslim women serve the greater purpose. It stigmatizes Islam a whole and creates a scapegoat for continued Western domination in Muslim regions. According to Noor Al-Sibai, feminism serves American militarism to protect Western power by ‘Spreading Democracy’ - a term used to justify wars in the Middle East for 15 years.’ In this regard, feminism “aims to justify Western wars under the guise of human rights” (Al-Sibai, 2015).

As Deepa Kumar Rutgers associate professor of Media Studies pointed out, imperialist feminism is rooted “on the construction of a barbaric, misogynistic ‘Muslim world’ that must be civilized by a liberal, enlightened West. From this perspective, the aim of Islamic feminism to de-colonize the view of Muslim women and enable the emergence of a new perspective in political and social imagination. Islami feminists claim their right to choose their identity rather than suffering it. They resist the illusion of Muslim women oppression in academic, political, religious discourses. It is the name of women who refuse to choose between feminism and her culture and religion.

1.7. Some critical approaches to Feminism

Although feminists claim to advocate equal rights and treatment under the law as their basic goal, for some critics modern feminism have strayed from this narrow mission and have adopted more radical agenda. Under the label of promoting equality, feminism aims to “promote women’s full autonomy by eliminating gender distinctions and forcing gender parity (statistical proportionality of males and females) in every area of academic, economic, social, and political life” (Villegas, 2016: Heritage Foundation). While the first wave of feminism initially aimed to expand women's political and legal rights, later beginning from the 1960s with the second wave of feminism modern feminism changed its target to social inequality of women from political and legal inequality. It holds the notion that private and public relations of sexes are oppressive, and the reason of women oppression and inequality is social structures and women’s inferior position within the family. On these grounds, second-wave feminism redefines the meaning of freedom and equality for women.

(...) post-1960s feminists have consistently defined equality and freedom not as the right to receive equal protection of the law and make decisions for oneself, but as qualities that are achieved only when women fully develop their social and intellectual faculties free from constraints imposed by gender (Villegas, 2016: Heritage Foundation).

Particularly, only self-actualization and individual autonomy meant equality and freedom. Betty Friedan states that “ true freedom (...) consists of the actual development of one's full – and hence highest – nature, not the mere legal right or opening to pursue such development” (Friedan, 1963: 67). Based on the idea that true freedom comes only with the expansion of intellectual and social capacities, Freidan claimed that women ought to refuse housewife roles and should take ‘serious responsibility in the community’ and pursue a paid work. “ (...) the only way for women, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own” (67). On this ground, self-actualization of women can only be achieved by pursuing creative work outside of the home. While Freidan called for the drastic transformation of the cultural image of femininity and therefore the need to free women in their roles as wives and mothers, she did not deny different sexual nature of

women than men. But this view was hanged by later feminists who denied any inherent sexual nature of human beings. They preserved the true liberation free from nature, gender, moral, religion and culture. Radical feminist Germaine Greer in her book *The Female Eunuch* (1971) claimed that the family, society and the capitalist system castrated women and in order to free themselves women need to revolt against womanhood, sexuality, and love. Radical feminists claimed that women should define themselves free from nature or femininity. Although second-wave feminism argued that women must be freed from unwanted or unplanned pregnancy, some radical feminists went even further claiming that; “women would not achieve true autonomy until advances in science and technology freed them from the ‘tyranny’ of their reproductive biology and childbearing itself through the development of artificial wombs” (Villegas, 2016: Heritage Foundation).

By the total rejection of biological and innate differences between sexes, contemporary feminism supposes that women will pursue the same goals as men if they are truly equal and free. Although there are no legal barriers for women to pursue their desired goals, feminists denounce statistical parity of sexes in all areas of social, economic, and politics. As feminists deny natural differences of male and female that might affect their preferences of occupations and professions, feminists interpret any lack of statistical parity in occupations, professions, carrier fields as the evidence of discrimination against women. In other words, modern feminism has the notion that if half of engineers, athletes, politicians, surgeons, CEOs, do not consist of women, it is because of limited or restricted opportunity and freedom for women to pursue their goals rather than women personal preferences.

It is the fact that second-wave feminism presumes family union as ‘tyranny’ and organization of patriarchal oppression of women which women should avoid as much as possible in order to be totally equal and free. Besides, the family was undermined as an organization “that train people to be violent” (Straus, 1989: 351) According to Straus “the marriage license is hitting license” and spanking is “training in violence” that “lays the basis for child abuse and wife beating” (353). Alice Miller claims that the structure of the traditional family is the prototype of a totalitarian regime (Miller,1983:4). According to Miller Germans “had received what is

considered a good strict upbringing” which contributed to the rise of Hitler and Nazism (Miller,1983:146). Speaking about families Stephenie Koontz writes that “ Beneath the polished facets of many ‘ideal’ families... was violence, terror, or simply grinding misery that only occasionally came to light” (Koontz,1992: 35). However, recent researches on the family have disclosed that the truth is far more different than these notions. Researchers have proved that the traditional family is necessary for the maintenance of free society and strong families essential for thriving communities and political stability. The researchers have shown that;

Long-term commitment and stability in marriage is beneficial for men, women, and children (...) and those who live intact, biological, married families, are far less likely to suffer from illness, exploitation, abuse, neglect, and impoverishment (Villegas, 2016: Heritage Foundation).

Obsessed with the idea that family keeps a cycle of patriarchal oppression and lead economic and emotional dependence of women, feminism attacks family union and blame it for sexist social conditioning. Mostly, feminism is not about the choice of women rather it is about creating conditions to make ‘right choice’. In this regard, the ‘right choice’ is identified with the feminist vision of what women should want from their lives and women who refuse to undertake this ‘right choice’ are shamed and rejected by feminists. Carrier Lukas in her book *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Women, Sex, and Feminism* (2006) demonstrates how feminists ‘right choice’ often conflicts with the goals and desires of real women. Modern feminists respond to such criticizes by claiming that the women who prioritize family over her career and financial autonomy are affected by cultural and patriarchal oppression. In other words, women choice is not her own but the influence of social expectations and cultural norms as “women adopt the values of the system that oppresses them as the chains that bind women are often in their own mind” (Friedan,1963: 28).

Feminists demand a proportional number of sexes in all areas of economic, political, and social life, neglecting women choice, priorities, preferences they aim equal statistical outcomes in all spheres. and view any lack of parity as evidence of discrimination and sexism. However, many studies show that the reason for statistical disparities in many cases can be a result of voluntary choice. Even though feminists

deny innate sexual differences, it is inevitable fact that it contributes to the overall structure of society. Physical, neurological, hormonal differences, as well as, women's indispensable role in childbearing, might lead to different priorities and preferences different from most men. For example, the belief that women earning lower salaries than men are circulated in every feminist discussion and cited as evidence of women discrimination. The National Organization for Women website states, "For full-time, year-round workers, women are paid on average only 77 percent of what men are paid (...) Women still are not receiving equal pay for equal work, let alone equal pay for work of equal value." (NOW) However, the mentioned statistics do not take into account other factors like education, years of experience, working hours, that influence the wage. The reason for the wage gap may differ, for example, the average full-time male worker spends at work 8.14 hours a day, whereas this statistics is 7.75 hours a day for a female full-time worker. Another factor that affects the wage gap is the choices of men and women takes regarding their job. Women tend to seek a job with regular work hours, little travel, more comfortable conditions. On the contrary, men have jobs with a less desirable condition, with overnight shifts and travel and more often dangerous and risk injury jobs. Children also play an important role in parents decisions. Unsurprisingly, the women who have or plan to have baby tends to seek kid-friendly jobs often trading higher salaries with more comfortable positions. In contrasts, men with children tend to earn more money to support his family by taking on more hours and less attractive positions. If these factors would be taken into consideration the wage gap will lower to the point of vanishing.

The American Association of University Women has now joined ranks with serious economists who found that when you control for relevant differences between men and women (occupations, college majors, length of time in workplace) the wage gap narrows to the point of vanishing. The 23-cent gap is simply the average difference between the earnings of men and women employed 'full time'. What is important is the 'adjusted' wage gap-the figure that controls for all the relevant variables.

The overview of historical and theoretical phrases of feminism provides a theoretical foundation of postfeminism. These strands are considered the most fundamental groundwork of feminism. The opposite opinions presented in the chapter provide a theoretical basis for postfeminism. To the greatest extent, these criticisms,

as well as a limited frame that feminism imposes with the inclusion of some and exclusion of other women, have to lead the emergence of postfeminism firstly in public and then in academic discourse. Postfeminism to some extent represents the voices of marginalized, excluded women against hegemonic feminism which tends to dictate women the style of living and exclude and denounce anyone who choose a different way of living.



CHAPTER II

2.1. Postfeminism

The new term ‘postfeminism’ appeared in the late twenties in cultural, academic, and political circles. In fact, for Susan Faludi, the reference to postfeminism was first seen in the 1920s right after the adoption of the 19th Amendment. However, the term regularly appeared in the 1980s. Indeed, the era beginning from the 1980s is considered as a post-feminist era, that feminism had reached all its desired goals and aims and was no longer necessary and appropriate for modern women. Opposed by some celebrated by others the term postfeminism is a concept full of contradictions. The definition of the term by scholars and critics has been varied from a conservative backlash of feminism, Girl Power, third wave feminism and postmodern-poststructuralist feminism. In academic writings, it is discussed with other ‘post’ discourses like postmodernism, postcolonialism, post-structuralism. We can divide the writings about postfeminism in the academic world into three groups. The first group of writers such as Naomi Wolf, Camilla Paglia, Katie Roiphe who have theorized the term postfeminism, however, they did not name themselves as post-feminist but rather have been named as post-feminist writers by others. The second group of scholars writing about postfeminism are feminist writers who are enraged by the term of postfeminism and driven to demonstrate its ineffectiveness in the purpose of preserving established feminist ideas. Finally, the third group of writers who think that postfeminism can add to feminism and fulfill the missing parts. These writers view feminism as follow to feminism. While critics and scholars argue upon the meaning and definitions of the term, for some critics “postfeminism remains a product of assumption and exactly what it constitutes (...) as a matter for frequently impassioned debate” (Denison,2007:59). This chapter will overview various approaches and theories associated with the representation of the term postfeminism in basis and cultural context. I intend to discuss diverse manifestation of the term and definition of the term in order to give comprehensive insight to my readers considering the fact that the concept postfeminism is supposedly new term in Turkey and very few works have been done in this context. For the purpose of introducing postfeminism, the chapter will summarize and analyze various post-feminist contexts. The chapter will explore a

number of theories and texts which appear in post-feminist contexts. I consider postfeminism a necessary and interesting theory of contemporary culture, society, academia, literature that requires serious attention and analysis in academic level and more work has to be done on this issue.

2.2. Defining the Term

2.2.1. Post in postfeminism

Before we indulge in the meaning and details of postfeminism, it is important to focus on the semantic confusion of 'post' in postfeminism. In general, 'post' prefix is a problematic issue in academic and theoretical cycles. In large extent, the disagreements over postfeminism and its meanings are due to the indefiniteness of the 'post' prefix. Even though, at first glance, the 'post' invokes the meaning of 'after' feminism, the definition, and interpretation of prefix 'post' are much more complex. For example, Rostislav Kocourek's examination in *English Dictionary* states;

'an expression 'post' + X can either be X or non-X, or both at the same time, which makes the derivative motivationally ambiguous'. This programmatic indeterminacy and interpretative openness are inherent in all 'post' terms – most notably, postmodernism and poststructuralism – to the extent that they become issues of debate about whether the prefix signifies an end of a particular type of influence or a recognition of the fundamental importance of the latter (*English Dictionary* 106, qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 41).

Supporters and opponents of the theory questioned the prefix 'post' in postfeminism and how it can be affected and understood. The debates center on what exactly the prefix accomplish and "what happens to feminist perspectives and goals" (Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 3). As Misha Kafka observes, the debates can be outlined as "how can we make sense of the 'post' in 'postfeminism'" (Kafka, 2001: 31). Amelia Jones states that "what is a post but the signification of a kind of termination – a temporal designation of whatever it prefaces as ended, done with, obsolete" (Jones, 1994: 8). In this regard, Whether located in putative popular revolts against feminism, academic criticism, women's consciousness in postindustrial society, or contemporary

culture, postfeminism involves a mapping of social space that renders feminism homeless and groundless (Hawkesworth, 2004: 969).

In this context, postfeminism signals the 'pastness' of feminism (...) and a generational shift in understanding the relationships between men and women and, for that matter, between women themselves (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 3).

The consideration of 'post' as 'anti' or 'after' is opposed by the theory that 'post' presents a genealogy that involves revision or strong family resemblance. Based on this view, the prefix is perceived as a part of a process of ongoing transformation. Thus " 'post' (...) signifies a dependence on, a continuity with, that which follows" (Kellner & Best, 1991: 29). In this case, 'post' in postfeminism does not inevitably indicate the elimination and rejection of feminism but implies that feminism persists in the post-feminist frame. However, there are other interpretations of 'post' that makes the term more complex for definition. Linda Hutcheon declares that 'post' " signals dependence on and independence from that which temporally preceded it " and " marks neither a simple or radical break from it nor a straightforward continuity with it: it is both and neither" (Hutcheon, 1988: 17). Sarah Gamble states " the prefix 'post' does not necessarily always direct us back the way we've come" (Gamble, 2000: 37).

Adding to this interpretive struggle, that makes impossible to present one particular explanation for the term 'post', the thing that the origin of postfeminism, feminism itself, is lack of universally accepted agenda and definition that we can measure against, double troubles the task of determining a definition for post-feminism. Geraldine Harris highlights that feminism doesn't have " a single, clearly defined, common ideology or been constituted around a political party or central organization or leaders or an agreed policy or manifesto, or even based upon on agreed principle of collective action" (Harris, 1999: 9). Rather, we can say that feminism has a number of working definitions related to specific issues, particular contexts, and personal practices. In this perspective to define one single, the definition of postfeminism seems unreal.

There is no original or authentic postfeminism that holds the key to its definition. Nor is there a secure and unified origin from which this genuine

postfeminism could be fashioned. Instead, we understand postfeminism in terms of a network of possible relations that allows for a variety of permutations and readings. In particular, we argue that postfeminism is context-specific and has to be assessed dynamically in the relationships and tensions between its various manifestations and contexts (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 3).

2.2.2. Theories and definitions of post-feminism

The thing that makes postfeminism so exciting and conflict-ridden is the fact that does not conform to any definitional frameworks of our preconception. Sarah Projansky noted that;

postfeminism is by definition contradictory, simultaneously feminist and antifeminist, liberating and repressive, productive and obstructive of progressive social change, whether we comprehend postfeminism as feminism or anti-feminism, it is after all “a matter of interpretation and degree (Projansky, 2001: 68) .

In order to understand the meaning of the term Rosalind Gill and Christina Scharff divided the usage of postfeminism into four broad ways:

1) “an epistemological break within feminism, that marks “the intersection of feminism with a number of other anti-foundationalist movements including post-modernism, post-structuralism and post-colonialism” (Scharff & Gill, 2011: 3), in this regard, ‘post’ “implies transformation and change within feminism that challenges ‘hegemonic’ Anglo-American feminism” (3).

2) A historical shift after the height Second-Wave Feminism, in this sense ‘post’ refers to the ‘pastness of feminism’ that implies that feminist struggle become irrelevant to modern women as gender equality has been achieved (Whelehan, 2000, 3). On the other hand, Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra maintain that this ‘pastness’ of feminism does not necessarily mean anti-feminist stance against all forms and conceptions: “rather it is by virtue of feminism’s success that it is seen to have been superseded” (Tasker & Negra, 2007: 5).

3) A backlash against feminism, in this discourse, the second wave feminism is blamed for the man-shortage, infertility epidemic, women mental health problems, and so on. Feminism made women “unattractive, unmarriageable, miserable” and so gender equality is incomplete with femininity and motherhood. This anti-feminist backlash discourse suggests that feminism is the “preserve of only the unstable, mannish, unattractive woman who has a naturally difficult relationship to her own femininity” (Whelehan, 2000: 17).

4) As sensibility postfeminism includes:

The notion that femininity is increasingly figured a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; the emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and discipline; a focus upon individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; a resurgence in ideas of natural sexual difference; a marked sexualization of culture; and an emphasis upon consumerism and the commodification of difference (Scharff & Gill, 2007: 255).

In other words, the post-feminist woman is conscious of her femininity and pleased to accentuate it by her appearances like makeup and dress, femininity is “figured as a bodily property” (Scharff & Gill, 2007: 4). Michele Barrett views postfeminism as about reinstating femininity and partly heterosexuality. The feminine presentation of self-becomes important. (...) postfeminism represents the successful combination of traditional feminine good looks with a new exercise of women's power” (Barrett, 2000: 48).

In her book *Postfeminisms* (1997) Ann Brooks describes postfeminism “as the intersection of feminism with postmodernism, poststructuralism, and post-colonialism, and as such represents a dynamic movement capable of challenging modernist, patriarchal and imperialist frameworks” (Brooks, 1997: 4). It is a dynamic movement that challenges hegemonic feminism and gives voices of marginalized, colonized and indigenous women. Postfeminism is a “conceptual shift within feminism from debates on equality to a focus on debates around difference” (4) She identifies postfeminism “not a depoliticization of feminism but a political shift in feminism's conceptual and theoretical agenda” (4). In essence, postfeminism implies

“feminism’s ‘coming of age’, its maturity into a confident body of theory and politics, representing pluralism and difference and reflecting on its position in relation to other philosophical and political movements similarly demanding change” (1), and a shift from feminist debates of equality to the focus on difference. Accordingly, postfeminism can be seen as a feminist movement of pluralization and diversification welcoming more diversities and ‘others’.

Contrastingly, there are a number of young women scholars suggesting that the term postfeminism suggests that “the project of feminism has ended, either because it has been completed or because it has failed and is no longer valid” (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 13). The prominent defenders of this viewpoint are Naomi Wolf, Katie Roiphe, Natasha Wolter, and Rene Denfeld.

They advocate an individualistic and liberal agenda, consider that first and second wave feminism's the political demands of like enfranchisement, equal pay, sexual liberation etc. have been met and feminism has become outdated to the lives of modern women. *The New Victorians* (1995) by Rene Danfeld starts with the estimation that;

For women of my generation, feminism is our birthright (...). We know what it is to live without excessive confinement. We are the first generation to grow up expecting equal opportunity and equal education, as well as the freedom to express our sexuality (Danfeld, 1995: 2).

So according to this approach, there is no need to enforce feminism politically, as all demands are already met.

To get more insight into post-feminist theory, a brief analysis of the three post-feminist authors would be beneficial. These authors share common themes in their works. The acknowledgment of the power of women femininity and sexuality as well as a reaction against feminist victim women identity are the main subject of their works. One of them Camille Paglia is labeled “thorn in the side of feminism” (Ferguson & Wicke, 1994: 7) for good reason. Her works are grounded on the belief that feminism deceives women presenting female sexuality as a part of patriarchal oppression. Indeed, women’s true power lies in her femininity and sexuality. “Woman destiny to rule men” (Paglia, 1994: 80) and it cannot be done unless women embrace

her power and ability. Paglia is also promoting the non-victim identity of women as her counterparts, Roiphe and Wolf. Indeed, one of the key elements of postfeminism is a reaction to accepted victim women identity. Modern feminism set rules for women rather than giving freedom. Diverse feminist programs impose man misogyny resulting in fear of abuse to women. In her book *Morning After Sex, Fear, and feminism on campus* Katie Roiphe charges feminism for “spinning not around love, not marriage, not communes, not materialism (...) but passivity and victimhood” consequently reinforcing ‘helpless women’ attitudes turning them into frightened victims rather than empowered free agents (Roiphe,1993: 171-172).

Noami Wolf also charges of victimhood against feminism. “Power feminism” as she names is one of the attributes of postfeminism (Wolf, 1994: 137). According to Wolf women already have power and they “should stop shying away from power and take what they are entitled to” (235). The gender equality has been achieved already and women only need to stop seeing themselves as powerless victims (xxv). Wolf positions ‘victim feminism’- “women seeking power through an identity of powerlessness” as opposition to power-feminism (135).

Wolf lists the characteristics of power and victim feminism. As indicated by Wolf victim feminists are antisexual, pretentious and judgmental, even fun-despising, and that their benevolent and noncompetitive demeanors are the real obstacles for women to gain control and power (Wolf,1994: 136-137). Wolf claims that victim feminists see all men as abhorrent and in charge of the progressive system: men want to overwhelm and they externalize women, though women are egalitarian, communicative and submitting (144). Power feminism is “unapologetically sexual” and “tolerant of other women's choices of sexuality”, it “hates sexism without hating men” and. perceives women's pursuit of influence, money, and self-satisfaction as natural and positive properties that will inevitably better the society and other women. She argues that feminism has actually no ties with ordinary women and their lives as its origins has outdated, and connects feminism with lesbianism, marginalization, and elitism (66-67). Feminism functions as a closed group of elitist white women have inflexible principles for being a genuine feminist: in widespread imagination, feminism has turned into a “massive No to everything outside a narrow set of endorsements” (61-62). She likens ‘pure’ feminist manners to the dread of being

alleged of a prostitute in the old times: a woman must keep her pure image not be thrown far from society, and a feminist must take 'correct' side on any given dispute to be permitted to remain in the 'sisterhood' (111-112). As per Wolf, this causes any objections noiseless and makes feminism immutable. Wolf emphasizes the significance of the individual's story in characterizing womanhood, feminineness, and becoming a woman (276).

Due to this undefined status and multiple origins postfeminism is criticized by feminist scholars and critiques. It has been condemned by feminist critiques as exploitation and "failed reproduction of feminist consciousness" and post-feminist generation has been accused of "forgetting their feminist legacies, and in effect not allowing feminist consciousness to be passed on" (Adkins, 2004: 429-430). Opponents of postfeminism scrutinize postfeminism as being sexist, politically conservative, and a media-propelled ploy that undermines values and achievements of feminism. This prompts impression postfeminism as an anti-feminist reaction that eliminates gains and social changes brought by the feminist movement. Susan Faludi, a prominent figure known with her anti-post-feminist stances interprets postfeminism "as the devastating reaction against the ground gained by the second-wave" (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 15), and accuse post-feminists in a backlash against feminism. She states in her article on *Guardian* "... post-feminism is the backlash. Any movement or philosophy which defines itself as post whatever came before is bound to be reactive. In most cases, it is also reactionary" (Faludi, 1992: 15). Some critiques even blame postfeminism for returning back to pre-feminist times. "(...) texts (...) in proclaiming the advent of postfeminism, are actually engaged in negating the critiques and undermining the goals of feminism, in effect, delivering us back into a prefeminist world" (Modleski, 1991: 3).

Thus the various interpretation of postfeminism results in consequent difficulty for academics to formulate a clear or universally recognized post-feminist ideology. Whatever, its various definitions, postfeminism has some theoretical key elements.

2.2.2.1 Biological Determinism

One of the important theoretical concepts of the post-feminist theory is biological determinism. According to feminism, biology makes the traditional sexual division of labor inevitable and reinforcing the notion that such division is legitimate, attractive, and even preferable (Weiss, 1998: 36). The second wave of feminism has a severe reaction to biological determinism from time to time proclaiming the total absence of difference between genders, even organic distinction. While rejecting biological difference feminism undermined femininity and female interests thus led to the assumption of 'being equal is being like a man'. Femininity is neglected by the women liberation movement. Whereas feminism succeeded to establish the fact that women are equally human to men, the fact that women are also women; that is uniquely feminine- has been lost (Denison, 2007: 89). Oppositely, postfeminism embraces the notion of 'unique equality' and everything female. The new focus is emphasized, "femininity as a means of asserting power since the feminine is equal to the masculine even though it may look different" (89). Postfeminism seems to embrace feminine and masculine characteristic and differences. Postfeminism recognizes women power without losing their femininity. Instead of feminism that left women with one or two choices postfeminism embrace any choice that women take. It is ok to be a housewife with a graduate diploma and nurturing your children and take care of your family and husband. There is no fight for equality in postfeminism. Man and woman are not opposite sides of the spectrum but interconnected to each other in a way or another way. The family, motherhood, and heterosexual relations are mostly the first concern in postfeminism. In contrast to feminism that ignores these facts or sees them as a part of women oppression of patriarchal society, postfeminism address these issues in women's social and business life.

2.1.2.2 Essentialism

Essentialism is another building block of postfeminism. It is much like biological determinism in that "Essentialism refers to the traditional notion that the identities of man and women are biological, psychically, and socially fixed or determined" (Phoca, 1999: 12). Feminists claim that "sexual difference is socially and

historically constructed, rather than biologically” (p. 69), and it is to blame patriarchy that “ positions women as the ‘other’ on a biological, psychic and social level” (p. 12). However, in the 1980s,

An important, shift happened, a shift explaining women’s subordination in terms of a single constraining system – whether we call it capitalism, patriarchy, biology, or even language – to focusing on the discursive, material, and cultural differences and make up the being or becoming women (Kafka, 2001: xiii).

Postfeminism, as a reaction to feminism's ‘social constructionism’, encourages women to live in whatsoever way they desire.

In the academic context, postfeminism interpreted as the combination of feminism and postmodern multiculturalism. It embraces the “complexity of vision and gives vent to the multivalent, inharmonious and conflicting voices of contemporary women, including the ‘other’ voices of feminists themselves” (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 30). As Ann Brooks puts it;

Postfeminism, along with postmodernism and postcolonialism, has been important in establishing a dynamic and vigorous area of intellectual debate, shaping the issues and intellectual climate that has characterized the move from modernity to postmodernity in the contemporary world (Brooks,1997: 210).

Examining various definitions, theories, and elements of postfeminism, indeed do little contribution to the comprehension of the theory. True comprehension would come through discussion of issues surrounding postfeminism and feminism and through analyzing their similarities and differences. I believe setting binary oppositions of a feminist and post-feminist outlook of women issues would create a vital step towards the definition of postfeminism.

2.3. Post-feminist Issues

2.3.1. Feminist Victimhood and Post-feminist Girl Power

Camille Paglia, Katie Roiphe, Naomi Wolf refer to ‘power feminism’ as a reaction to feminism’s ‘victim feminism’. “Victim feminism involves any number of

variations on the theme of women as the constant and permanent underdogs of a patriarchal society, the doormats trampled by countless uncaring men” (Denison, 2007:82). Postfeminism charge ‘victim feminism’ in the fabrication of numbers about date rape, equal pay gap, home abuse rates, and sexual harassment. According to postfeminism, feminism uses ‘victim feminism’ to be in power of “being the most oppressed” (Wolf, 1994: 279). Feminism mostly uses its energy towards fierce criticism of patriarchy. Feminism is the radical notion that woman is men by devaluing and oppressing man. Feminism does not see individual man and woman, instead, perceive them in their collective roles in the system of ‘male supremacy’. Likewise, all man are enemies that need to be fought. We can see the idea of victimization that all women are a victim and all men are oppressors.

Women are an oppressed class. Our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. (...) We identify the agents of our oppression as men. (...) All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy. All men have oppressed women (Redstockings, “Manifesto”, 1969).

“Feminist consciousness is consciousness of victimization (...) to come to see oneself as a victim.” (Sandra Lee Bartky, 1990: 15).

The problem of this stance toward patriarchy is that it seems to be outdated, as the younger generation of women has been raised with equal opportunities and without restriction and obstacle of being, doing, or becoming whatever they want. As such, more and more women seem to refuse the identification of feminism entirely or accept feminism partially qualifying which portions are acceptable which are not. Consequently, the key strand of post-feminist ‘power feminism’ arises as a reaction to feminist victimhood. Media definition of power feminism is Girl Power which essential characteristic is a re-appraisal of femininity as a means of female empowerment and agency which means implicit rejection to feminists “who stressed the disempowering and oppressive aspects of femininity” (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 76). Some critiques view Girl Power as a “ complex, contradictory discourse that provides a new articulation of young femininity and represents ‘a feminist ideal of a new, robust, young woman with agency and a strong sense of self “ (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 76). Girl Power can be comprehended as a reaction to long-lasting

feminist assessments viewing femininity as female weakness and patriarchal oppression. Especially, second-wave feminism rejected femininity as ‘artificial, man-made’ and demanded: “undoing [of] our conditioning in femininity” and an “unraveling [of] the hood of patriarchal woman-hood [sic]” (Daly, 1995: 409). Girl Power discards the feminist notion that femininity is always sexist and oppressive. Indeed, it “is a rebellion against the false impression that since women don’t want to be exploited, they don’t want to be sexual” and “against the anachronistic belief that (...) girls and power don’t mix” (Richards & Baumgardner, 2000: 137). It is a notion that women can compete alongside man without sacrificing their femininity. The feminist myth that sees femininity as signs of passivity and subordination are replaced by the post-feminist notion that femininity is powerful and empowering. Females are inspired to use their femininity and female power for their independence and emancipation. According to Aapola, Gonick, and Girl Power offers young women an image of femininity with the possibility, limitless potential, and the promise of control over the future (Aapola, Gonick, & Harris, 2005: 39).

2.3.2. Work and Equality

Balancing work and family are of great importance for women and with the post-feminist era, this has become increasingly evident. Despite, the second wave feminism who sees caring and raising a family as a part of patriarchy that needs to be demolished, postfeminism embrace family and childcare and addresses these issues in women business life. The modern world has put a lot on a women shoulder. While a few decades ago women’s goal was to get married and raise children, now add to this are financial independence, career choice, and social life. While feminism gives only a few options in dealing with these issues, often offering to ignore family, postfeminism advances options and choices in filling these roles. Post-feminist woman acknowledges that the false feminist notion of “have it all” does not work in reality and woman needs to sacrifice at one point. And unlike feminist woman that the only “acceptable” choice is persuasion of her career, a post-feminist woman has a choice to stay at home so that new human life can have the opportunity to thrive. On the contrary to feminism that sees childcare as drudgery, for the majority of post-feminist women, there is a tremendous pleasure to watch your children learn and grow.

Then, postfeminism can be thought as a response to the feminist ‘superwomen’ syndrome that “pushed women into wanting too much” (Brooks, 1997: 3) as “its embrace of multiplicity may relieve some of the pressures to do everything at once” (Denison, 2007: 85). The reality for women is as Caitlin Flanagan puts it rightly;

What few will admit- because it is painful, because it reveals the unpleasant truth that life presents a series of choices, each of which precludes a host of other attractive possibilities- is that whichever decision a woman makes, she will lose something of incalculable value (Flanagan, 2006: xx).

Second wave or older feminism, view homemaking and motherhood as well as the desire of women in caring family and raising children not the women individual choice but as “desires that (...) socially constructed by the culture steeped in patriarchy and the idolization of all things male” (Denison, 2007: 86) as feminism was convinced that ‘individual choices are formed and constrained socially’. In other words, it implies that one's decision is really not one's own but the result of the socially constructed behavior or belief.

Ironically, in this line of thinking aborting one’s baby from the womb is considered feminist while welcoming one’s baby from the womb and then caring for her at home is often viewed as non-feminist because such a decision could not possibly have been made free of any conscious or subconscious inducement (Denison, 2007: 86).

Nonetheless, regardless of personal ideas on labor division,

The idea that equality between men and women – or fairness between any two partners – can come about only through similar life courses and a parallel allocation of labor may constitute an abstraction by which few people actually want to live (Marneffe, 2004: 22).

As mentioned previously in this paper, femininity, feminine interests occupation has always disregarded by feminism. To be female with apprehension and appreciation of your femininity Is not welcomed if you are feminine with feminine interests you cannot be equal to man. So women have to options: whether you pretend to be like a man or be a woman “desperate, victim-like way” (Aronson, 2003: 904).

The attitude of 'being like men to be equal' leads to androgyny as Michele Kremen Bolton states "True androgyny – acting out both gender roles simultaneously – is a myth, than a reality for most women... Instead, it's all a question of trade-offs" (Bolton, 2000: 33). So the problem occurs in the business life of women as women try to act like men because of male needs and definition of success controls and influence the thoughts and behaviors of both sexes (Wolff, 1990: 227). Men behaviors, attitudes and standards are accepted as a norm and women are expected to behave and act according to these norms mostly, because of the feminist standpoint of 'to be like men in order to be equal'. It is a post-feminist main component to promote equality as women instead of women trying to be like men, and thus views women issues and problems within business life and workplace together with motherhood, maternity leave, and childcare which were ignored by older feminism for decades. As Ann Crittenden states: "Pretending that we are the same as men—with similar needs and desires— has only led many of us to find out, brutally, how different we really are" (Crittenden, 2001: 33).

Based on the fact that every life choice we make has its own own sacrifices and consequences, postfeminism offer "an honest assessment of these ramifications" (Denison, 2007: 87). On the contrary to feminism, that dictates which choices are preferable for women, postfeminism embraces any combination of either, neither or both of options.

2.3.3. Femininity and Masculinity

Beauvoir was adamant that "woman (...) cannot be transformed unless society has first made her really the equal of man" (Beauvoir, 1949: 737-8). Feminism is about gender equality states many feminist scholars. But what does this equality look like? Is the disappearance of masculinity and femininity because they are socially constructed falsehoods? Does it mean the denial of traditional gender roles? Or does it require women to be like a man in order to be considered as human?. "While we now recognize that women are human, we blind ourselves to the fact that we are also women" (Crittennden, 2001: 29).

Femininity, then, is an element that was missed by the women's movement. While feminism had tremendous success in establishing the fact that women are equally human to men, along the way the fact that women are also women; that is uniquely feminine- has been lost (Denison, 2007: 89).

However, postfeminism seems to embrace feminine and masculine characteristic and differences. It seeks out the way out of the structure that places women in a binary system determined by her difference to men. Differences and desires that distinct men and women are embraced (Phoca, 1999: 52). Contemporary women who have liberation of being female at the same time pursuing their carrier, education and personal goals do not consider femininity as foul as feminism does.

In essence, femininity should be an option to women because women who feel trapped at the inability to reach their human potential will suffer every bit as much when cutting off from those aspects of life that are distinctly and uniquely female (Critennden, 2001: 22).

The disturbing aspect of the feminist discussion on male-female equality is that sometimes feminism itself reveals this disparity by degrading femininity and being female. Some feminists avoid being 'feminine' by male identified clothing, hair and make-up to be real and powerful. Can't women be powerful with her femininity? If a woman is fighting for equality as a woman why she needs to be like men in order to be considered real and powerful? Isn't the attempt to be like men are the glorification of masculinity over femininity? If there is no difference between genders then, does it also mean that there is only one gender – male, and 'other humans like women' need to transform into that gender? Another irony of this view is that the attempt to abandon feminine aspects demands great attention to one's appearance. The women with the appearance of male-identified do so with tremendous effort. If there is no difference between sexes and gender only socially constructed, should it come naturally without any public high interest?

Each woman also notes that her conscious attempt to become male-identified is a result of early failures at being feminine, or in other words a failure to measure up to someone else's standard of physical beauty. That this even

affected them is an interesting commentary on the uniquely feminine desire to be beautiful and appealing (Denison, 2007: 92).



2.3.4. Marriage, Men, and Family

As mentioned above one of the postfeminism key element is the renewed emphasis on traditional gender roles. The men role in women's lives, as well as marriage and mothering, is a part of any discussion of postfeminism. Postfeminism establishes a role for men away from a feminist view of an oppressor. Postfeminism recognizes the fact that, without the varying roles of men as fathers, husbands, sons, friends, women's life would not be full.

In a contrast to feminism, that tends to alienate men, “postfeminism tents to be implicitly heterosexist in orientation, (...) seeks to develop an agenda which can find a place for men lovers, husbands, and fathers as well as friends” (Gamble, 2000: 43). Indeed, post-feminist ideals of work and family balance are only possible with the assistance and support of men. Conceivably, few women can get help from other women, however, most women count on men to meet demands in their daily life. In this sense, postfeminism entails increasing partnership between men and women as well as increasing trend in parenting where fathers involved in child rising on daily basis. Particularly, men ’s role in families is in a constant study in Western countries as well as in Turkey, as the studies show that families are changing constantly. In Turkey, studies show that fathers role has also changed, and they are now becoming more involved in childrearing processes (Barutçu & Hıdır, 2016: 27). In Western countries, women now are having more children than they did a decade ago and many choose to quit their top carriers or work part-time in order to raise their children. It shows a radical shift in attitudes towards carriers and families. In fact, this trend is constant that it once become major news in *USA Today*. The article states that in a post-feminist era more women üho are educated and have good carriers are not afraid of leaving their professional carrier their children. They are ready to quit or take a break from successful job carriers in favor of raising their children (Nasser, 2004)

Postfeminism like feminism takes a great deal on gender relations, but on the contrary to feminism, it seeks to promote the harmony and balance between sexes rather than disharmony. “Postfeminism signifies a cease-fire in yesteryears' battle between the sexes” (Press, 1991: 45). Regardless of, feminist criticize of postfeminism for its “post-feminist images of the family which idealize traditional nuclear family”

in which women function as nurturers and caregivers (47), there are more and more women choosing families over careers are increasing in many Western countries like USA, UK, Canada, and Scandinavian countries, and the role of men as fathers and husbands are undeniable in this shift. It is with the help of their husbands can either balance careers or stay at home to raise children (Nasser, 2004).

This larger emphasis on family and relationships is not entirely welcomed in feminism. The resurgence of 'family values' viewed by feminists as "an insistence on the maintenance of a patriarchal power structure" and "an indication of the deep anxiety the patriarchal feels at the emergence of strong and independent women in the areas of business and politics" (Jones, 1994: 18). So as Robert Stacy writes "the crude mechanisms of partisan politics" inspires women to see themselves as helpless victims of the patriarchal system and thereby view all men as the oppressive enemy.

Thus the attempts to create alternatives to traditional families have led more divorces and fatherlessness, which in turn results in hardship in finding family happiness for young women, because, boys from broken families are less able to navigate responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood. The child is deprived of the organic family ties and networks of support provided by the traditional family with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins which in turn results in the sociological breakdown of a mother as she tries to replace all of them. For some researchers, the increase in criminal violence in progressive welfare states is the lack of organic family support.

While feminism, questions the needs of fathers, recent studies relinquish the necessity of father in child development.

Fatherlessness is a major force behind many disturbing social problems. The absence of fathers from children's lives is one of the most important causes of problems related to children's well-being such as increasing rates of juvenile violent crime, depression and eating disorders, teen suicide, and substance abuse. Fathers make unique contributions to childrearing, including a parenting style different from mothers and an emphasis on play, which facilitates normal emotional development. Specifically, girls gain a sense of themselves and appreciation for their femininity from fathers. The largest negative consequence

of father absence is juvenile delinquency and violence and early sexual activity (Popenoe, 1998: 38-39).

It appears that the post-feminist area gradually brings shifts to feminist anti-male attitudes. Now the time children spend with their parents is constantly increasing comparing to 20 years ago. The recent survey hold shows that parents now consider their family more significant than career development and think that quantity time with kids more valuable than quality time. More and more fathers today are willing and taking part in the daily lives of their kids (Klein, 2004: 38-39). Fathering are very essential in postfeminism since family, as well as relations between men and woman, are the principal focus on postfeminism.

2.3.5. Women and Motherhood

The good mother, the wise mother (...) is more important to the community than even the ablest man; her career is more worthy of honor and is more useful to the community than the career of any man, no matter how successful. --Theodore Roosevelt

By the resurgence of family values, motherhood also receiving a great deal of attention in post-feminist discussions. While feminism downplays the role and importance of motherhood, postfeminism both embrace and analyze it (Denison, 2007: 45). Feminism sees childbearing as a root of female oppression which should be avoided or lessened. While feminism states that feminism is about chooses, it promotes the choice of either to be childless or with one child. Mothering is ignored as “it is feared and undervalued” (Crittennden, 2001: 8). Feminism promotes the idea that ‘time spent with one's child is time wasted’. In her book, *The Price of Motherhood* Ann Crittenden states “The extraordinary talents required to do the long-term work of building human character and instilling in young children the ability and desire to learn have no place in the economists' calculations (Crittenden, 2001: 3). In essence, “There is an intransigent insistence that something is lacking in women who spend their time mothering” by this sending message that “mothering is antithetical to self” (xxi). In the following quotation we can summarize feminism’s negative attitudes toward motherhood:

A woman who stays at home, caring for children and the house, often leads an extremely sterile existence. She must lead her entire life as a satellite to her mate. He goes out into society and brings back a little piece of the world for her. His interests and his understanding of the world become her own and she cannot develop herself as an individual, having been reduced to only a biological function. This kind of woman leads a parasitic existence that can aptly be described as ‘legalized prostitution’ (Beal, 2003: 441).

Postfeminism accepts the fact that motherhood is a vital part of the society and it is not less valuable, less important, less meaningful than the work at the workplace. For post-feminist woman raising a child and taking care of her family is not a burden, an obstacle that interferes her from “career success”. Post-feminist woman acknowledges that the feminist notion of “have it all” does not work in reality and woman needs to sacrifice at one point. And unlike feminist woman that the only ‘acceptable’ choice is persuasion of her career, a post-feminist woman has a choice to stay at home so that new human life can have an opportunity to thrive. On the contrary to feminism that sees childcare as drudgery, for a majority of post-feminist women, there is a tremendous pleasure to watch your children learn and grow.

2.4. Postfeminism in Popular Culture

Rosalind Gill, presents the concept of ‘entanglement’ in postfeminism, bringing feminist and anti-feminist ideas together despite contradiction and clear opposition. According to Gill, the conflicting conceptions of postfeminism represents “transformations in feminisms and transformations in media culture – and their mutual relationship” (Gill, 2007: 147). If postfeminism is a product of media culture, it is critical for academics to approach postfeminism as a “critical object – a phenomenon into which scholars of culture should inquire – rather than an analytic perspective” (Tasker & Negra, 2007:148). On this perspective, “postfeminism then, rather than a theory or theoretical frame, is a cultural space where contradictory ideologies converge, where the past can be questioned and considered and where current conceptions of gender can be critically examined and expanded” (Green, 2008: 4). Thus, for a better understanding of the term, we cannot avoid but look at popular

culture and media which can provide best signs into the world and characteristic of postfeminism.

The existence of postfeminism in popular culture is undisputed as popular culture is considered the ground that first recognized and stimulated post-feminist trends and ideas. It is the fact that the widespread character of postfeminism is often criticized as “lessening its analytical potential and undermining more thorough and systematic social and academic movements” (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 19). For many feminist critics, postfeminism in media and popular culture is “an abatement and depoliticization of the feminist movement” in which feminism is represented as “damaging attempt to manage and contain the revolutionary potential of the feminist enterprise” (19). By this, feminism has become a part of the cultural field and “its meanings are increasingly mediated” (19). Hollows and Mosley state that “most people become conscious of feminism through the way it is represented in popular culture and for many women of our generation, formative understandings of, and identifications with, feminist ideas have been almost exclusively within popular culture” (Hollows & Moseley, 2006: 2). Correspondingly, some feminists in attempt to resolve the question of ‘What is feminism?’ state that “it is, in practice, impossible to discuss feminism without discussing the image of feminism and feminists”. In this regard, “feminism is never available in some pure or unmediated form and instead, our understanding of feminism is filtered through the media, forming and shaping our ideas of what it means to be a feminist” (Hollows & Moseley, 2006: 3). That is to say, popular media it seemed to be a crucial place for the formation of the meanings of feminism as well postfeminism.

Popular culture was criticized by feminists for its cultural portrayal and propagation of gendered inequalities and was renounced as it “is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony” (Storey, 1997: 12,129). Particularly second wave feminists denounced popular media for not just misrepresentation of women in general but also particularly for distorted image of feminism and feminists. Negative depiction of feminism such as bra-burning, fanatic, radical, mannish, feminist was circulated in media culture “so long as to have become one of the most familiar symbols in the contemporary political landscape and cultural imagination” (Hinds & Jackie, 2001: 153). Whether it's true or false, the general representation of

feminism was “shrill, overly aggressive, man-hating, ball-busting, selfish, hairy, extremist, deliberately unattractive women with absolutely no sense of humor who see sexism at every turn” (Douglas, 1995: 7). This unattractive bra-burner figure leads to the perception of feminism as anti-feminine in the public mind. Feminists are characterized and depicted as enemies of beauty and femininity and feminism “preserve of only the unstable, mannish, unattractive woman who has naturally difficult relationship to her own femininity” and who just wants to spoil normal women’s lives by making them feel bad about their “normal” life choices” (Whelehan, 2000: 18). There is a need to highlight that, popular media representation of feminism as anti-femininity is not ungrounded but indeed, presented in many feminist writings. The feminist movement and feminist identity often appear as the rejection of femininity. In feminist thinking, “women’s quest for femininity and beauty is often constituted as a ‘problem’ and a major cause of women’s oppression” (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 23). For many second-wave feminists, the reason of women oppression and disempowerment lies on “ that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity” (Beauvoir, 1949: 12). Betty Friedan declares that women enslavement of femininity leads to “ the problem that has no name, a vague undefined wish for “something more” than washing dishes, ironing, punishing and praising the children” (Friedan, 1963: 54). Mary Daly denounces femininity stating that;

Femininity is man-made construct, having essentially nothing to do with femaleness (...) the ultimately deceptive glorification of femininity, convincing women that its desirable for men and also desired by them, luring females into forgetting the falseness of femininity, blinding us to the fact that femininity is quintessentially a male attribute” (Daly, 1995: 68).

She condemns femininity of women calling these women as “man-made” and “painted birds” that “become ‘living’ dead women” (Daly, 1995: 334,67). Joanne Hollows envision femininity as inferior to masculinity and states that “equality between men and women might be achieved if women rejected feminine values and behavior in favor of masculine values and behavior” (Hollows, 2000: 10). Consequently, second-wave feminists in order to pursue ideal equality abandoned femininity as a fundamental reason for women oppression. Thus, anti-feminine stances and their distinction of ‘real woman’ and feminine woman have to lead the emergence

of new post-feminist voices who appreciate their femininity and support re-articulation of femininity. Essentially, beginning from the 1980s;

The relationship between feminism and the popular – and, associated with this, femininity – was reconceptualized, and new terms like popular feminism, postfeminism, and third wave feminism started to appear to mark a changed social, cultural and political context (qt in Genz & A.Brabon, 2009: 24).

Feminist commentators of media “envision postfeminism as a white ‘chick’ backlash that denies class, avoids race, ignores (older) age, and ‘straight’-jackets sexuality” (Holmlund, 2005: 117). Post-feminist heroines have professional careers, often in traditionally in man-dominated vocations, and mostly, the story focus on romance rather than an action. Post-feminist films are troublesome for feminists, as for feminist viewpoint they entail and promotes adverse tendencies.

(...) postfeminism already incorporates a negotiation with hegemonic forces in simultaneously assuming the achievement and desirability of gender equality on the one hand while repeatedly associating such equality with the loss on the other (Tasker & Negra, 2005: 108).

That is to say, total equality that feminism advocates and demands cost some sorts of emotionally, relationally, romantically lost for women. Films portray female achievement at entering traditionally man subjugated fields but the result of this is some kind of lost in personal women, and mostly causing personal unhappiness. Films are mostly centered on dissatisfaction where feminism has the abandoned woman. Often in a post-feminist context “a well-educated white female professional displays her “empowerment” and caring nature by withdrawing from the workforce (and symbolically from the public sphere) to devote herself to husband and family” (Tasker & Negra, 2005: 108). Most post-feminist media are intrigued by the question of work vs. family. Often in post-feminist contexts, a woman's career causes unhappiness because of mental health, reproductive difficulties, problems in relationship and marriage.

Another important characteristic of post-feminist media is, the notion of sisterhood is totally absent. It emphasizes the post-feminist idea that the individual woman must face her own problems. The problems of women are the result of personal

choice and no woman actually make decisions based on sisterhood. Women experiencing problem need to solve them based on own competence such as private insight and personal carriage rather than public or collective actions (Press, 1991: 39).

Regardless of the fact that it is hard to define exact characteristics of postfeminism, however, we can establish some basic elements of postfeminism. Postfeminism tends to be person-centered rather than women-centered focusing on humanity rather than biology. Women, femininity, and gender are important are important but they can not view separately from men. Women as human beings separate and at the same time different from men are still in the area of concern in postfeminism. The individuality of male and female is acknowledged, appreciated and even glorified as it does not put genders in hierarchical order. It embraces multiplicity and individualism accepting the notion that experience and priorities may differ according to race, religion, conditions, ideologies and so on under the umbrella term of 'anything goes'. Essentialism and biological determinism are key factors of postfeminism. Within this, a resurgence of family values, acceptance of masculinity, femininity, motherhood, domesticity become vital themes. Additionally, addressing these issues to women business lives opens new possibilities for women into balancing their work and family. Subsequently, as we defined elements of postfeminism we can now step to analyzing post-feminist elements in literature and perceive the representation of postfeminism in literature.

CHAPTER III

3.1. Post-Feminist Aspects in *Tracks* and *Beloved*

As the theory itself, Postfeminism in literature has various interpretations among scholars. As it is a relatively new term compared to feminism, a few pieces of research have been done regarding the representation of postfeminism in literature. Most researches done in this theme, associated postfeminism with popular culture chick lit literature. Indeed, many scholars name chick lit literature as post-feminist literature. However, I aim to show post-feminist elements in the works of two prominent writers of America and explore whether and how postfeminism represented in their works. As discussed in Chapter 2 the characteristics and definition of postfeminism are hard to define and conceptualize, nevertheless, I will analyze the works according to three themes – post-feminist representation of femininity, post-feminist representation of masculinity, and post-feminist representation of maternity. The writers I choose for my research differ from many of their counterparts as they depict alternative history far away from dominant perceived history. The reader is able to see history through nonwestern eyes. As a well known saying states ‘ the history is written by winners’, these writers depict the history from the perspective of ‘losers’.

The history of the United States is often described as glory. However, at what expenses this glory achieved is either ignored or silenced. These expenses are referred to as past which should be put behind. However, two prominent writers with non-western heritage show readers all the horrors of ‘glory’ of the United States and allow contemporary readers to confront the reality of this glory. They show their readers that, the history is not over, instead of these writers revision history with the stories of previously silenced people. Morrison and Erdrich allow the reader to see history through non-western eyes. Their works provide an alternative history that previously silenced. Remembering might be difficult and painful but the people who suffered should not be forgotten. Erdrich depicts stories of Native Americans, whereas, Morrison retells stories of African Americans. Both writers “re-tell history through the lives of ordinary people, with women characters who struggle in a world created for the conveniences of others” (Negro, 2000: 18). Throughout these characters and their

lives, readers learn the history that was never told before. Erdrich and Morrison were able to revise and re-vision American history depicting the plight and trauma of the displaced American Indian and the African ex-slave.

Louise Erdrich's characters live in a world that completely changed, where their land, resources, culture and their way of life have been robbed. Morrison's characters struggle to forget the horrors of their past so that they can begin a new life in freedom. Through their works and the characters both writers,

offer the reader a fresh look at American history and the issues of cultural conflict, the outcome of cultural domination, and the horrors and terrible repercussions of slavery without apology, without comment, and without resolution. Perhaps there is no resolution (Negro, 2000: 21).

3.2. Louise Erdrich

Louise Erdrich is one of the best known and important writers of a contemporary American writer who is one of the significant authors of the Indian Renaissance. Louise Erdrich's writing can be placed within the period normally referred to as the second Native American Renaissance, the period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, where Native women writers became far more prolific and began to prioritize female protagonists and plots (Huhndorf, 2009: 114). With a mixed heritage, as a child of German-American father and Ojibwa mother, she presents distinguishing narrative style with the use of intratextuality and multiple narrators, that presents the readers a possibility to interpret her fictional world from different angles. She is the author of fifteen novels and volume of poetry, children books, and short stories. Her book *The Round House* won National Book award for Fiction, her first novel *Love Medicine* won the National Book Critics Cycle Award, the book *The Plague of Doves* won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Erdrich has received the Library of Congress Prize in American Fiction, the prestigious PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction, and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

As one of her prominent themes Louise explores the perception of femininity and gender identity. She resists the typical image of Native American women

perceived by Western culture. Louise also opposes the Western concept of femininity, gender roles, and gender identities by deconstructing these stereotypes in her works. In her novels, she creates a wide range of characters to deconstruct Western concepts of gender and bring to focus on diversity.

3.2.1. Life and Works

Louise Erdrich was born in 1954, in Minnesota to a German-American father and half French-American half Ojibwa (North American Indian tribe) mother. Her parents were teachers. Growing up with a big family with a diverse background, strongly contributed her future life as well as works. Her “strong sense of connection to the community” (Stookey, 1999: 1) exposed in each of her novels. Beginning from her early childhood she heard stories that lead her “ to appreciate the world of possibilities invoked by a storyteller's voice” (1). She was attracted to the sounds and rhythms of stories that “rise, break, and fall.” Erdrich began to write stories when she was a small child with the encouragement and support of her parents. Indeed, the memories of her family, as well as family stories made a great impression of Erdrich that reflects itself in her novels in many ways. The told stories or memories of childhood occasionally emerge in her novels. For example, her grandparents ran a butcher shop in a town she was born. We encounter these memories in her works like the poem *Butcher's wife*, the novels *The Beet Queen* (1986), *Tracks* (1988), and *Tales of Burning Love* (1996).

She went to Dartmouth College where she met her future husband Michael Dorris. Erdrich majored in English and Creative Writing during her college years. She also took some courses on Native American studies that led her to be more interested in her Ojibwa background. Before enrolling graduate school she worked as a waitress, a lifeguard, a sugar beet weeder, a cucumber picker, and a construction worker provided the experience that later would be referred while writing novels. In 1978 she was accepted M.A program in Creative Writing at John Hopkins University. During university years she wrote many of her poems that later published in *Jacklight* as well as began to try her hand in fiction with the novel *Tracks*. Later after the graduate school of John Hopkins University, she started working within an urban Indian community

that helped her realize that “that her own Native tradition was an important part of her life and something that she wanted to write about” (Stokey, 1999: 4).

In 1981, Erdrich married Michael Dorris and the couple has 6 children, which three of them were Native American children adopted by Michael Dorris as a single man. Later their marriage turned into a literary partnership, as they began to write romance fiction under the name of Milou North a genderless pseudonym. With the encouragement of Dorris, Erdrich competed for the Nelson Algren Fiction Award with her story “The World’s Greatest Fisherman” and won the prestigious Award in 1982 and “it was with this prize that she truly launched her writing career” (7). In 1996, the couple separated after fifteen years of marriage, and the following year Dorris committed suicide. Erdrich and her biological daughters live in Minnesota, where she continues her writing projects and owns an independent bookstore Birchbarks Books.

Erdrich first novel *Love Medicine* was published in 1984 and “garnered more literary awards, according to Publishers Weekly than any other book in printing history (1984 National Critics Circle Book Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters Prize, Los Angeles Times Novel of the Year, among many others)” (Lincoln, 1993: 209). *Love Medicine* started tetralogy that includes *The Beet Queen* (1986), *Tracks* (1988), and *The Bingo Palace* (1994) encompasses the story of four Anishinaabe families that somehow connected to each other. Her later books *Tales of Burning Love* (1996), *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse* (2001), and *Four Souls* (2004) also contain independent stories of Indian American families. These novels were compared to William Faulkner novels due to multi-voice narration and non-chronological storytelling. *An Antelope’s Wife* (1998) was the first book she released after her husband’s suicide, also she denied any relationship between her life and characters, the novel has a self-distractive husband. Her book, *The Master Butchers Singing Club* (2003) was finalist National Book Award, a novel *A Plague of Doves* (2008) was shortlisted for Pulitzer Prize, the novel *The Round House* (2012) won National Book Award. Her most recent novels encompass *LaRose* (2016) and *Future Home of Living God* (2017).

Erdrich’s non-fiction book *The Blue Jay’s Dance* (1995) involves her pregnancy and birth of her first child. She also published a number of children books

based on Native American people. Her short stories were collected in a book *Red Convertible: Collected and New Stories* (2009). Erdrich's poems were collected in books such as *Jacklight* (1984), *Baptism of Desire* (1989) and *Original Fire: New and Selected Poems* (2003). Erdrich was rewarded U.S Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction in 2015.

In Erdrich works her native Chippewa (Ojibwa) tribe's traditional imaginary played the great role the great role. According to Chippewa mythology, the Creator Gatchi Manito took the four parts of the Mother Earth - earth, wind, fire, and water, and breathed life into them with the help of the Sacred Shell. So, a man was born from the synthesis of the four elements and the breath of the Creator. Water is the blood of Mother Earth, and underground rivers - its veins. In one of the legends of the Chippewa, it is said that Mother Earth generates the Water of Life, which feeds animals, races, shadows, and people. Louise Erdrich believes that her four novels - *Love Medicine* (1984), *The Beet Queen* (1986), *Tracks* (1988) and *The Bingo Palace* (1994) – constitute a single whole of mythology as each novel defines one of the four elements.

Naturally, in the debut novel *Love Medicine* which received the National Award of Literary Critics and became a bestseller, is the element of water- the element of ground zero.

Heroes of Erdrich simultaneously exist in the world of the Indian reservation and in the world of the American city and in the transition from cultural space to another, changing the hypostasis of their identity. For the depiction of this process of “overflowing”, the writer of recourse to the metaphoric associated with the element of water, while filling it with both Christian and Indian meaning. In the fate of her characters, Erdrich shows that the western component of their bicultural world often has a destructive effect on the person, because writer associates it with the elements of fire, while the life-giving principle is embodied by water. Repeated comparison of human veins with rivers, which goes back to the Indian myths, creates the image of water as a blood bond, of the unifying generation. However, Louise Erdrich does not propose to delete the Western culture from Native Americans lives: she demonstrates

that critically, in some ways even ironically the attitude towards it creates a viable combination in which the prevailing role belongs nevertheless to the Indian heritage.

3.2.2. The Novel *Tracks* – Background Information

Published in 1988 *Tracks* is the third novel of the tetralogy retelling the stories of intertwined American Indian families. Actually, *Tracks* is the earliest of the novels that present the background story of some characters in the tetralogy. The novel is set in the period from 1912 to 1924 which is the historical period after the implementation of the 1887 Dawes Allotment Act. Known as 'Dawes Act' provided law for the distribution of Indian reservation land among individual tribe members. The Act was meant to encourage Indian to leave their traditional hunting and gathering practices instead use their land for profitable enterprises. In other words, the Act urged Native Americans to adopt the values of capitalist culture and assimilate to that social order.

The connection between ownership of land and the loss of traditional ways of life is of crucial interest in *Tracks*, for the characters who resist assimilation, who in fact refuse complicity in the exploitation of their land, are left with insufficient means to pay the fees or taxes they are told that they owe (Stookey, 1999: 72).

The Act unexpectedly resulted in deterioration of Indian life and social life in tribes. Members of the tribe even friends and families were divided one against other. *Tracks* depict the consequences of the Act, although Erdrich never cites the Act directly. Stookey names *Tracks* as Erdrich's "most overtly political novel" as it "directly portrays the historical circumstances of which these characters are survivors and thus invokes images of cultural catastrophe" (Stookey, 1999: 70). The novel depicts the story of characters that not only lose their family land but also "imminent loss of Indian people's traditional values" (72).

3.2.3. Post-feminist Elements of the Novel

As most of her books in *Tracks* Erdrich opposes conventional Western presumption of Indian life. The land before white people occupation was not wilderness but it was home and "the people were not lighting out for territory. The women in my books are lighting out for home" (Pearlman, 1989: 145). Home is a place

of comfort, not oppression as Western feminism depicts. It is a woman naturally, not a man, who “shape, inspire, and guide everyday life” (Cooperman, 1999: 111).

Family units are the primary source of personal identity. Food is important whether grown, harvested or hunted it is expected to share. Women are absolute control of the food supply in Ojibwa as in many other traditional societies. It is a universal custom to offer food as soon as a visitor enters the room.

The opposing prevalent Western assumption of female inferiority and powerlessness, as well as the traditional Western depiction of Indian women as virgin princess or squaws, the women in Erdrich novels, are commonly are important to the tribe happiness and prosperity. They give advice, make decisions, and manage a property. Young women are powerful and older women are honored for their wisdom and knowledge. Marriage described in Erdrich novels more an equal partnership rather than unevenly balanced property criticized by Western feminists. Women are independent, they can remarry several times or enjoy their singleness.

3.2.3.1. Maternity

As many of Erdrich's novels in *Tracks* maternity plays a central role in the interconnected relationship of land, tradition, culture, identity, and community. The novel protagonist in some form distanced from mother/daughter relationship and therefore, displaced literally and symbolically. This distraction of mother/daughter relationship resulting displacement of a child functions as a metaphor of community's disruption of tradition, culture, and land. However adoptive mother figure performs on the novel as grounding the displaced characters, as well as to restore their relationship with the land and raise awareness of their heritage. Motherhood in Erdrich's novels serves as a force of creation and reunion which is centered on cultural rebirth. Maternity has a maternal, live-giving regenerative power that “ tribal continuance, relational sense of community and identity, the restoration of the matriarchy, and a spiritual connection to Mother Earth” (Doney, 2009: 6). Motherhood is important in the continuation of tradition and culture. “Native American women long have been associated with the continuance of tribal tradition, both through childbearing and through transmission of cultural values in stories” (O'Reilly, 2004: 174). Mothers are

the ones who tell stories, which injects traditional and cultural values, practices, spiritual epistemologies. It is no surprise that the novel itself takes part in an oral tradition, so the maternity builds community. Mothers are vital for relational identity:

Feeling at home in the traditional sense, [sic] is sensing one's relationship to one's social, geographic, and cosmic networks, as well as to one's immediate and extended family. Mother is not merely one's biological parent; she is all one's relations (male and female, human and animal, individual and tribal), and she is connected to the earth (Doney, 2009: 177).

In *Tracks*, motherhood is vital for the tribal community, as mothers develop relational identities based on tradition, culture, community, and landscape. "Native women viewed the Earth as their Mother, who gave life to plants, just as they, the women, gave life to their children" (McGowen, 2006: 54).

In *Tracks*, we observe empowering of motherhood. However, we can also observe the juxtaposition of motherhood. Native Mothers feel socially and personally empowered through their family and children. Lands are their home and shelter from the outside world. Biological mother Fleur and adoptive/surrogate mother Nanapush are not fighting for the land they are actually struggling for their home and family. Fleur decides to save her baby even though she got pregnant as a consequence of rape. Whereas, Pauline- a mother character with Western assimilation- desperately tries to kill her baby in her womb. Pauline "who rejects all of the aspects of her Indian heritage" (Hughes, 2000: 96) including a natural function of her body, her femininity, which includes her sexuality and motherhood. She is in the belief that "If I gave birth, I would be lonelier. I saw, and I saw too well. I would be an outcast, a thing set aside for God's use, a human who could be touched by no other human" (Louise, 1988:135). For her, motherhood is a burden that will upside down her life. "Instead of representing connection and community, even family at its most basic level, she believes motherhood will bring isolation" (Doney, 2009: 17). She rejects motherhood in the fear of alienation and status. Pauline behavior and thoughts confirm Western feminist thought of maternity. Setting juxtaposition of Native motherhood and Western motherhood, Erdrich critiques Western feminism that diminishes motherhood alongside with femininity and sexuality.

3.2.3.2. Gender Roles

As in her many novels, in *Tracks*, Louise Erdrich creates a variety of characters that criticize the prominent Western feminist notion of gender, femininity, and masculinity in patriarchal societies and structures. She brings into a focus a variety of possibilities of human identity, without framing them in one gender. Masculinity receives special attention in Erdrich Dakota series including *Tracks*. Nevertheless, Erdrich view of masculinity is positive we observe elements of benevolent sexism in her male characters. In *Tracks* 'nurturing male' Nanapush is the center character of the book. By her positive male characters, Erdrich criticizes feminist depiction of evil masculinity and stress the importance of male nurturing to maintaining a vital community sense of self-identity.

We see Nanapush – a masculine character - nourishing, caregiving tribal leader, with maternal feelings to other children. He saves Fleur and Fleur's daughter Lulu, heals them and adopts them as his daughters. He cares for Lulu as her mother and he recognizes the suffering of a mother losing her child:

Many times in my life, as my children were born, I wondered what it was like to be a woman, able to invent a human from the extra materials other own bodies. In the terrible times, the evils I do not speak of when the earth swallowed back all it had given me to love, I gave birth in the loss. I was like a woman in my suffering, but my children were all delivered unto death. It was contrary, backward, but now I had a chance to put things into a proper order (Louise, 1998: 167).

He is far away from the demonized masculine notion of Western feminism. Erdrich focuses on characters and personal identity rather than genders. In contrast Nanapush who embrace motherhood, Pauline character- a biological mother- who desperately seeks to abort her child and rejects her even after her birth. She struggles to recognize her as a human “it grew, or she grew” (133). While laboring she decides “to die, and let the child too, no taint of original sin on her unless she breathed air”. Erdrich highlights personality and identity rather than gender criticizing feminist man hatred and woman victimization.

3.2.3.3. Feminine power

Louise Erdrich novels portray strong women characters especially as mothers and self-made personalities with self-confidence and play an important role in their communities. In general, the novel is generally about female experience. In most of her novels, Erdrich resists the predominant view of Native American women as marginalized and powerless by creating strong female characters. Her women are portrayed as courageous, intelligent, and independent. *Tracks* is not an exception. A protagonist Fleur Pillegar a Native American woman with supernatural powers and beauty. Fleur is a powerful and fearful feminine force, she is a self-made woman and uses her power and strengths for herself and her community. Her power is related to her supernatural powers and her connection to her tradition and community. She almost drowns three times, but each time survives and others die in her place. It is because she embraces her feminine power, Misshepeshu chooses her as her lover: “it was clear that Misshepeshu, the waterman, the monster, wanted her for himself(...) He's maddened for the touch of young girls, the strong and daring especially, the ones like Fleur” (Louise, 1998: 111). She is a strong person with an abundance of power and abilities. She is aware of her feminine beauty and ability to attract men. She is a passionate woman “men made brainless fools out of themselves following. They adored her and feared her in equal measure” (72). She has the power to stand for herself and take her revenge. Although eventually, she loses her power in the novel, she survives drowning several times, overcomes rape, withstands the death of her child and endures the loss of her land that she fights for. She has always taken revenge who was wrong to him. Following her rape, offenders were found dead in the room where the incident took place “ “It was a fair-minded disaster, no one could be said to have suffered much more than the next, except for Kozka's Meats” (29). She uses her mystic feminine power the last time in the novel and takes revenge on the lumber cutters. “The wind shrieked and broke (...) swept full force upon us (...) the trees surrounding Fleur's cabin cracked off and fell away from us in a circle, pinning beneath their branches the roaring men, the horses” (223). Fleur uses the wind and trees as a weapon to fight lumber cutters. Although she loses her main power- her land, she is never dominated. She refuses to live in reservation with her family and leaves indicating that although she lost everything she has power and control over her destiny.

Fleur draws her power from Chippewa spirits, medicine her charms and her femininity and sexuality. Her acknowledgment of her culture, ancestors, heritage as well as feminine identity empower her and make her be more strong and powerful despite all the difficulties she encounters.

3.3. Toni Morrison

3.3.1. Life and Works

Toni Morrison original name Chloe Anthony Wofford is a contemporary American author, editor, and professor who the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature for being an author “who in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American reality.” She is an eighth woman and first African American women winning the prize.

She was born in 1931 in Ohio. Her family has a profound influence on her development as a writer. She spent a great deal of time with her grandparents and her childhood was filled with African American folklore, music, rituals, and myths. Storytelling was of great importance to the Wofford family. Adults, as well as children, told stories to each other in Toni's family. She admits that she recalls her childhood memories in the process of writing. In 1949 she went to Howard University where she met her future husband Harold Morrison. They married in 1958 and had two sons before divorcing in 1964. Later in 1968 she began working as an editor at Random House and became a senior editor and first African American women working for that company.

Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) was chosen to be Oprah Winfrey Book Club Selection. Her second novel *Sula* (1974) was nominated to National Book Award. The third book *Song of Solomon* (1977) won the National Book Critics Circle Award, American Academy Award and Letters Award. *Tar Baby* was published in 1987. *Beloved* (1987) received Pulitzer Prize in 1988 and is considered Morrison's masterpiece. In subsequent years she published *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1998), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), and *God Help the Child* (2015). In 1993 she was considered the best writer in the world.

Toni's novels depict the life of African American people in depth. The influence of writers like Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner can be noticed in her novel which is not coincidentally. She studied these writers deeply during her college years as she wrote her master thesis on these authors.

Morrison writes about women experiences but she refused to label her works as a feminist and she doesn't want to be labeled as feminist. In the interview with Zia Jaffrey Morrison emphasizes: "I don't subscribe to patriarchy, and I don't think it should be substituted with matriarchy. I think it's a question of equitable access, and opening doors to all sorts of things" (The Salon Interview with Toni Morrison).

3.3.2. The Novel *Beloved*

3.3.2.1. Background information

The novel is based on real story of Margaret Granter, a woman who runs away from slavery but was followed and found by her landowner. She decided to murder her children rather than witnessing them enslaved and was able to kill one of her children. The novel portrayals the life of a former slave Sethe who escaped the slavery with her children and when slave hunters found them, she kills her 2 years old daughter to save her from the life as a slave. Through the novel, this horrifying decision figuratively and literally haunts her. The book challenge enigmas of "what it means to be a man and also what it means to be a mother when the basic elements of freedom and humanity are denied" (Gillespie, 2008: 19).

The novel portrayals the characters that were enslaved and their life after slavery. Their trauma is so deep that their memories continuously haunt them and remind them of their experience of as one's property. The character Beloved is the representation of all this traumas, loss, violation. The novel mainly explores the story of two former slave – Sethe and Paul D. – who try to begin a new life despite their traumas and loss. The main character Sethe questions about what it is about to be a woman – mother, wife, friend, daughter – as a slave within the limited opportunity and choices. Sethe decides to run away from the farm when she realizes that the person who owns her and her children doesn't see them as human. She escapes slavery and lives nearly a month in freedom. During this short time, she has a chance to explore

herself as human. She was able to nurture her children, to play with them, to make conversation with other women, to establish relationships and friendship, to grieve her losses. She becomes a free person with her destiny in her hand. When her former master arrives she refuses to return to life as a slave where she has no control of her body, herself and unable to resist to what happens to her children. She decides to take the life of her children rather than return them to slavery. She manages to kill her older daughter before stopped by Stamp Paid. This action saves her from slavery as her master refuses his rights of her thinking that she is has gone mad. However, with this choice, she gets herself into another slavery – the slavery of the past. “The guilt she feels about her decision prohibits her from allowing herself to live” (Gillespie, 2008:30).

3.3.3. Post-feminist Elements of the Novel

3.3.3.1. Motherhood

Motherhood is one of the central themes in many novels of Morrison. Morrison's theory of motherhood, indeed, radically different from the established dominant view of motherhood. Her novels indicate the significance of maternity and portray maternity as an integral part of women state of being. In the face of feminism, Morrison bravely questions women's filly fulfillment without motherhood. She questions what happens to a family when women choose to be free and independent. She criticizes feminist standards which define women independence and freedom apart from her family and mother line. Morrison defines maternity as the power of woman and that is concerned with the empowerment of children. Morrison's;

Motherhood centers upon the recognition that mothering, in its concern with the physical and psychological well-being of children and its focus upon the empowerment of children, has cultural and political import, value, and prominence, and that motherhood, as a consequence, is a site of power for black women” (O'Reilly, 2004: 4).

Morrison defines motherhood as a “freeing, generative experience” (20) which contradicts to the predominant image of maternity in Western society. In a context of Western feminism, motherhood is viewed as an institution organized by patriarchy that

aims to reinforce women oppression. In contrast, for Morrison, maternity is liberation and self-realization. While dominant Western culture requires women to choose between work and motherhood, in African American culture, as well as in all ancient cultures, motherhood and work are integrated thus, motherhood is both political and public enterprise. In her book *The Motherline: Every Woman's Journey to Find Her Female Roots* (1992), Naomi Lewinsky states that many women today have lost the authenticity and authority of their womanhood because they get disconnected from their motherline. According to Lewinsky women empowerment is only possible if women reconnect to mother line.

Like Louise Erdrich, Toni Morrison also values mothering as “cultural bearers and define themselves in connection with African American culture and history, and who serve as ambassadors for their people, bringing the past to the present and keeping African American culture in the community of black people” (O'Reilly, 2004: 23). In Morrison fiction the women who embrace the Western definition of feminism don't achieve ‘fullness, completeness of self’, indeed, “these qualities can be obtained only by those women who live their life according to the ancient properties of their foremothers” (24). In her fiction motherhood is depicted as a site of power. Unlike most white female writers who portray motherhood as a conflict between work and home, Morrison's preserves motherhood and work as essential and integrated dimensions of women role and identity. The women in her novels are never in a struggle of balancing work and family. Rather, Morrison centers on providing best mother work - both inside and outside of the home of - for empowerment the children despite racism and poverty.

In the novel, *Beloved* Morrison focuses on the desperate struggle of mothers – at times, extreme measures particularly murdering – in order to protect and nurture their children. Sethe murders her 2 years old baby in order not to have her suffered from slavery like herself. The novel depicts Sethe challenges and struggles for nurturance and preservation of her child in the face of slavery, poverty, and racism. Morrison also criticizes modern feminism and system who urges the mother to start working shortly after the birth. For Morrison, ultimate freedom for women is to be able to breastfeed her child: “For Sethe, one of the ultimate expressions of freedom and of mother love is having the ability, the time, and the freedom to provide milk for

her children—a basic function often denied to women who were enslaved” (Gillespie, 2008: 26) as well as modern ‘free’ women. Sethe is unable to breastfeed her child at times, either because she is forced to work or her milk is taken from her for white children. Her motivation for survival is to get to save her milk for her breastfeeding daughter. Sethe’s main purpose of leaving Sweet Home is to nurture and protect her children. She is not able to do it as she has to leave them and do the work that was expected from her as a slave. She leaves Sweet Home because she wants mothering, her children, she wants to watch them grow, to play with them in order words to be a mother of her children. This basic right is taken from her in the way of slavery. However, modern women have no much difference from Sethe. With the efforts of Western feminism, motherhood is preserved as drudgery and obstacle for women - a patriarchal institution established to keep women at home. A modern woman also obliged to return to ‘paid slavery’ much before the end of the breastfeeding period.

Stephanie Demetrakopolous argues that “milk is the symbol of mother's love” (Demetrakopoulos, 1982: 439) in women writings. In *Beloved* Sethe’s brutally taken milk as wet nurse represents stolen mother's love. The slave women mostly were not allowed to nurse their babies, and when they were, it is only allowed after nursing white babies. Alongside mother's milk, her love was also taken from a slave woman and she and her children were forced put up with what had left after white masters and their children. Her milk, her time, her body didn't belong to her as well as her children. Sethe explains her murder and relationship between mother's love and milk:

The little white babies got it first and I got what was left. Or none. There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you; to have to fight and holler for it, and to have so little left. I'll tell Beloved about that; she'll understand. She, my daughter. The one I managed to have milk for and to get it to her even after they stole it; (. . .) (Morrison, 1987: 215).

Throughout the novel breast milk signifies mother's love: “sure enough, she had milk enough for all” (100), “Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children.” (200), “I have your milk (. . .) I brought your milk” (216). Mostly, for this reason, Sethe gets ruined when her milk is ‘stolen’ by white men, it is a

representation of mother love that was denied to her as a slave woman. When she was cowhided by a white man, it wasn't the pain but the loss of her baby's milk intolerable:

“They used cowhide on you?”

“And they took my milk.”

“They beat you and you were pregnant?”

“And they took my milk!” (17).

In contrast of feminism encouraging women to leave their babies to social support centers and return to work as soon as possible, Morrison emphasizes the importance for a mother to take care of her child, and how it is important for a child. A child needs its mother it is only a mother who could love him\her proper.

Nobody was going to nurse her like me. Nobody was going to get it to her fast enough or take it away when she had enough and didn't know it. Nobody knew that she couldn't pass her air if you held her up on your shoulder, only if she was lying on my knees. Nobody knew that but I and nobody had her milk but me (16).

Feminist readers often criticize Sethe character “for defining her identity through her maternal role” (O'Reilly, 2004: 137). According to Carole Boyce Davies Sethe reinforces gender ideological perception of identifying woman through her motherhood. Actually, in all Morrison's novels mother's position protection and nurturance of their children in the center of their lives. This is not because they are too enslaved by maternal identity but because this nurturance and protection is a political act and social act – a rebellion, a site of resistance. By protection and nurturance mother instills the love of self to her children, enables them to be humans in a society that denies their humanity and give them power, confidence to live in a highly racist environment. Morrison “doesn't limit women's role in the society to motherhood” (Ghasemi and Hajizadeh, 2012: 478) in contrast, these mothers are never only a mother, they are workers, lovers, sisters, friends and so on. Indeed, Morrison portrays her mother characters as “independent, strong, determined, and self-seeking” (478). These mothers claim their maternal identity not apart from these social roles but in the parallel of them. Hence, Morrison criticizes feminist dominant ideology of

motherhood which defines motherhood as a patriarchal institution and reinforcing women social enslavement. In Morrison's novel women struggle to be a mother in a time when it is denied or prohibited to them. They embrace motherhood as a site of resistance to society which denies women motherhood. Morrison revisions all dominant stereotypes of motherhood to be particular of Black motherhood and shows her readers different perspectives of femininity and motherhood. Her mothers are free, independent, strong, and their maternity helps them to explore “the best thing” in themselves while giving them the site of power, and courage to survive despite all hard conditions like slavery and racism.

3.3.3.2. Femininity

In the 1960s a group of French women scholars – Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray – developed a critical literary theory referred as *écriture féminine*, which can be interpreted as women's writing or feminine writing. According to these scholars “ Western thought was constructed on the structural absence of women's experiences” (Notenboom, 2013: 4). There are mis-and-underrepresentation of aspects of femininity, namely motherhood and maternal in the literature (p. 4). These women scholars set difference between woman's books and feminine text “A feminine text challenges and aims to undo some of the fallacious attitudes towards and about women and their sexuality in Western culture, language, and history” (3). According to Notenboom, Morrison's novel should also be read as *écriture féminine* as it “deconstructs and rewrite the history, philosophy while reforming language and social structures in Western thought and culture”.

According to French women, scholars *écriture féminine* can be categorized under three themes–language, sexuality, and maternal. Here, comprehensive information on these themes and how they portrayed in the novel, will be analyzed.

3.3.3.3. Language

Language is an essential concept in the *écriture féminine*. Women writing is poetic just like her sexuality. “ A bodily rhythm will be visible in her language” (10). The narratøve is not linear but circular. “Her speech, even when ‘theoretical' or ‘political', is never simple or linear or ‘objectified', generalized: she draws her story

into history” (Notenboom, 2013: 10). It should have poetic characteristics. In a close reading of *Beloved* these aspects of *écriture féminine* can be easily noticed. Morrison uses, metaphors, multiple narratives, poetic. She uses gaps, puns, silences, and empty spaces which make Morrison's novel appear poetic. The narration shifts, several voices mix, there are silences and empty spaces, punctuations either is missing or using differently. There is no linear approach, instead, circularity and circle metaphors dominate in the novel, supporting Cixous idea of “fluid nature of feminine writing”. The language doesn't have discerning contours as Cixous claims “Her writing can only keep going without ever inscribing or discerning contours” (12). It is like the sea, the fluidness of the female discourse:

She said you wouldn't hurt me.

She hurt me.

I will protect you.

I want her face.

Don't love her too much (Morrison, 1998: 215).

The language goes on with a parallel between past and present. There is no end and beginning, accordingly, supporting the idea fluidness of Cixous.

3.3.3.4. Female Sexuality

The complexity of female sexuality, love, and desire in relation to slavery is addressed by Morrison in *Beloved*. There are several different types of representation of their bodies, their sexuality, and their love. There is the meaning that is ascribed to their bodies from the colonial point of view. Then there is the meaning that they give, as subjects, to their own and other bodies. Additionally, their drives and desires are formed by the institution of slavery. Morrison shows how the women express their sexuality, love, and desire by establishing positions which they can inhabit as women.

Cixous, Kristeva, and Irigaray envisioned a liberation of sexuality in which the female experiences are voiced and implemented. Morrison achieves this through the literary device of the novel. By filing the novel as historical fiction, Toni Morrison is able to subtly give a voice to the female experience within the existing historical

discourse. She examines female sexuality, love, and desires under the yoke of slavery. Through abuse and pain slaves became estranged from their bodies. It is through the character of Sethe that Morrison tells about the complex nature of the feminine and slavery. She describes how on Sethe back blooms a cherry oak tree, a collage of scars made by a whip on the night that she escaped. On the front, her breasts, which are described as tired, symbolize her complex and consuming maternal role. It is Paul D who reads her bodily discourse. In the final scene between these two characters, Paul offers to bathe Sethe. Although her dialogue seems simple, it reveals a lot about Sethe's sexuality, drives, and desires. Wanting to reconcile with her past, she believes Paul D could hold the key. Yet she is afraid that her body, which represents the different aspects of her self, the mother, the lover, the slave, will fall apart. "Will he do her in sections? First her face, then her hands, her thighs, her feet, her back? Ending with her exhausted breasts? And if he bathes her in sections, will the parts hold?" (Morrison, 2007: 321). Her bodily discourse voices the tiredness and uncertainties she feels, but also the willingness to finally place herself in someone else's hands. "(...) the relationship here is not one of merging or of domination but of resonating "likeness" and empathic understanding," says Barbara Schapiro in her essay "The Bond of Love and the Boundaries of Self in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1991). It is exactly the kind of relationship of "her (and his) body and to the other body" of which Cixous speaks according to Conley in *Hélène Cixous: Writing the Feminine* (1976). Paul D is able to understand Sethe by reading her body. Through Sethe Morrison shows how the body can be used to communicate to the self and connect to other bodies. This bodily inscription of desire in *Beloved* can be linked to French *écriture féminine*. "In the body. – More so than men who are coaxed toward social success, toward sublimation, women are the body" (Cixous, 1976: 886). The perspectives, positions, and desires in the story are inhabitable by women as women and that is how *écriture féminine* is used as a method in *Beloved*.

3.3.3.5. Masculinity

Although, Morrison's novels mainly read as woman-centered, alongside with femininity she also explores the construction of masculinities through her male characters. Morrison tells stories of black male characters, explores their manhood

complicated by race and history. Rather than focusing on women life and experiences as a slave, Morrison demonstrates concern both with man and woman. She depicts the stories and experiences of black masculinities as a slave within the oppressive and horrific circumstances. Even though, it seems as a Sethe story. *Beloved* is also a story of male characters such as Paul D, Sixo, Helle. Indeed, in the novel, *Beloved* women stories are incomplete without a man. As Morrison states “The book was not about the institution-Slavery with a capital S. It was about these anonymous people called slaves. What they do to keep on, how they make a living, what they're willing to risk, however long it lasts, in order to relate to one another--that was incredible to me” (Angela, 1989: 120).

Despite the fact that central voice belongs to a woman, the stories of male characters such as Paul D., Sixo, Helle “put...next to her” (Sitter, 1992: 18) making the story complete. Morrison's depiction of manhood highly challenges and contrasts the dominant white culture perception of manhood, particularly African American manhood. Through her male characters, Morrison challenges Western values by values rooted in African culture. She articulates and validates a worldview of other than dominant white culture. As many dominant cultures believe and values, masculinity is also challenged in the novel *Beloved*. Morrison draws alternative masculinity that at once both strong and humane. Further, the paper will be dealing with a deeper analysis of male characters and their masculinities portrayed in the novel.

One of the pivotal male characters in the novel is Sixo. He is unmixed African come and grown in Africa. He knows his roots and culture. He “has the qualities of strength and endurance associated with a warrior, but without the violence that is an integral part of a warrior's life” (Dzregah, 2013: 493). Sixo is loving, a patient person who cherishes his lover. Although he wants to be with his lover- Patsy, he sends her back to the plantation to prevent her from possible trouble come by her owner. He helps his woman Patsy and Sethe and her children to escape at the expense of his own life.

By Sixo character Morrison also challenges ecofeminism associating nature female and femininity. Six has a deep love and respect for nature. Sixo believes that Nature is a living thing that communicates with a human. He asks the wind to help him

find his love who apparently lost her way and the wind helps him. Opposite to white culture, that “demeaning, dissecting, and desecrating others” (Dzregah, 2013: 493) Sixo has respect to other cultures. Once, he asks permission before entering (Redman's) Native American's structure.

Alongside with loving caring nature, Sixo demonstrates masculine skills of strength and endurance and athletic abilities. His character “illustrates the complex nature of masculinities by revealing how apparently contradictory qualities can constitute a positive type of masculinity” (494). Sixo has manly qualities of love and gentleness. Despite his masculine traits he doesn't hurt or dominate his friends. He uses his strength and skills to protect and help his beloved and friends. `

Another positive portrayal of masculinity in the novel is Helle. Helle is very gentle, hard-working, and the most pleasant of the Sweet Home men. He is an intelligent and loving person. He is a loving son that buys his mother's freedom at the expense of his time. He is depicted as a compassionate man. He cherishes Sethe and treats her as equal. With the character, Helle Morrison portrays a positive and nurturing kind of masculinity. Morrison alternative masculinity characterized by Sixo demonstrates compassion, love, respect for women, other cultures and nature. Through Helle, Morrison shows the nurturing, sacrificial, loving and intelligent masculinities.

CONCLUSION

My aim in the paper was to analyze the term postfeminism, present the theories and definition of the term and try to give some characteristics of postfeminism. In order to, understand postfeminism the first chapter gave the outline of feminism and some drawbacks and critique of feminism that for some scholars lead to the emergence of feminism. The first chapter gave an overview of the historical and theoretical phrases of feminism that provides the theoretical foundation of postfeminism. The opposite opinions presented in the chapter provide a theoretical basis for post-feminism. To the greatest extent, the opposite opinions I have presented, as well as a limited frame that feminism imposes with the inclusion of some and exclusion of other women, have to lead the emergence of postfeminism firstly in public and then in academic discourse. Postfeminism to some extent represents the voices of marginalized, excluded women against hegemonic feminism which tends to dictate women the style of living and exclude and denounce anyone who choose a different way of living.

Like feminism that has no unified agenda and definition, postfeminism as well is hard to define and frame. However, in the second chapter, I tried to give all possible definitions and interpretations of the term. The term has a different interpretation from various scholars. We learned that the term causes various discussions in academic contexts, beginning with the prefix 'post' in the postfeminism. For some scholars 'post' means after that points out a shift in feminism - a new discourse in feminism. For other scholars 'post' means 'anti' that is postfeminism totally rejects feminism and degrading its achievements. Another vision of postfeminism is the backlash of feminism that undermines feminism, its struggles, and merits to women. Regardless of the fact that it is hard to define exact characteristics of postfeminism, however, we established some basic elements of postfeminism. Postfeminism tends to be person-centered rather than women-centered focusing on humanity rather than biology. Women, femininity, and gender are important are important but they can not view separately from men. Women as human beings separate and at the same time different from men are still in the area of concern in postfeminism. The individuality of male and female is acknowledged, appreciated and even glorified as it does not put genders in hierarchical

order. Essentialism and biological determinism are key factors of postfeminism. Within this, a resurgence of family values, acceptance of masculinity, femininity, motherhood, domesticity become vital themes.

Despite the continuous discussions between opponents and supporters, it is fact that the representation of postfeminism is frequently observed in popular culture and literature. As the term is relatively new in academic contexts especially in literature the more profound researches on the term are yet to come. The existing researches made on the post-feminist representation in literature are done as a backlash of postfeminism. Post-feminist literature is connoted with chick lit literature that focuses, mostly on consumerism, fashion, romance, sexual pleasure. The aim of the third chapter to analyze the works of two prominent American writers and track the elements of postfeminism in their works. The writers chosen for this purpose are distinguished from their counterparts for portraying the alternative history of America that enable readers to see the history from non-western eyes. Their non-western heritage and knowledge allow them to succeed in their mission. Both writers criticize and challenge dominant Western feminism presumption of gender roles, femininity, masculinity and maternity. They focus on humanity regardless of gender rather than focusing on a woman. Their novels depict women that embrace their femininity, the women in these novel doesn't see maternity as burden and obstacle but longing to care and nurture their children. Humanity is portrayed in these novels without focusing on gender. The balance in men and women relations are depicted without any struggle between them. Indeed, men stories would be incomplete without women and vise verse. The women depicted are not victims they are string independent personalities with feminine power. All these elements work together allowing us to name these writers and their novels as post-feminist.

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