

**T.C.  
MANİSA CELAL BAYAR ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI PROGRAMI**

**A QUEST FOR FEMININE IDENTITY IN TIMBERLAKE  
WERTENBAKER'S PLAYS: *NEW ANATOMIES* AND *THE  
GRACE OF MARY TRAVERSE***

**Sevim EVREN**

**Danışman  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yasemin YAVAŞLAR ÖZAKINCI**

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## ÖZET

### TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER'IN *NEW ANATOMIES* VE *THE GRACE OF MARY TRAVERSE* ADLI OYUNLARINDA FEMİNER KİMLİK ARAYIŞI

Ataerkil toplumlar tarafından oluşturulan kadın rolleri nedeniyle maruz kaldıkları baskı ve kısıtlamalardan kurtulmanın yollarını aramaya başladıkları için, özellikle on yedinci yüzyıldan itibaren kadınlar birçok tartışmanın merkezinde olmuştur. Bu tezin ilk bölümü, farklı dönemlerde farklı amaçları ve tartışmaları içinde barındıran feminist hareketin tarihsel gelişimini sunarken, ikinci bölümde yazar ve iki oyunu feminist tartışmalar ve kimlik sorunsalı çerçevesinde incelenir. Bu çalışma, Timberlake Wertenbaker'ın *New Anatomies* ve *the Grace of Mary Traverse* adlı oyunlarında, klişe kadın kimliklerinin oluşturduğu sınırların ötesine geçerek kısıtlamalardan uzak bir kimlik arayışına giren ana kadın karakterleri incelemeyi hedefler. Yine bu çalışma gösterir ki, ataerkil sosyal yapı değişmediği sürece, klişe kadın kimliğinin değişmesi mümkün değildir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Feminizm, Tiyatro, Timberlake Wertenbaker, Kimlik, Kadın, Klişe

## ABSTRACT

### A QUEST FOR FEMININE IDENTITY IN TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER'S PLAYS: *NEW ANATOMIES* AND *THE GRACE OF MARY TRAVERSE*

Women have been in the centre of many discussions especially since the seventeenth century as they start to search for ways to get rid of the oppression and restriction which they have been exposed to because of the socially constructed female roles in the patriarchal societies. While the first part of this thesis is conducted with the historical development of the feminist movement that has had different targets and discussions at different periods, in the second part the playwright and her two plays are analyzed in the framework of feminist debates and identity question. This study aims to scrutinize the main female characters in Timberlake Wertebaker's *New Anatomies* and *the Grace of Mary Traverse* who traverse the boundaries of their stereotypical female identities and embark on quest of identity which is free from the restrictions. As this study shows, unless the patriarchal social construction changes, it is not possible to change the stereotypical female identity.

**Keywords:** Feminism, Theatre, Timberlake Wertebaker, Identity, Woman, Stereotype

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Sevim EVREN

Manisa, 2019



**For my most precious one,**

**Defne EVREN**



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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages, women have always had a secondary position both at home and in society. Today, since there are some societies that still have the characteristics of patriarchy, women in these societies are not valued as much as they deserve and they are considered to be less important, less clever, less talented compared to men. In fact, it is the society and its conventional social structure that cause this categorization between men and women. The socially constructed gender roles in this conventional structure which are defined as “the expected attitudes and behaviours a society associates with each sex” (5) by Linda L. Lindsey, attribute certain identities and responsibilities to men and women. In this context, while men are associated with the characteristics such as being strong, superior and rational, they are accordingly expected to have a good education, to work to earn money for their families and to be active in the social life. On the other hand, women are excluded from the social life and confined in the domestic life, which does not necessitate to be educated, with responsibilities like childrearing, doing household chores and pleasing their husbands. In this direction, they are doomed to being weak, inferior, passive, silent and obedient. The outcome of this unjust categorization is not, for sure, for the benefit of women. Their restricted life which is dominated by the patriarchy causes their identities to become restricted, as well and in time, to become lost completely.

In the seventeenth century, literary names such as Aphra Behn and Mary Astell criticize the patriarchal order in their works and thus show that women can break their silence. Moreover, the discussions over independence and equality which emerge together with the French Revolution, have an influence on women and the prominent writers towards the end of the eighteenth century. Mary Wollstonecraft and John Stuart Mill both write about equal rights for women in every sphere of life and their feminist arguments lead to the beginning of the First –Wave Feminism which starts in the nineteenth century.

In this First-Wave of Women’s Movement which is started by women with the aim of having freedom and gaining equal rights with men, women really achieve their goal and they have lots of rights in the political arena. To start with, they acquire equal legal rights with men to own property with the Married Women’s Property Act in 1882. More importantly, the Suffrage Movement which starts in

1860s also achieves its purpose and women gain the right to vote in 1928, accordingly the right to say their opinion about the ruling of the country and the present order. Thus, they enjoy the state of being equal to men until the second half of the twentieth century.

In the 1960s, in spite of the legal rights they have in the political arena, women start to discuss that there are still many areas in which they need to gain their rights, so the Second Wave Feminism starts. With this new wave of feminism, women aim to become equal with men in all areas of life including family life, work life, social life and sexual life. In this period, the most important literary names that also have an influence to start this new movement are Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan. In their books they attract women's attention to the socially and conventionally constructed female identity and roles. They also emphasize that the only way to get rid of this inferior image for women is to change their way of living in every arena. Hence, as the arena of life in which women strive for equality is varied, feminist debates and views are varied, as well. Among these various viewpoints which emerge in this period, three major ones are, the liberal, the radical and the socialist feminisms and they will be discussed in detail in Chapter II after the historical background of feminism is widely covered.

As theatre is a preferred platform to reflect the period with all its political, sociological and cultural dimensions, feminism which is extensively discussed in the second half of the twentieth century, is also given a wide coverage in theatre. This field of theatre called as Feminist Theatre which is also the study field of this thesis, is covered in Chapter II, as well. Starting with Suffrage Drama, the historical background information about the modern feminist drama in British Literature is given in this chapter.

Chapter III in which one of the most leading figures of modern feminist drama, Timberlake Wertenbaker is introduced in detail, is the main part of this study and in this chapter the subject of the thesis is discussed while the two plays of the playwright, *New Anatomies* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* are analyzed.

The purpose of this thesis is to focus on the main female characters of *New Anatomies* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* who go beyond the restrictions of the patriarchal societies and start a journey with the aim of a quest of a new identity. In pursuit of an independent identity which is free from the limitations of the socially and conventionally constructed female roles, these protagonists either is disguised as

a man like Isabelle Eberhardt or behaves like a man, as Mary Traverse does, at the cost of losing their feminine identities to be accepted in the outside world which is dominated by men. The main character of *New Anatomies*, Isabelle Eberhardt, is a real person who lived at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century, mostly in Switzerland and France, but strives to find an identity outside her country and culture, in the deserts of North Africa which she associates with freedom. On the other hand, the protagonist of *The Grace of Mary Traverse* whose name also takes place in the title of the play, lives in the eighteenth century England that is highly patriarchal and she traverses the boundaries of her house which is under the hegemony of her father and her socially constructed female identity and also her class identity to gain power and knowledge in the external world. Along with the characters' quests of new identities, this study also discusses the various feminist views that Wertebaker reflects in the plays through the characters.

In the concluding chapter, whether Isabelle Eberhardt and Mary Traverse achieve their goals of having a new identity in the external world which is dominated by men, is discussed. With this aim, the protagonists of each play are compared in terms of the ways they use to traverse their gender boundaries. Lastly, it is put forward whether these female characters do the right thing to be powerful and free in the male world.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FEMINISM**

An image of silent and inferior kind has been created for women since the beginning of humankind just because they are seen incapable of doing many things out of the borders of their houses. As a result of this image that has been attached on them, women have always been oppressed and controlled by the strong sex (male) through patriarchal order. Accordingly, women have lived in a way that men determined for them and as this way of living has been dictated on them, they have been unable to think of another life which is free from the patriarchal norms. As Judith Lorber denotes, "...men set the standards and values, and women are the Other who lack the qualities that the dominants exhibit. Men are the actors, women the reactors. Men thus are the first sex, women always the second sex" (3). In this context, women were not worth of being paid attention, spent time on and educated at school. Unlike boys, girls did not have an equal chance to learn the subjects such as mathematics, astronomy and Latin that would improve them intellectually. The only aim of the females being educated was to raise an industrious housewife and an excellent mother, to prepare them for the life after getting married. Thus, it is safe to say that, as Simon de Beauvoir suggests "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (295), just as men were taught to be the powerful sex in the patriarchal order. So, women were expected to be obedient to their fathers and husbands. Being obedient to the patriarchy never increased their value, though. They were equal to men neither at home nor in social life, let alone having the same legal rights.

Being silent shadows in a male dominated society, women could not express their problems they lived under the male hegemony throughout the ages. However, as a result of this male oppression women always felt on themselves, in the second half of the seventeenth century, women started to take an action to get rid of this image of "inferior sex". The literary names such as Aphra Behn and Mary Astell became the representatives and voices of all suppressed women. They criticized the patriarchal order and defended the females in their works. The voices against male suppression continued to be heard in a louder way in the next century under the influence of the revolutionary events.

The French Revolution (1789) which caused "momentous changes in society and destruction of old and powerful institutions" (Manly 46), was definitely quite

influential in the raising of women's voices against the old and powerful patriarchal hegemony at that time. It was inevitable for the women to be involved in these revolutionary discussions while the ideas such as independence, equality and natural rights were being cried out for all people. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, with *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) Mary Wollstonecraft became "a writer of great influence for the development of feminist political thought and the feminist analysis of literary representations of women" (Manly 46). The pioneer writer believed that women should also have an active role in public life and discussed women's educational and legal rights and their place at home and in society in her work. Concentrating on the issue of education, Wollstonecraft argued that "women are born human, but made 'feminine', and thus inferior to men, through poor education" (Anderson and Zinsser 347). This work whose aim is to raise consciousness for equal rights for women, is accepted the first major work about women's issues. Thus, it can be stated that Wollstonecraft paved the way to the beginning of the First-Wave Feminism which started in the nineteenth century and lasted until the mid-twentieth century.

Another remarkable name as both being a man and having the thoughts on women's having equal rights with men is John Stuart Mill. Mill developed the feminist arguments of the period more in his *Subjection of Women* (1870). In his work, Mill criticized the patriarchal oppression on women in private life, in work life, in politics and education. Besides, he claimed that women should have equal rights with men in every sphere of life. John Stuart Mill also stated that "all the selfish propensities, the self-worship, the unjust self-preference, which exist among mankind, have their source and root in, and drive their principal nourishment from the present constitution of the relation between men and women". As a man, he was the first who drew attention to the relation between men and women which was based on the advantages of men in that period.

The other important name who participated in the feminist arguments was Virginia Woolf. As Jane Goldman demonstrates, "Virginia Woolf is rightly considered the founder of modern feminist literary criticism" (66). For that reason her influence on later feminist arguments is an indisputable fact. In her work, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Woolf developed Wollstonecraft's arguments. She asserted that men saw women as inferior and kept the control of the social structure in their hands. She also added that women "have served all these centuries as

looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size” (Woolf 41). Here, the writer illustrated that women, as subordinate beings, helped the construction of the patriarchal structures. To get rid of this social structure and this inferior image, Woolf emphasized that women should reject the patriarchal construct of femaleness and should define their own identity for themselves as Judith in *A Room of One’s Own* (1929). This gifted sister would work to become an artist just like her brother Shakespeare although she was “excluded, as all women were, from education and performing arts” (Humm 21). Woolf also claimed that to be included in the public life, women should have their financial independence. Thus, Virginia Woolf wanted to show that if women were given opportunities, they would be able to do everything just like men.

All these revolutionary movements for the women, which emerged under the influence of the French Revolution, paved the way to the beginning of the Women’s Movement in Britain. The Women’s Movement started as a political movement in the second half of the nineteenth century. Under the influence of the ideas such as natural rights, equality and freedom which were first heard with the French Revolution, women started a movement to gain their individual rights and freedom. They were aware of the fact that only way to achieve this goal was to start their struggle having political rights. For that reason, the first step women decided to take was to have the equal rights in the political arena.

The most important right that women gained in the political arena in the twentieth century was the right to vote. For sure, this victorious result for women did not happen all of a sudden. The movement which women started to react against the oppression at home and at work places, was called the Suffrage Movement and it started in the 1860s. The women who started the Suffrage Movement were called the suffragists and they struggled for equal right to vote. By having right to vote, they knew women would have their legal rights and could change the social rules in favor of themselves as they would have the right to say something in the ruling of the country. In addition to the right to vote, women also struggled to have equal legal rights with men to own their property before and after marriage and they acquired this right in 1882 with the Married Women’s Property Act (Mitchell 479). Hence, in the late nineteenth century women took the first step in terms of having equal rights with men.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Women's Movement saw a satisfactory period. Women who used to be voiceless, especially in the public sphere, were given their civil rights. First, in 1918, women over 30 accomplished to have the right to vote. Then, in 1928, women over 21 were enfranchised and became equal to men in terms of voting rights. After this important event, they began to think that they were "both equal and free" (Banks 72) and as a result, for the Women's Movement in Britain, a permanent period, which lasted until the 1960s, started.

Although women made remarkable progress in terms of legal rights, in the second half of the twentieth century, they realized that they still did not have enough rights of saying in all areas such as social life, family life, work life and even in sexual life. In the national conference which was held by the Women's Liberation Movement in the spring of 1970, four basic 'demands'; Equal Pay; Equal Education and Opportunity; 24-Hour Nurseries; Free Contraception and Abortion on Demand were discussed (Wandor 13). The aim of this new wave of feminism was to make women conscious of their equality with men in all areas of experience and of their rights on their bodies. As Wandor states "the struggle for feminists was therefore not only to challenge male power, but to encourage women to counteract their own passivity; to resist the assumption that women are only important in terms of their relationships with men, or as secondary citizens" (13). Thus, it is safe to say that, for the Women's Movement a totally new and different period started under the name of the Second Wave Feminism.

Looking at the political arena of the time when the plays studied in this thesis were written, a radical change is observed in Britain's history with the election of Margaret Thatcher who was the first woman Prime Minister of Britain. When Timberlake Wertenbaker wrote *New Anatomies* (1981), it was two years after Margaret Thatcher came to power for the first time (1979) and when *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985) was written, it was two years after her re-election for a second term office (1983). In fact, Thatcher served three consecutive terms. During her very long term, many radical neo-Conservative economic and social reforms were applied in British politics and cultural life such as privatization of state-owned firms, reducing the expenditure on public services, weakening the power of the Trade Unions and devolving responsibility for many areas of welfare-state onto the individual (Gibson 34, Peacock 1). Being an authoritarian figure that advocated individualism, Thatcher was not keen on consensus within her cabinet. Accepting



that “she was neither a consensus nor a pragmatic politician” (Peacock 12), she was not interested in improving the standards of the public. Her policies even caused inflation, raising taxes, unemployment that led the public into economic depression.

Although she would have been a powerful woman figure in a patriarchal world who would have worked to defend the rights of women and to support them to be powerful like her, Thatcher preferred to keep her individualist attitude on the feminist issue, as well. As Peacock argues “[t]he mere presence of a woman Prime Minister, herself a bourgeois feminist, offered no greater opportunities for the majority of women” (95). To be successful in a male-dominated political world, she was ready to adopt male values and traits. While the women who were influenced by the individualistic policies of Thatcher became successful developing their careers in business life, they had no concerns for their oppressed sisters. In short, there was definitely no sisterhood or unity between women in this period, instead they were highly individualist and competitive because of the competitive capitalist policies of Thatcher. Fewer women in business life meant fewer competitors for them. Their only concern was to be more successful than anyone else in their careers just like Thatcher. As Peacock states “Her attitudes concerning the role of women in general were, however, Victorian and were part of a desire to return to ‘Victorian values’” (25). In other words, she had a Conservative view about the role of woman which was restricted in private sphere as a wife and a housewife. If women went out of their houses listening to the feminists in order to work, they would have abandoned their responsibilities at home which were much more significant to deal with according to Thatcher. She was opposed to the feminist liberals’ actions to make the women’s condition better and thought that women had already been in a good condition in society. Nevertheless, Thatcher’s Conservative views could not prevent women to be active in social life as during the 1980s more women were able to work although the jobs they were given were limited.

As for arts and theatre in Thatcherite period, it cannot be said it was a golden age. Although art, as it is argued by Kershaw, “should be protected both from market forces and state interference” since it presents audience “universal values” and aims to make people obtain these values (271), the motto ‘art is for art’ was not valid in this period and theatre was under the influence of marketing and other policies of the government of the period. Thatcher applied her policy of privatization, for instance, on theatres as well. As an outcome of this policy, in the 1980s most of the theatre

companies were not supported financially by the government and the Arts Council. Theatres, therefore, experienced some financial pressures like other parts of the public sector. These financial pressures, as argued by Peacock, “inevitably affected the selection of plays, on one level in relation to their marketability and on another to their production costs, particularly as these were affected by the size of their casts” (51). Peacock exemplifies this situation with these words:

*It may also be argued that the necessity of producing plays containing between two and four characters had an ideological outcome in that it militated against left-wing political plays whose dramatic discourse demanded the representation of society in action and, therefore, often required large casts. In contrast, plays with small casts generally focus on individual experience and personal psychology rather than the interaction of social groups and therefore reflect bourgeois individualism. (Peacock 51-2)*

So, it can be concluded that the context of plays in that term were influenced by the policies of Thatcher and Conservative Party that demanded more value for money in public institutions. The status of theatre also dramatically changed in those years as well as the position of audience of theatre who changed into customers. With the merchandising parts added to theatre buildings such as bars, restaurants, bookshops, the activity of theatre-going became an experience to be consumed for the consumers (Kershaw 276). In the period of Margaret Thatcher who valued money too much, monetarism was felt in every institute as it was in subsidized theatres which were becoming highly populist. To attract more people and so to sell more theatre tickets, there was an increase in musicals and adaptations although the presentation of new plays and classical drama was decreasing in the 1980s. As it is seen, during Thatcherite period which started in 1979, only commercial success of theatre was accepted worthy of appreciation whereas its social and spiritual role was disregarded. Nevertheless, various feminist theatre companies such as the Women’s Theatre Group, the Monstrous Regiment, the Gay Sweatshop, and the Siren survived in this period maintaining the quality of their works and gave opportunity to many feminist playwrights like Caryl Churchill and Timberlake Wertenbaker to write plays that reflect the feminist views of the period.

## 1.1. Second Wave Feminism

After the Second World War, in the 1940s and 1950s, issues of equal rights and opportunities for all people were discussed in the Parliament. The Welfare State established by the Labour government at that time in Britain attempted to make some socialist regulations for everyone in the country, regardless of their class, to benefit from education at all levels, health services and housing opportunities. “The philosophy behind this,” as argued by Wandor, “was the idea of a genuine equality of opportunity, as a result of which, in theory, all the negative aspects of inequality (class, race, gender) would be ironed out, and everyone could benefit from society’s resources” (54). However, no considerable change was observed in women’s lives until the 1960s. In this decade, women aimed to change the circumstances which were related to them and they formed the ‘Second Wave’ of feminism (Aston and Reinelt 10). So, a new era in the Women’s Movement started.

The most prominent literary names in this new era were Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan. Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1946) and Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) are known as the books with which the Second Wave began as the feminist views in those years were based on these books. “The account of the cultural construction of woman as Other” by Beauvoir gave inspiration to much of the theoretical work in those years (Thornham 29). To change their identity as ‘Other,’ the writer highlighted that women needed to be the person who would change their way of living and their future and so they would gain total freedom. The other significant writer Betty Friedan also argued that women must change their conventional status as housewives and they must strive to gain freedom in her outstanding book, *The Feminine Mystique*. The National Organization for Women which was founded by Friedan in 1966 also presented the issues that took place in *The Feminine Mystique* in its Statement of Purpose. According to this statement, women must not forget that they were not inferior, but equal with all people and as all human beings did they must not just sit in a corner, but share the responsibilities with every other people and so they could develop their potential they already had.

The Second Wave of feminism witnessed lots of positive legal developments on behalf of women in Britain such as Abortion Act in 1969, Divorce Reform Act in 1969 and Equal Pay Act in 1970. In this period, different voices evaluated the

feminist movement from a different point of view and as a result of this, an incredible variety was seen in the feminist writings and debates. As Mark Fortier states “just as there is no universal woman but only women, there is not one feminism but feminisms” (71). Among this variety, three major viewpoints were, the liberal, the radical and the socialist feminisms.

### **1.1.1. Radical Feminism**

Radical feminism, which emerges in the early 1970s, “springs from the direct, gut response of all women to the day-to-day irritations and resentments which women feel and experience” (Wandor 132). These experiences are shared and recognized through ‘consciousness-raising’ groups which aim women to share their own life stories with each other and search a way to change this order in which women are objectified, exploited and oppressed by men (Bryson 26-7). With this process, a huge amount of information about women’s lives and the ways they are oppressed is uncovered. In this context, Ellen Willis claims that the process of consciousness-raising is “the movement’s most successful organizing tool” (94). This is because through this process, women are able to come together to change the conditions they are in. Expressing the responses and complaints women share, radical feminists think that the source of all kinds of oppression is patriarchy and they “challenge(s) very directly the notion that men are biologically superior to women” (Wandor 132). Women’s being degraded as if they were inferior or deficient makes radical feminists strive more to reach their aim. As radical feminism is “concerned with all forms of oppression which affect the life chances and human dignity of women” (Thompson 133), it argues that the only solution is to remove all forms of oppression which are attributed to male domination. As Redstockings, which is the first group which discloses its radical feminist ideas in the public, declares “[a]ll power structures throughout history have been male-dominated and male-oriented” (Redstockings, 1970: 599). Along with the primacy of male domination, radical feminists also insist on the primacy of women’s suppression in history. They claim that all other forms of oppression came after the oppression of women and hence they believe that if women’s subordination comes to an end, all other forms of subordination will come to an end as well (Thompson 133-5). In fact, this belief shows that women have a great influence on the rest of the society.

“Claiming that what women do and think and feel is socially valuable and important” (Wandor 132), radical feminism insists on a radical change in the social structure in which women will not be oppressed any longer. With a radical evaluation of society’s organizational structures radical feminism aims to deconstruct patriarchal dominance (Aston, *An Introduction*, 63) and hence promote the women’s.

According to radical feminism, women are strong and they have power to do anything. This viewpoint rejects the perception of women as passive, inferior, fragile and feminine, therefore being seen as a sexual object by men is unacceptable. This image of women as helpless and passive victims underestimates the potential power of women. “Such a view, critics say,” and Bryson also denotes, “is politically counter-productive and, in an era when women have made tangible gains, it is largely responsible for the popular view of feminism as a complaining, whining and negative creed, irrelevant to the lives of go-ahead young women” (29). The thing radical feminists want women to do essentially is to get rid of this feminine, weak and passive image, and to fight against injustice, taking full responsibility for themselves. As Wandor states radical feminism “encourages women to unite, to develop solidarity on the basis of their gender, [...] and to become sexually self-determining, whatever their sexual orientation” (133). With these aspects, radical feminists encourage women to have an active role and have a saying in the reconstruction of the society rather than being silent and passive audience of male actions. They believe that when women get free from patriarchal institutions, meanings and values completely, their real power which is suppressed inside of them will show up (Thompson 114-5). As women become more powerful after they are free from the bounds of patriarchal institutions, it is aimed to create a ‘female counter-culture’.

In the new social structure they aim to develop, radical feminists want to preserve women’s traditional culture. They do not reject their roles as mothers, nurturers and healers as women’s culture is based on these roles and their accompanying values such as emotion, sensitivity, intuition, love, the acceptance of all bodily functions like menstruation and giving birth and even their capacity to bring pleasure (Jaggar 251). They view these values as the traits that make up woman and they are proud of themselves with all their characteristics. They do not want to change these qualities that are peculiar to women and become like men. This view that women and men are completely different has even caused a new vocabulary to emerge in radical-feminist language. For instance, the word ‘women’ is spelled in

various ways such as 'womon', 'womyn' and 'wimmin' without the word 'men' in the root and new formations of some words like 'herstory' instead of 'history' (Case 64). At this point, radical feminists differ from liberal and socialist feminists as they accept the values of the male culture and want women to go on living according to the male standards. However, no matter how different values radical feminism has compared to patriarchy, the only value which is appreciated by patriarchy and radical feminists also accept is being powerful. While power means suppressing the people who are not as strong as them physically, economically or in terms of class or gender for patriarchy, for radical feminists its meaning is related to being free from the domination of patriarchal social structure. Although it can be interpreted in different ways by each of them, neither accepts being passive, weak and subservient.

Adorned with power and the thought of radical change, radical feminists aim to present women's culture, as opposed to the patriarchal culture of men. For them, it is a "grass-roots movement, a flourishing women's culture concerned with providing feminist alternatives in literature, music, spirituality, health services, sexuality, even in employment and technology" (Jaggar 84). The idea of women's culture, in fact, does not emerge all of a sudden, it has existed since matriarchal societies were formed or even before. Matriarchal societies "being a truly egalitarian society in which no gender/sex dominates the other" (Dahlerup 94) were free of domination. They had no class of suppressed people as they had no class of rulers. While taking a political decision, no member of the household was excluded. Women in matriarchal societies were highly respected, because they had the power of giving birth. So with their natural abilities, they were able to renew and prolong the life of their societies. This situation constituted the essence of the matriarchal view of life. However, while the ability of giving birth was considered as a unique power and promoted the position of women in matriarchal societies, along with the rise of production of materials and industry, for women giving birth transformed into an obstacle to take place in the work places where men dominated. So women were not able to preserve their powerful and divine image any longer and male dominance in social life formed a basis for patriarchy. Even if the presence of matriarchal societies is controversial, "the idea of possible matriarchal societies somewhere in history is stimulating, since it challenges the idea of women's subordination as natural" (Dahlerup 94). Instead, radical feminists who know that "patriarchy is a cultural, not a natural phenomenon" (Dahlerup 94) are very decisive on changing the male culture.

One of the central issues which radical feminists focus in the patriarchal society is gender differences and the hierarchy they cause in both public and private life. As radical feminists focus on women's culture and patriarchy a lot, the notion of gender becomes a prominent issue for radical feminism (Case 64). To construct a society which has an all-women culture with their own values, radical feminists believe that "gender must be eliminated" as it hinders their aim and androgyny must replace the gender system (Jaggar 86). According to this idea, as Jaggar relates, an androgynous society means a society which is liberated from "social distinctions between the sexes"; and this is the only solution for a society free from male intervention (86). As "women's subordination extends beyond a lack of legal, political and economic rights and is rooted in family life and personal relationships," it is not enough to question unjust laws, fight for a proper political representation of women or being against the capitalist economy (Bryson 25-7). Instead, the thing women must do is to reshape the politics and power relations in both public and especially private spheres to redefine the family and personal relationships. Related to private sphere, radical feminists have some demands which would provide total equality at home like "equal sharing of housework and child care, equal attention to our emotional and sexual needs" (Willis 92). With these issues raised, radical feminists aim to change the image of woman in men's mind which is passive like an object.

In fact, before the problem of being seen as an object by men, radical feminists argue that women need to change the view of woman in their minds. Being born into a society which is dominated by men, women always feel this feeling of living in a confined, limited, controlled place and do everything under the controlling gaze of both the others and their own. As John Berger claims in his book *Ways of Seeing*, "she has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life" (46). So, while men show their presence to the exterior world directly by the physical, social or economic power they have, women have more intrinsic presence. They are more interested in how they look than what they do. This tendency of women to be appreciated by others and the importance they give to how they appear may make men think that they have a domination over women to judge their behaviors and appearance. At this point, radical feminists draw attention to the exploiting force that

is applied by men over women and that may even lead to sexual violence and rape. As Sue-Ellen Case notes, “male culture made women’s bodies into objects of male desire, converting them into sites of beauty and sexuality for men to gaze upon” (66). To show a resistance to the patriarchal oppression of women by sexual means, some radical feminists give support to lesbianism and think that this is a way of constructing an all-women society. As Willis argues “many of the feminists who ‘converted’ to lesbianism in the wake of lesbian separatism did so not to express a compelling sexual inclination but to embrace a political and cultural identity (104). For these converts, lesbianism has a meaning of a kind of reaction to heterosexuality which they accept as one of the compulsory norms of patriarchy. Within this new consciousness of women’s sexual rights, “the right to safe, legal abortions became a central issue in the movement” as well (Case 67). Discussing these new and revolutionary ideas, radical feminism makes the best of its name.

### **1.1.2. Liberal Feminism**

Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth centuries and even before, it was widely assumed that women belonged to their homes as wives and mothers. There was also a general belief that women could not have a significant role outside the home, so they were not worth of being given education. In those years, especially with the industrial revolution, a thick wall was built between the work place and the home, so women were associated with the domestic sphere. Under these circumstances, while the public sphere was identified with rationalism, the private sphere or in other words, women were accepted non-rational (Donovan 19). These views about women interestingly went on existing along with liberal and liberal democratic ideas about individual rights and these ideas later “provided a language through which women could articulate demands for change without challenging dominant political principles” (Bryson 10). According to the liberal theories that emerged in the seventeenth century, individuals had many rights in educational, legal and political fields. However, while these rights were given to men as they were rational beings and able to make decisions about their lives, “many early liberal and liberal democratic theorists denied that these rights could be extended to women, indeed many argued that women were biologically incapable of the full development of reason” (Bryson 10). This view, no doubt, prompted some women to defend the



female nature and they argued that they were not less rational than men, but they were deprived of education which caused men to look superior. Even in those early years of liberalism, the women who thought they were as rational as men planted the seeds of liberal feminism.

As it is seen, unlike radical feminism which is a contemporary phenomenon, liberal feminism is rooted in very old philosophical traditions. It develops specifically from liberal humanism and liberal political theory which discuss universal values such as the equality of all humans' potential to reach reason (Jaggar 33). As Ruth E. Groenhout states "liberal political thought bases rights on what would seem to be a gender-neutral concept such as rationality" (51). Rationality is seen as the essence of human being according to liberal political theory. So, it becomes inevitable for liberal political thought to be "a traditional resource for feminist thinkers" (Groenhout 51) and accordingly for liberal feminists. Hence, for liberal feminist view as well, the most important characteristic that a human can have is being rational, neither being white or black nor female or male. Liberal feminist view is not interested in the physical differences between women and men. Moreover, "liberal feminist position seems to be that male and female natures are identical;" in other words, "there is no such thing as male and female nature: there is only human nature and that has no sex" (Jaggar 37). This view makes women get away from the feeling of inferiority that has been imposed on them because of their sex. In that context, an awareness is created about the potential of women and women are expected to make use of their potential and deal with the problems they experience in the society. Therefore, it is accepted that women are also capable of using their mind and having a say in everything as much as men.

For liberal feminist view, although women are not perceived differently from men because of their sex or physical appearance, their capacity for reason is under question for some reasons. The basic reason of it is the society which discriminates women because of their sex. Nevertheless, females, who are isolated in the private life, are not entitled to participate in any part of the public life. Even if they are lucky enough to participate in the public life, they are never able to hold the prestigious and well-paying positions such as administrative ones that men do. Contrary to men, they either run their house and raise their children or do the similar types of work outside to earn money. So, they do not need to develop their mental performance. In fact, this discrimination begins at very early ages and girls and boys are raised differently and

unequally resulting in different directions for each sexes. While boys are educated to practice prestigious professions with high salaries, girls are trained to work in feminine jobs. Liberal feminists accept that women fail to develop their mental capacities as they lack for educational opportunities that are presented to men (Jaggar 37). So, it is accepted that the only difference between male and female gender is the unequal level of education, not their mental capacity. However, liberal feminists consider and as Donovan claims, “since men and women have the same moral and intellectual core, they should receive the same mental and spiritual training” (26). With equalized opportunities for education, it is believed that women can develop their capacity for reason and be equal with men.

However, this does not mean that in a world where human, regardless of its sex, is valued, a new social structure is outlined by liberal feminists. On the contrary, they do not aim to make any radical changes in the political, economic and social structures. Although liberal feminists think that human nature is universal, the norm that they accept is male sex. The first and the most important thing for them is having the equal standards with men (Wandor 134). They accept the current system determined by male standards, therefore it is not revolutionary. Unlike radical feminism, it does not challenge the patriarchal society and it does not aim to create an all-women society. As Dolan highlights, “the movement's general effort is to insert women into the mainstream of political and social life by changing the cultural perception of them as second-class citizens” (4). The liberal feminists think that there is no reason for women to be seen as inferior beings and they just want to change this perception by improving the position of women in society “e.g. through legislative reform” (Aston, *An Introduction* 8). They complain about sexual discrimination in legislation which causes women to be judged as being female by the law, not being individuals while men are always regarded as individuals and supported by the law (Jaggar 176). The laws provide superiority for men in terms of responsibilities and opportunities while justice needs to be equal for every individual, who is essentially rational, regardless of sex as it is not an essential feature of a human. So liberal feminists include “[t]he fight to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, the effort to gain equal pay for equal work, a woman's right to control over her body and to choose abortion” into their discourse (Dolan 4). Liberal feminists assert that “if the possession of rights is based on a gender-neutral quality such as rationality, and if women can be shown to possess this quality, then women are possessors of rights”

(Groenhout 51) and under these conditions they just demand a reformation. With legal reform, liberal feminists think that women become equal and have equal rights with men in the public sphere in terms of education, employment and politics.

In their collaborative work, Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean claim that with liberal feminism “women’s oppression will end once women have achieved legal equality and equal opportunity with men through their own efforts” (2). This means that while challenging the limitations and hardships they have in the patriarchal society, the main source that women must rely on is themselves, their mental capacities and their power to do everything. However, although liberal feminists encourage women to be successful, they do not take risk and “seek success within existing structures and according to existing rules” (Bryson 13). Liberal feminism, or as Wandor calls, bourgeois feminism “accepts the world as it is, and sees the main challenge for women as simply a matter of ‘equalling up’ with men; in other words, what men already do is seen as the norm” (Wandor 134). Accepting male norms without questioning “rather than working for their overturn” (Dolan XV), the only thing liberal feminists do is to become like men. In fact, as man means human in society, all liberal feminists aim is a society which relies on human values for everyone without sexual discrimination and in which everyone is equally valued. To reach this aim, to gain equal pay for instance, liberal feminists argue that women need to participate in every part of social structure equally with men doing equal work. As Dolan states, liberal feminism “suggests that working within existing social and political organizations will eventually secure women social, political, and economic parity with men” (4). To achieve parity with men, women also need to take responsibility and show that they are powerful and exist in every area of society, even in the places assumed to belong to men.

As the essential human nature and individualism are the basic views of liberal feminism, it is not interested in gender, class or race analysis. Just as being male or female is considered irrelevant to an individual’s essential humanity, so are the physical or social characteristics. To be able to benefit the equal rights defined by the status quo, being capable of full rationality is the only thing needed. However, at this point society and its rooted perception of the male and female hinder the individual to make mental progress. Because in this kind of traditional societies, males and females have unchanging sex roles and it is difficult to go beyond these limits. For that reason, liberal feminists recommend a new type of society called androgynous

which is free from stereotypical views about sexual discrimination (Jaggar 38-9) as radical feminists do. In this society, humans, whether male or female physiologically, would not differ in psychological traits showing masculine or feminine characteristics because they would not be imposed on humans. Being free from their sex roles, the only thing that people are in pursuit of would be self-development. Liberal feminists claim that “androgyny constitutes the most consistent application of the liberal principle of individual freedom, the only ideal that allows every individual to develop her or his full human potential” (Jaggar 39). Indeed, androgyny, taking into consideration not only women but also men, puts human above everything and does not allow anyone to be perceived as second-class citizens. In this respect, androgynous societies consist of the things that liberal feminism struggles to change in the society.

### **1.1.3. Socialist Feminism**

Socialist feminism, which flourishes in the 1970s, consists of the discussions of both Marxism and feminism. Like the other branches of feminist theory, socialist feminism highlights the causes of women’s oppression, as well. However, according to social feminist theory, the main cause of women’s oppression in the patriarchal society is not only gender or patriarchy, but also class. In other words, it argues that in the class structure which is “a hierarchical structure” (Case 83), women are seen as a class that is oppressed because of their economic, social and cultural status. In fact, in this social structure women are not the only side that is oppressed by the powerful class. Socialist feminism also draws women’s attention to “the ways in which men are also oppressed” (Bryson 17). So, it is seen as more “gender-neutral” than either liberal feminism which struggles for equality with men accepting the male norms or radical feminism which aims to change the structure of patriarchal society in favor of women (Dolan 10). Socialist feminists want to integrate the problem of sex discrimination within their struggle to provide equality for all humans from all classes. By doing this, furthermore, they do not only focus on the male dominance over females, but also the dominance of females from the upper economic and social classes over the females from the lower parts of society.

Class division is the most significant issue that socialist feminism takes into consideration. As it can cause a division between different sexes, it can also cause a

division within the same sex. Because of this intra-sexual class division, the conditions such as discrimination or inequality are recognized between the dominant and powerful upper-middle-class women and the weak working-class women, as it is argued, for instance by Sue-Ellen Case (83) and Zillah R. Eisenstein (*Imagining Feminism* 484). Socialist feminists argue that these class distinctions among women do not allow them to unite together and in this environment a sisterhood among women is impossible to be formed because women in upper classes actually oppress the women in the lower classes of society (Case 83, Wandor 136). It is viewed that the material conditions cut across the solidarity between women, let alone the humans.

According to socialist feminism, the capitalist system is the root of oppression of lower class people and women, as well. Eisenstein claims that to figure out the socialist feminist political analysis, it is essential to understand the “interdependence of capitalism and patriarchy”, as there is a “mutually reinforcing dialectical relationship between capitalist class structure and hierarchical sexual structuring” (*Capitalist Patriarchy* 5). Marxism, which socialist feminism takes its political theory from, concerns about the class dynamics of capitalist society. In the class structure of capitalist societies, inequality is an inevitable outcome of especially the capitalist economic system. In this economic system there is a group of people who own all resources and another group who need these resources to survive. To benefit from these resources, the latter group work under the conditions set by capitalists and these conditions are not generally for the good of them. They work hard to produce but they are never rewarded for their efforts, they are even paid less than they deserve. The capitalist system goes on working in this way, that is to say exploiting the people who produce. In addition to this inequality seen between the capitalists and working classes, another inequality is observed between the sexes. In this relationship, the exploited side is women. Women have always been accepted as a property and suppressed in the patriarchal society. The labor that women are expected to do in the domestic sphere has been limited with the domestic chores such as childrearing and unpaid housework. In the public sphere, the woman worker has been paid less than man and “retained in a subordinate position without upward mobility” (Case 83). So, it can be claimed that woman workers are exploited twice; for being a working class member and for being a female in the workplace which is generally captured by men. Eisenstein who uses a phrase called “capitalist

patriarchy” to define the source of the problem of inequality suggests that “socialist feminism is the answer” (*Capitalist Patriarchy* 5-6). This is because socialist feminists consider that being dependent on their fathers or husbands economically and working at a lower level than men are the root of women’s oppression and when women become active in work life and class struggle, they will not be the oppressed side any longer.

In order to improve the position of women, socialist feminists believe that it is necessary to make changes in the social and economic structures of society. However, as it is argued by socialist feminists, unless there is a collective class struggle, the things done individually are not enough for social and economic development. At that point, the ideas of collectivism and role-sharing gain importance for a social change with the aim of living in a society in which everyone is equal. In other words, social feminists call not only women but also men for action. In addition to collectivism and role-sharing, another significant part of organizing for social change is “the creation of a sense of political unity among oppressed groups” (Jaggar 333). In this respect, besides social change for all humans, socialist feminists also struggle to create a women’s culture which is viewed “as a necessary part of political organization for social change” and “an important way in which women can develop political self-consciousness” (Jaggar 334-5). As women share common responsibilities such as being responsible for housework, for childrearing, for sexual satisfaction and for the work place for those who work together in the paid labor, they have an opportunity to develop a shared political identity. As Donovan states “[s]ome contemporary socialist feminists believe that women's culture, women's experience and practice, can provide the basis for a feminist opposition to destructive patriarchal ideologies” (Donovan 102). One of the outcomes of ‘destructive patriarchal ideologies’ is, as largely discussed by Jaggar, alienation of women. The critique claims that women are alienated in all parts of their lives as sexual beings, as wives, as mothers and as wage laborers etc. For instance, although women do not welcome the recognition of being sexual objects, men see them as sexual objects and they sometimes have to present themselves in a way that is sexually pleasing to men because of economic reasons. It is men who ironically control the expression of women’s sexuality, not women themselves. Thus, sexually alienated women are not free to express and even to discover their sexual preferences. As for mothers, they are unable to decide how many babies they want to

bear again because of economic reasons. In the past they were forced to bear more children than they wished as children were seen as an economic benefit and labor power, but now since they become an economic burden, mothers are not free to bear as many babies as they wish to bear or they are prevented from becoming mothers. In both cases, as being conceived as a sexual being and becoming mother, it is not women who decide or control their preferences. In this framework, alienation is perceived as women's contemporary oppression "as a phenomenon peculiar to the capitalist form of male dominance" (Jaggar 317). Alienation which "generally refers to the modern experience of being cut off from oneself, from others, and from a sense of meaning" (Donovan 82) makes women come together to create a women's culture, to achieve a complete socialist and feminist transformation of social relations and to overcome all aspects of women's alienation.

Looking at all feminist theories flourished in the Second Wave Feminism, it can be said that there is not only one direction feminism views any longer, but there are many. Feminism, as Wandor argues, "challenges a number of assumptions about women and men: (a) that men are the center of the universe; (b) that women are secondary and dependent on men; (c) that the social/sexual division of labor is 'natural' and unchanging" (13). It is surely beyond doubt that there are much more issues that feminism challenge than presented in this thesis but whatever their way of arguing is, they all aim to bring about some changes in the position of women and they do this advocating self-determination for women and challenging the male dominance.

## **1.2. Emergence of Feminist Theatre**

As theatre is an ideal platform to display the political, sociological and cultural subjects, it cannot be kept separately from politics, sociology and culture. Along with the emergence of feminism in the late 1960s, it was inevitable to see the reflections of feminism in the field of theatre as "theatre is continually influenced by the new political ideas of its time" (Wandor 1). To discuss the place of women in society and the struggles of women to gain their deserved places in society, feminist theatre emerged.

The first step that is accepted as the origin of contemporary feminist drama is suffrage drama. It can be definitely stated that suffrage drama emerged "as part of a

consciously organized scheme to propagate political doctrine and advocate social and cultural changes which would contribute to the dismantling of a system based upon patriarchal oppression” (Stowell 43). Related to the suffrage drama, the pioneer name that first comes to mind is Elizabeth Robins. The plays written in the early twentieth century mostly emphasized “how essential the vote is to women” (Wandor 3) as Elizabeth Robins’ political play *Votes for Women* (1907) did. Both a playwright and an actor, Elizabeth Robins worked effectively for the suffrage and in *Votes for Women* she focused on the important issues for women such as the right to vote, oppression of women and equality. As Robins’ play was about the current feminist issues of the time, it was appreciated by a lot of women as soon as it was first staged at the Royal Court Theatre in 1907 (Stowell 11). Consequently, she caused an increase in the number of the so-called ‘suffrage plays’, “a species of ‘agitprop’ drama” (Stowell 2), that were seen between 1908 and 1914. This event of a theatre play caused “propaganda” (Stowell 2) among women encouraged many other women to take part in theatre either on the stage or behind the stage. These “suffrage supporters in the theatrical professions” (Stowell 2) such as the playwrights Elizabeth Robins, Cicely Hamilton and the actors Lena Ashwell, Ellen Terry, later founded the Women Writers’ Suffrage League (WWSL) and the Actresses’ Franchise League (AFL) in 1908, which continued until 1914. These organizations presented several plays related to feminist issues and supported suffrage drama in its “struggle for female suffrage” (Wandor 2).

Suffrage drama came to an end in 1914 partly because of the right to vote which was obtained by women and partly as a result of the First World War. Winning franchise even if it was limited in 1918, women felt satisfied as they got what they wanted after long struggles and as they had a better status in society. As a result, “the narrowly political agitprop drama of the AFL and WWSL appeared redundant” (Stowell 154) because women did not need to struggle more for their political rights. As an outcome of the World War, “much of the energy expended upon the struggle for emancipation was channeled into a wider war effort,” (Stowell 154) and after 1914, it can be clearly observed that “organized political feminism was far less visible” (Wandor 3) along with the changing direction of the struggle for emancipation to the struggle for national strength. As a result, patriotic plays replaced suffrage plays and the suffragist playwrights such as Hamilton, Sowerby and Baker all continued to write, but not in the suffrage context (Stowell 154). So,



“theatre work controlled by women, and linking feminism and aesthetics, ceased to command its own space” (Wandor 3). Although there were a few women playwrights who wrote about women and their problems after 1914, “it was only well after the Second World War that feminism and theatre again came together” (Wandor 3) as the new views and discussions about human and woman emerged.

In the late 1960s, the woman question was revitalized as a result of the political and social upheavals of the decade and as an outcome of the gender-oriented political demonstrations against the objectification of women, such as the Miss World protests (Wandor 36), the Second Wave of feminism was seen. While the society was in a kind of upheaval, it was inevitable for theatre to stay indifferent to the events, so theatre and feminism again met in 1968. Especially in 1968 and 1969, “issues of sexual and cultural politics were addressed in a variety of ways, in many different public spaces, from academic conferences and university demonstrations to street theatre protests” (Goodman 24). These demonstrations and early feminist agitprop groups were the first steps of organized feminist theatre. Another significant event that paved the way to the new feminist theatre was the abolition of theatre censorship by Act of Parliament in 1968. After theatre censorship was canceled, as there were no limitations and no taboos any more, feminist playwrights felt free to write about any topics they wanted. Within this context, contemporary feminist theatre became a political platform where social protests were presented, equal rights were promoted besides women’s problems. In this environment of freedom, alternative theatre groups and fringe theatres appeared. The most remarkable one was the Women’s Street Theatre Group which was formed in 1970. The emergence of significant feminist playwrights such as Caryl Churchill, Pam Gems and Louise Page in the late 1960s and 1970s and Timberlake Wertenbaker, Sarah Daniels and Heidi Thomas in the 1980s was led by these alternative theatre groups.

The year 1970 also witnessed the first national conference held by the Women’s Liberation Movement in Britain. By the end of that conference some basic ‘demands’ had been established such as “Equal Pay; Equal Education and Opportunity; 24-Hour Nurseries; Free Contraception and Abortion on Demand” (Wandor 13). Apart from these, there were more demands, which were established later, like “Financial and Legal Independence; an End to Discrimination Against Lesbians and a Woman’s Right to Define Her Own Sexuality; Freedom From Violence and Sexual Coercion” (Goodman 30). Formulating these demands, the

women who worked for the Women's Liberation Movement aimed to improve the position of the women both in the social and private life. Besides, they worked to redefine the traditional male-female roles, destroying the assumption that the male is superior to the female both in men's and women's minds. The suffrage drama of the AFL had also worked to express the women's demands for equality and to improve the status of the women, but differently it focused on women's political rights because of the social and political condition of the time. In the early seventies, however, the main focus of feminist drama was women's sexual liberation and as Elaine Aston stated in *Feminist Theatre Practice: A Handbook*, women "made (making) theatre in the context of the 1970s Women's Liberation Movement" (3). As it is understood, this movement explicitly had a great role in the new period of feminist drama.

In the 1970s new feminist ideas began to have a considerable influence on a lot of women's lives. This is because "feminism encouraged women towards a political understanding of how they had been either oppressively positioned, or completely left out of, the 'malestream' of social, cultural and political activity" (Aston, *Feminist Theatre* 5). As an outcome of this influence, these women started to challenge female passivity and question the male dominance in every area of life including theatre. While women were asking for equal rights with men, at first they made their protests in street demonstrations and street theatres. Feminists displayed themselves, as they did at the Miss World beauty contests in the late 1960s and early 1970s, by decorating their bodies and clothes "to object to how women were objectified in dominant social and cultural systems of representation" (Aston, *Feminist Theatre* 5). Besides these demonstrations, feminist practitioners also staged plays at street theatres. Although feminist practitioners somehow had found a way to examine women's issues, they needed a 'space' that was special to them. As women were not treated equally as men in mainstream playhouses and also "to claim a counter-cultural 'space of their own'" (Aston, *Feminist Theatre* 6), they set up their own theatre companies and they had more control over the content of their theatre plays. While women were represented as an object or "belonging" to men in the mainstream theatre which was under the control of men, "counter-cultural feminist theatre-making sought to re-present women as subjects in their own right" (Aston, *Feminist Theatre* 6). So, while they could not present women's issues and experiences on the stage in the mainstream theatre before, as they had their own

theatre companies now, they would be able to tell what they wanted on the stage freely. All they wished was to be free from the image represented by men as an object and instead, to be accepted as they were, as individuals, as women.

Although several feminist theatre companies emerged in the early seventies, only four of them were strong enough to work for long years: the Women's Theatre Group, the Monstrous Regiment, the Gay Sweatshop, and the Siren. Because of the cuts applied by the Arts Council in Thatcher's period, the other feminist theatre companies could not continue their practices. To give an idea about the working methods the theatre companies applied and the issues raised by them, and as it was the one for which Timberlake Wertenbaker worked, the Women's Theatre Group is analyzed in this part of the study.

Women's Theatre Group (WTG), which was founded in 1974, just like the other all-women theatre companies was highly recognized by the public. Its policy relied on the policy of equality for everyone, so it gave opportunities to everyone to present their works on the stage even if they were homosexual or multi-racial works. It included many lesbian plays such as *Double Vision* (1982) by Libby Mason. As the WTG was especially influenced by radical or cultural feminist ideas, it adopted 'the personal is political' view and focused on the relationships between people both at home and in the social life (Goodman 63). Containing social feminist approach as well, the WTG dealt with class divisions and class struggle among women (Wandor 39) and women in the work place (Goodman 63) such as *Work to Role* (1976) which is a group devised work. The theme of "rehistoricizing" typical to the feminist critical practice" (Goodman 63) was also used in its materials as it is recognized in Timberlake Wertenbaker's *New Anatomies* (1980) which dramatizes the life story of the explorer Isabelle Eberhardt. Other themes that were seen in the productions of the WTG, for instance in its first group devised-work *My Mother Says I Never Should* (1975) was contraception and mother-daughter relationships. Like other theatre companies, the WTG also had economic problems because of the funding cuts in Thatcher's period. It needed to raise its variety and number of spectators and to find sponsorship, so tried to develop some strategies to increase its market earning potential but it was not successful in its attempts (Goodman 67). Being unable to apply its plans in order to expand its size or funding, the WTG went on working in a small-sized structure with no more than five performers for a play and three plays in a year without spoiling the quality of its work. Later in 1990, the WTG decided to

change its name as The National Women's Theatre Company expecting the word 'national' would help it to attract sponsorship, but the company disagreed with this idea and found this move conservative (Goodman 67-8). However, in 1991 the name of the Women's Theatre Group changed and it became The Sphinx.



## CHAPTER 2

### TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER AND HER TWO PLAYS

#### 2.1. Timberlake Wertenbaker's Early Life

Timberlake Wertenbaker is one of the leading contemporary woman playwrights of British theatre. Although her dramatic career covers a period of more than thirty years, the information about her private life has taken some time to be revealed. Wertenbaker has always been reluctant to talk about her private life and to be interviewed as she expressed explicitly in an interview with Hilary de Vries in 1989. She claims "..., I am private anyway. And I just feel that people have pried and revealed things that belong to me and my life" (De Vries). Although she was decisive to do something about "public scrutiny" (De Vries) in those years, her increasing fame and success as a playwright has caused her life to be scrutinized more. Fifteen years later, in another interview with John O'Mahony, Wertenbaker states that, "[i]t is very hard for a woman to be a playwright because it is so public," and she continues "[i]t's a tough world in the theatre." No matter how long she has spent in the world of theatre, she could not get over the disturbance she has felt about being public. Although Wertenbaker kept her life private, it is inevitable to view some fragments of her life in her works.

To start with, although she was born in New York in 1944, Timberlake Wertenbaker is considered as originally an Anglo-American as she was born to an English father, Charles Christian Wertenbaker, and an American mother, Lael Tucker Wertenbaker. Both of her parents were journalists and foreign correspondents for *Time* magazine. Lael Tucker Wertenbaker was also the author of a memoir called *Death of a Man* (1959). In this book, she documented the time when her husband suffered from cancer and his death because of this disease. Since both of her parents were journalists and travelled a lot, she grew up in the Basque region of France and she was brought up by a Basque woman (O'Mahony). Therefore, the Basque culture has played a significant role in the establishment of Wertenbaker's character. For instance, Wertenbaker explains that, "One thing they would tell you as a child," in the Basque region, "was never to say anything because you might be betraying someone who had done something politically or whatever. So I was inculcated with this idea of emotional privacy" (O'Mahony). As John O'Mahony inferred,

Wertenbaker "... attributes some of her reticence to her unusual upbringing in a small fishing village called Ciboure in the Basque region" and it might be observed in her reluctance to talk about her life.

At this stage, it should be emphasized that Wertenbaker's early life in the Basque region was influential in shaping not only her character, but also her future career. She claims that "Basque country was theatre in itself, because it's a very verbal culture. [...] you knew what was going on in the village, so there was endless stories and gossip" (qtd. in Bush 8). Furthermore, she encountered with theatre literally at an early age, "because there really is a lot of theatre in French education" (qtd. in Bush 8). In fact, she could not have a chance to go to the theatre a lot in those years, but she continued reading several plays which kept her interest in theatre alive.

After her childhood and early adolescence years in the Basque region, upon her father's death, Wertenbaker and her family went to the U.S.A.: "she remained in the United States to attend St John's College in Annapolis" (Bush 10). After she graduated from the university, she continued to live in America and worked at Time-Life Books as a caption writer (Bush 10). By the end of her twenties, although she was "upwardly mobile in a well-paid, prestigious New York job" (qtd. in Bush 10), she felt frustrated with this ordinary life. She claimed that, "I was suffering from a malaise common to people, like me, in their mid-twenties ..., who had a 'good job', a 'good life', all the external trappings of happiness ..., without actual happiness" (qtd. in Bush 10). So, she went after various adventurous experiences in the next part of her life. In 1975, she went to Somerset to become a stable-hand (Bush 11). By the end of 1976, she moved to the Greek Island of Spetse and here, she worked as a French teacher (Bush 12). She also had a chance to write for the stage and established a small theatre company for Greek children (McDonough 406). After leaving Greece, Wertenbaker settled in England, north London with her husband and daughter.

## **2.2. Timberlake Wertenbaker's Literary Career and Her Works**

Timberlake Wertenbaker is one of the most significant woman dramatists in contemporary British theatre. She took her first step into theatre in Greece with a small fringe company that had been initiated by her. Here, she wrote plays for

children and she produced them on the stage. Wertebaker tells her first impressions on playwriting as follows:

*I was in Greece, and I was with some people in the theatre. [...] [W]e were just sitting around actually, and just sort of decided to write this little play together, just for fun. I mean, it was just one of those afternoons. And I did then go home and [...] sort of write this kind of monologue, and it just felt [...] right, you know, it really did. And I've used that image before – I don't know if I've ever told anyone, but just like putting a hand in a glove. I mean, I just liked it. (qtd. in Bush 25)*

Thus, she realized that playwriting was the exact thing that she needed to do to complete the missing part of her life. Although her first experience of playwriting seems to have happened by coincidence, it definitely created a strong impact and became the first stone of the path of a brilliant future career.

On moving to England, Wertebaker started to work for some radical fringe theatres and small theatre companies in London, such as the Shared Experience Company and the Women's Theatre Group. In the years 1984-1985, she worked at the Royal Court Theatre (Snodgrass 562). Thus, "after beginning her work on the radical fringe, [she] has found herself courted by more high-profile theatres" (Carlson "Issues of Identity" 268) and she began to be known as a successful dramatist in the 1980s.

Throughout her career Wertebaker wrote several plays for the stage and television and radio, as well. Her radio plays are *Leocadia* (1985), *La Dispute* (1987), *Pellas and Melisande* (1988), and *Dianeira* (1999); and her television plays are *Do Not Disturb* (1991) and *The Children* (1992). The first stage plays of Wertebaker which remain unpublished are *This is No Place for Tallulah Bankhead* (1978), *The Third* (1980), *Second Sentence* (1980), *Case to Answer* (1980), *Breaking Through* (1980), *Inside Out* (1982) and *Home Leave* (1982). The only play Wertebaker wrote in her early career, *New Anatomies* (1981) took place in the first collection of her plays, *Plays One* (1996). It is about a group of women who construct a 'new anatomy' - a new sexual identity for themselves to be able to survive in a male dominated society.

Wertebaker wrote *Abel's Sister* (1984) and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985) for the Royal Court Theatre during the years she worked there. The second play received the Plays and Players Most Promising Playwright Award in 1985. This successful play is about a young woman who wants to experience freedom and

power in the male dominated society in the 1780s. The next award-winning play she wrote was *Our Country's Good* (1988) which was based on Thomas Kenally's novel *The Playmaker* (1987). This play received the Lawrence Olivier Award and the Evening Standard Play of the Year Award in 1988.

### **2.3. *New Anatomies***

*New Anatomies* (1981), Timberlake Wertenbaker's first play to be published (in 1984), is mainly about the life of Isabelle Eberhardt, a European traveller and writer. Although she was a Swiss woman, she lived in various countries such as France, Switzerland and strikingly in Algeria cross-dressed as an Arab man "in a quest for mental and physical liberation from gender stereotyping" (Peacock 161) in the last decades of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century. In *New Anatomies*, Wertenbaker presents Eberhardt as the main character who struggles to draw an identity that is sexually, nationally and religiously strong using cross-dressing (Foster 109). Apart from the life story of Eberhardt, other women who have similar lives with her are also depicted in the play and it is clearly seen that the thing all of these women have in common is that they are on a quest of 'new anatomies' or in other words "new structures of their gender" to be able to survive in male dominated societies (Peacock 166). Therefore, it is safe to say that *New Anatomies* is a play that questions gender ideology and gender limitations set by the male dominated society.

As Isabelle Eberhardt is a real person who lived in the past and attracts Wertenbaker's attention with her adventurous and unconventional life, it will be appropriate to mention her life story at this point. Isabelle Eberhardt was born in Geneva in 1877 to a German-Russian woman Mme Nathalie de Moerder, née Eberhardt and an unknown father as an illegitimate. It is assumed that Alexander Trophimowsky, Mme de Moerder's lover and the tutor of her children was Isabelle's father (Abdel-Jaouad 93). Compared to the girls in those years who were raised highly feminine under the education that was restricted to the female roles such as how to become a moral woman, a good housewife and a mother, Eberhardt was brought up in an unusual way. Being away from the generally accepted female roles and with her clothes she looked like a boy. Another thing which was unusual about her upbringing was that she was taught Arabic by her family along with history,



geography, philosophy, classical and modern European languages. She was interested in Orientalism and she had a curiosity about Arab lands and the desert where she led a life of exile and nomadism in the rest of her life. This can be interpreted on the one hand as because of her illegitimacy, Isabelle was always on a quest for a father and a fatherland and this search led her to a kind of nomadic life, on the other hand this shows Isabelle's desire to find her real identity free from the restrictions of her culture, religion and language (Abdel-Jaouad 94-5). In her quest of identity, she travelled to the Algerian Desert which always meant freedom for her, but was not as free as she thought because of the French hegemony. During this journey she took in her twenties, she was dressed as an Arab man. From 1897 on she lived variously in France, Switzerland and Algeria. In 1900 she met and then married to Slimene Ehnni, an Algerian soldier with French citizenship. She accepted the rules of Islam and joined the Quadria brotherhood of Sufis. In 1901 she was attacked by a member of the Tidjanya brotherhood that supported the French, but not the Quadria. After this event, she left Algeria, but returned later for the attacker's trial. In 1903 she met General Lyautey and he asked her to be an agent of French colonialism and persuaded her to do this in a suitable manner. After all, this gave Eberhardt an advantage of travelling in the Algerian Desert freely. Eberhardt died in a flash-flood, ironically in the desert village of Ain-Sefrain in 1904, at the age of 27.

Since Wertebaker did not change the time in which Eberhardt actually lived and used the same time setting in the play and told the events as they were in that period, it is important to scrutinize the late nineteenth century France. Although it is seen that a progress was made in terms of democracy and social life along with Republicanism, French Revolution and industrialization, there was not a dramatic change in the situation of women by means of gender roles. They continued to have an active role as wife and mother but only in the domestic field. In the same vein, as James McMillan also emphasized, "It is important to appreciate that Republicanism, the principal vehicle for the development of French democracy over the course of the nineteenth century, was from the outset committed to a vision of democracy from which women had been excluded" (31). Similarly, the French Revolution, contrary to what is assumed, was not "a turning point in the history of French women in any positive sense," on the contrary, it defined "the boundaries of both public and private life", in that way, women would be able to contribute to society "only through the private sphere of the home" (McMillan 31). They were expected to raise their

children, to do domestic chores and to make their husbands happy while men, unconcerned with these 'feminine' chores, had all the opportunities to be active and successful in the public sphere. There was a common view about 'separate spheres' of men and women that should not be mixed in order to save "the stability of the social order" (McMillan 42). This binary relationship between men and women caused a kind of hierarchy where men dominated women and masculinity assigned femininity an inferior position. Accordingly it prevented the development of equality between sexes. As it was important not to confuse sexual roles, likewise there was a strict line between the educations of two sexes in the nineteenth century French society. While the boys could be educated to take part in the outer world, the education of girls should be "moral and religious" (McMillan 98) and related only to domestic life because they were associated directly to family. They were not expected to take part in public sphere and this separation of spheres did not change until the end of the nineteenth century. In this period, due to the emergence of the first wave of feminism and women's emancipation, the conventional type of woman gave way to the modern and socially active type of woman. Women were not suppressed by the male dominated society any longer and they went out of the domestic boundaries taking roles in the social life together with men. As a natural consequence, this new type of woman was not appreciated by men and as McMillan argues, this "image of masculinized woman" even frightened them (141) just as Isabelle Eberhardt is not accepted by the conventional French men in the play since she is an unconventional woman who travels in the desert freely together with Arab men being disguised as a man.

Eberhardt is in a quest in the most part of her very short life. Her quest is mainly for personal reasons, in other words for a 'better self' as she explained her opinion about becoming 'better selves' in her diary. According to Eberhardt, "truly superior people are those preoccupied with the quest for better selves" (qtd. in Foster 111). The better self she searches for on her quest is an identity which is free from the limitations of patriarchal society. In his compelling 1993 article about Eberhardt's life and career, "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Nomad," Hedi Abdel-Jaouad notes that "Isabelle realized early in her life that true freedom could only be attained outside the purported hell of her milieu, that is, outside her culture, religion, and language" (94-5). Accordingly, in the play, while some female characters are shown as oppressed beings, the main character of the play Isabelle Eberhardt does

not accept this oppression as she owns an independent personality and her personality does not let her lead a life under the hegemony of men. She struggles to go out of the conventional lines that surround her and all women, so she starts a journey and travels to North Africa in a male costume. Although traveling themes are related to the political issues between one nation and the other as it is seen in the play between the westerners and the Africans as colonial conflict to some extent, colonialism is not a topic that is directly touched upon in this play. For instance, Isabelle has a sympathy towards the Arabs who are under the hegemony of the French, but this is not because she is interested in the politics of colonialism. In this play travelling means an escape from traditional confinement in the patriarchal society for Isabelle. In other words, traversing national boundary is a kind of breaking with the origins. In her journey, Isabelle leaves her stereotypical identity set by the society behind and creates a new identity of her own.

In *New Anatomies*, Wertebaker dramatizes the biography of Isabelle Eberhardt in the period Eberhardt was alive, so being quite loyal to historical reality starting from the first scene. The opening scene of the play is set in Ain-Sefra, a few hours before Isabelle's death, but this is understood through the end of the play. She is "*dressed in a tattered Arab cloak, has no teeth and almost no hair*" (Act 1, sc. 1, 5). The main character, who smokes, speaks in a rude way and continuously burps while speaking as she is drunk, looks a completely unconventional female figure in her Arab male costume. Isabelle, who has a rather masculine look, tells her 27-year-life to the chronicler Séverine. While narrating her background, Isabelle who has a brother called Antoine, interestingly says that she "was the only boy in the family" (Act 1, sc. 1, 7), most probably to emphasize that she has been stronger and much more masculine than Antoine who is depicted as "frail and feminine" (Act 1, sc. 2, 8) in the play. Related to her mother, she tells that her mother ran off and when Séverine asks her how her mother dared to run off in 1870s, Isabelle explains this with these words, "Even the violet resists domestication" (Act 1, sc. 1, 8). So, it is understood that Isabelle's mother is not one of the stereotypical women of the nineteenth century as women in this period, as noted by McMillan, tend to take responsibility in the private sphere rather than outside (31). Thus, it can be inferred that her mother is a role model for Isabelle in the context of not accepting domesticity and conventional roles of women. As her unconventional life story is

recorded by Séverine, Isabelle thinks that she is “famous” and she “will be in History” (Act 1, sc. 1, 6).

The second scene is set in Geneva, in a period when Isabelle is thirteen and her brother Antoine is sixteen. This scene gives the audience an idea about Isabelle’s family members and the relationship between them. While Isabelle’s mother Anna is portrayed as an ineffective mother figure who is not interested in her children enough, the things said about her father ‘Trofimovitch’ cause a monstrous father figure to occur in the audience’s mind. Antoine makes plans to escape from the harsh treatment of his father and despite his effeminate nature, he believes that he will be happy if he joins the army. Although Isabelle is not subject to her father’s negative treatment as she is “strong” (Act 1, sc. 2, 9) contrary to her brother, she accompanies her brother in playing a dream game in which they travel to the hot and vast Sahara desert or in other words they escape from their cold and restricted home in Geneva. In their imaginary journey in this part of the play, they imagine that there is a sandstorm and all of a sudden they embrace each other and roll on the floor calling each other “beloved” (Act 1, sc. 2, 11). This is the first time their mother notices the children and warns Antoine not to embrace his sister in that inappropriate way. It is understood that this unusual relationship between the two siblings is not peculiar to this particular moment but it is recurrent as they mention that the eldest sister Natalie wants them to behave “like Swiss clocks” (Act 1, sc. 2, 11) but not in this unconventional way. The only conventional member of the family Natalie enters in the play in the meantime. Like Antoine, she also plans to leave home but for her the only way of escape is marriage. The initial reason of her leaving the house is her father who attempts to seduce her. She is angry with both her father and mother as they do not take the responsibility of their families. She criticizes her father for being too much into philosophy and politics and her mother for teaching her children only poems instead of teaching them good manners, looking after them and protecting them. While insulting her brother Antoine describing him as “sniveling, delicate half girl” (Act 1, sc. 2, 12) although she knows he is so because of being “terrorized by that drunken beast” (Act 1, sc. 2, 12) that is their father, Natalie only cares for Isabelle. She promises Isabelle that she will return for her after getting married and so she will be able to live with her and her husband “in a real home, with a real family” (Act 1, sc. 2, 13). So she leaves home in pursuit of her dreams or more

precisely in pursuit of conventions just to be in a safe place, for the same reason with Antoine who also leaves home at the end of the scene to join the army.

The following scene is set in the house in Geneva, again. A few years later Natalie comes home to visit her family, but she sees only Isabelle. Isabelle tells her that Antoine has become a legionnaire in the French Army after leaving home. When it comes to her parents, Isabelle says both have died. Not surprisingly, Natalie is not sorry for their death, instead she is happy as she inherits the house. She starts making plans about selling the house saying “I’ll be so pleased to sell this house. All buried at last” (Act 1, sc.3, 19). Natalie also makes plans about her sister and as an outcome of her conventional perspective, she thinks that Isabelle should get married because of the necessity of “a roof over her head” (Act 1, sc.3, 17) as she is alone without a family. She has even found a candidate for Isabelle to get married, but she has some concern about her sister’s unusual attitudes and gives her some advice to behave like a conventional Victorian girl to be appreciated by the opposite sex:

*You’ve been reading too much. You mustn’t talk like that to men. When they come into the shop you must be seen working very hard, dusting things very carefully. That always inspires young men. We’ve thought a lot about Stéphane’s cousin. He has a flower shop and he won’t mind the fact that you look so strong. You could help him in the garden. You’d like that. (Act 1, sc.3, 17)*

After all, Natalie thinks, it is necessary for a woman to be under the protection of either her family or a husband. However, Isabelle, who is an intellectual quoting from the books she has read and writing articles, is completely different from her sister and has totally different plans. Unlike her sister, she never dreams about a happy marriage or having children. As she has dreamed since her childhood with her brother, she desires to travel to the desert that means independence and freedom for her and explains this to her sister in this way “Geneva of the barred horizons. I’m getting out, I need a gallop on the dunes” (Act 1, sc.3, 17). Yet, Natalie thinks that her sister’s dreams are temporary and she will forget all of them when she is married. Isabelle pities Natalie who thinks marriage is for order and replies “Poor Natalie, left the dreams to look for order, but order was not happiness” (Act 1, sc.3, 18).

In the next scene, Isabelle and Natalie go to Algiers to visit their brother and his wife Jenny who is pregnant. They see that Antoine, who is a civil servant and married now, has changed a lot. Now he is realistic enough to admit “Life isn’t what we dreamt” (Act 1, sc.4, 22) and to Isabelle’s surprise, he has given up their dreams

related to travelling to the desert unlike his sister who has never dismissed them from her mind. Although he lives in Algeria which is very close to the desert, he does not have a desire to go to the desert any longer unlike Isabelle. In this condition, she cannot figure out the reason why he lives in Algeria instead of Switzerland as she thinks there is not a remarkable change in his life. For Antoine, the desert has lost its meaning, as he says, "I did see it. It's not how we dreamt of it. It's dangerous, uncomfortable, and most of it isn't even sand" (Act 1, sc.4, 21). However, for Isabelle the desert still means freedom. Meanwhile, Natalie, who is not there during this conversation, returns home from the market with lots of clothes and materials given her by the Arabs, exclaiming, "It's wonderful how stupid these people are. They give you things for nothing" (Act 1, sc.4, 23). Upon her sister's opportunistic disrespect for Arab bartering, Isabelle praises their generosity. This disagreement that Isabelle has with her sister about Arabs is doubled when Antoine dispraises the desert saying Arabs "have no respect for human life. You see how dangerous they are" (Act 1, sc.4, 24). Isabelle also has a conflict with Jenny, the other Western character in this scene, about Arabs and how to behave them. She criticizes Isabelle for "talking to the natives in their own language. There's no reason not to talk to them in French" (Act 1, sc.4, 21) according to Jenny. The servant girl in the house, Yasmina is the other issue of conflict between Isabelle and Jenny. They are not pleased with the treatment of each other to Yasmina. While Jenny is opposed to Isabelle's too much interest in a native and a servant as she thinks this will result in disrespect, Isabelle warns Jenny for calling Yasmina with her own name. Yet, Jenny insists "Their names are unpronounceable. We call them all Fatma" (Act 1, sc.4, 21) as she ignores that native servants also have an identity. The other issue that Jenny opposes to Isabelle is that Isabelle's unconventional behavior as a woman. As Jenny, who is a conventional woman like Natalie, thinks that a woman has to do the domestic chores in order to set the order at home, Isabelle's lack of interest in doing housework disturbs her and she complains to Antoine saying that "she hasn't lifted a finger since she's been here" (Act 1, sc.4, 19). Unable to realize that there might be women who do not care about the feminine roles that are crucial for her, Jenny even tries to offend Isabelle saying; "You're jealous, that's all, because you can't find a husband" (Act 1, sc.4, 20). She thinks that there is no alternative way of living for a woman, but she has to behave within the limits of social norms set by the patriarchy. Hence, according to Jenny, a woman needs to be feminine, a good wife and mother.

For that reason, when Isabelle wants to smoke, she objects, “Women shouldn’t smoke. It makes them look vulgar, doesn’t it Antoine?” (Act 1, sc.4, 20). As a conventional woman, Jenny thinks that Antoine is the representative of the patriarchal society that determines the boundaries of genders and wants her husband to be as conventional as her to set the order at home, but Antoine prefers to be silent.

Among the clothes Natalie has brought home from the market, they see a costume called *jellaba*. While Jenny is trying on this costume as she thinks that it is a woman’s clothing like Natalie, Isabelle who has considerable knowledge about Arab culture, says it is a man’s costume and it is worn by warriors. Learning that it is not a female clothing, Jenny takes out the *jellaba* which is later put on by Isabelle. Contrary to Antoine and Natalie who despise Arabs, Isabelle puts on this male costume “slowly, formally” (Act 1, sc.4, 24) showing a kind of respect and “*she feels as at home in it*” (Act 1, sc.4, 24). This act of Isabelle contrasts to Jenny’s opinion about women’s wearing male clothes that are not for their gender. As Jenny thinks it is blasphemy, when Isabelle puts a captain’s jacket on Yasmina, the servant girl, she feels annoyed as opposed to Antoine who is not disturbed because of women wearing male costumes. Furthermore, he says “Isabelle looks like our recruits. No one would know you were a girl. Is this male or female?” (Act 1, sc.4, 25). This is because by putting on an Arab man’s outfit, she owns not only a new sexual identity, but also a new racial and cultural identity. In her *jellaba*, Isabelle wants to go out for a walk in the town, but Natalie warns her saying “a woman can’t go out by herself at this time of night” (Act 1, sc.4, 26). Yet, Isabelle opposes her sister “But in these ... I’m not a woman” (Act 1, sc.4, 26) and leaves the house.

In Scene Five, Isabelle is in an Arab neighborhood and alone, most probably on her way to the desert. In her monologue, it is understood that on the way that goes through her dreams, she dismisses all the terms that can be used to define her earlier:

*If, down and obscure alleyway, a voice shouts at me: hey you, shopkeeper -I’ll not turn around. If the voice pursues me: foreigner, European -I’ll not turn around. If the voice says: you, woman, yes, woman -I’ll not turn around, no, I’ll not turn even my head. Even when it whispers, Isabelle, Isabelle Eberhardt -even then I won’t turn around. But if it hails me: you, you there, who need vast spaces and ask for nothing but to move, you, alone, free, seeking peace and a home in the desert, who wish only to obey the strange ciphers of your fate - yes, then I will turn around, then I’ll answer: I am here: Si Mahmoud. (Act 1, sc.5, 26)*

Thus, in the rest of the play, Isabelle is seen in her new identity, in disguise of an Arab man called Si Mahmoud. It is seen that Isabelle assumes this new sexual, racial and cultural identity before setting off her quest for freedom and wisdom in the desert. As Abdel-Jaouad states “In socially and sexually segregated societies, such as the French colonial and Islamic ones, transvestism and the subsequent changes of name functioned for Isabelle as social and economic equalizers” (107). So, it can be argued that to eliminate any objections she might meet in an Arab society and to be accepted by the Muslim Arab men, she is aware of the advantages that both male and racial identity as an Arab will bring her.

In the last scene of Act One, Isabelle eventually reaches the desert to have peace, independence and freedom. In the desert, she is together with two Arab men, Saleh and Bou Saadi “*sitting passing around a pipe full of kif. They are very stoned, from lack of food and the hashish*” (Act 1, sc.6, 27). So, it can be deduced that these two Arab men have become friends with Isabelle who is in her new identity and introduces herself to them as a Tunisian student in search of wisdom and has not disclosed her real sexual and racial identity to them. Being in the desert in pursuit of wisdom as well as freedom, Isabelle asks her Arab friends questions about the wise men. During this conversation, they mention an Arab woman called Lalla Zineb and they praise her as she was a wise woman and highly respected by the Arabs. Astonished with this information because in the West it is assumed that women in the East are not valued, Isabelle cannot hinder herself to question how it is possible for a woman to be respected by the Arabs. Saleh replies “What difference does it make, Si Mahmoud, if she was wise?” (Act 1, sc.6, 28) and advises her to spend some time in the monasteries if she is in search of wisdom. While her Arab friends are telling about the changes in the desert which is not totally free after French hegemony to Isabelle, a French officer called Captain Soubiel enters and asks them who they were. After themselves, Bou Saadi introduces Isabelle as “a young Tunisian student on his way to the monasteries down south” (Act 1, sc.6, 29), yet Captain Soubiel suspects her appearance and wants to talk with Isabelle in private. Staring at Isabelle carefully, at first he “*becomes extremely courteous*” (Act 1, sc.6, 30) and he appreciates her for her courage to wander in the desert alone as “a mysterious young lady” (Act 1, sc.6, 30). Although Isabelle insists on introducing herself in his male Arab identity, he supposes that she is just an adventurer and advises her to ask the French army to escort her instead of Arab men whom he



constantly insults. Because Isabelle is on the side of the Arabs, she opposes what he says about the Arabs and her reaction causes Captain Soubiel's courteous manner to change. So he starts to make implications about her gender in a humiliating way likening her to "a delightfully unbroken young filly" (Act 1, sc.6, 31). Since Isabelle refuses his offer to accompany her, he gets furious and tells the truth about her identity to Bou Saadi and Saleh. However, this explanation of the Captain does not astonish them. Instead, Saleh continues to call Isabelle Si Mahmoud while speaking and explains, "It is a courtesy in our country not to be curious about the stranger. We accept whatever name Si Mahmoud wishes to give us" (Act 1, sc.6, 32). In fact, they have already learned the truth about Isabelle, but as they have indicated before the important thing for them is being a person in search of wisdom just like Isabelle. They even respect her since she knows the *Koran* better than them and for her desire to gain wisdom. Before leaving, the Captain orders the two Arab men to bring Isabelle to the city within ten days. However, Isabelle never leaves her dreams behind; she just leaves for Paris to appeal to the French government for permission to live in the desert and promises her Arab friends that she will come back.

The first scene of Act Two takes place in a salon in Paris. In the salon, there are five different women, Verda Miles, Séverine, Lydia, Eugénie and Isabelle and all of them except for Lydia, the owner of the salon, are dressed as men to survive in a male dominated society, as they usually do and hence they create new anatomies for themselves. Related to this atmosphere that night, Lydia asserts that the following century "will see a revolution greater than the French Revolution" and makes a comparison between the priests and the women saying "They defrocked the priests, we'll defrock the women" (Act 2, sc.1, 40). However, each woman wears men's clothes for her own private reason rather than a revolutionary act. Verda Miles, for instance, is a singer and she is dressed as a man when she is on stage as she sings men's songs as a male impersonator. She has chosen to sing in that way because she thinks that "there is more variety" (Act 2, sc.1, 38) in men's songs and in the role of a man. So, to be able to survive and be successful in the artistic milieu, she has to carry male clothes and male traits on her when she is on stage. Another woman in this scene, Séverine is a lesbian journalist and she is always dressed as a man because she is aware of the fact that she will not be accepted by the male dominated society as a lesbian. Although she prefers to have lesbian identity as she feels comfortable in it, when she goes out, she seeks comfort in male clothes. As she

wears male clothes, she relates, she can take her girlfriends “to coffee bars without having men pester us” (Act 2, sc.1, 38). The owner of the salon, Lydia is an amateur writer and claims that she begins to think and get ideas only when she dresses as a man. In order to write seriously, she admits she “must dress as a man” (Act 2, sc.1, 38). When she is dressed as a woman, on the other hand, she finds herself “most concerned with the silky sound of [her] skirt rustling on the floor” or spends “hours watching the lace fall over [her] wrist” (Act 2, sc.1, 38) and she concludes that the reason of Séverine’s being so successful as a journalist is her always dressing as a man. Lastly, Eugénie who admits that she has always had a masculine tendency, says so she has not been able to adopt female characteristics determined by the male dominated society and she prefers to dress as a man. Although all these women are cross-dressed for different reasons, Isabelle in her Arabian male clothes attracts their attention. When they learn that this woman in Oriental look is in fact a European nomad who travels in the Sahara desert in disguise of an Arab tribesman, they want to have a conversation with her and learn more about her but Isabelle does not talk much about herself or when she talks, she does it in such a way that is defined as “vulgarity” (Act 2, sc.1, 41). Drinking too much champagne during her stay in the salon, Isabelle explains the reason of being “too free with [her] tongue” saying she “spent nine months working on the docks of Marseilles to pay for this trip” to Paris “loading ships” (Act 2, sc.1, 41) to pay for the permission to travel in the desert. Séverine, however, cannot be indifferent to her interesting life story and decides to record it.

This cross-dressed women scene in a Paris Salon is significant due to the fact that it shows that these women, in fact, accept the superior position of men. As they lived in a period in which “Man is the measure of all things” (Act 2, sc.1, 34) as related by Eugénie, the only way to realize their dreams and to survive for these women in the male dominated societies of this period was to be like men wearing their clothes and assuming their identities. They are aware of the fact that as being women with their own stereotypical gender identities that are determined by male dominated societies, they will not be able to reach their goals. Thus, since they go out of the conventional limits of femininity, they are not accepted by the majority of people that is assumed to be normal and they remain as the minority for whom normality is “the golden cage” (Act 2, sc.1, 39) as Séverine reflects, and they are left out of this cage:

*Normality, the golden cage. And we poor banished species trail around, looking through the bars, wishing we were there. But we're destined for curiosity shops, labelled as the weird mistakes of nature, the moment of God's hesitation between Adam and Eve, anatomical convolutions, our souls inside out and alone, always alone, outside those bars. (Act 2, sc.1, 39)*

In the following scene, Isabelle is seen as having achieved to go back to the desert and she is in a monastery called 'zouaia' together with Si Lachmi, Saleh and Bou Saadi. Her Arab friends give information to Isabelle about Quadria, one of the oldest of several Sufi orders because she will become a Quadria like them. Si Lachmi gives information about the Quadria telling that "There is no dogma. We believe only in the equality of all men and gentleness of heart" and adds that their "founder was most loved for his friendship with the oppressed" so she "must be generous and show pity to all" (Act 2, sc.2, 42). As they continue to converse, "*the Murderer comes in, unseen*" (Act 2, sc.2, 44) and he attacks Isabelle with a sabre and she is wounded slightly. The Murderer, who is caught, is questioned by Isabelle's Arab brothers as he has tried to kill a brother of them and he replies that Si Mahmoud is a woman and so God ordered him "to kill that person who offends [their] law" (Act 2, sc.2, 44) and customs. Isabelle who is not satisfied with this reply tries to learn why the Murderer wants to kill her, but the only reason is that she offends their customs just as she is not a man but a woman dressed as a man which reminds Isabelle the European culture and its conventional structure which discriminates against women and specifically unconventional women and she admits "But that's why I left them" (Act 2, sc.2, 45). Thus, Isabelle, who leaves her European background behind as it does not accept the women who transgress the limits of their gender, realizes that the Eastern culture is not much different from her own culture. Seeing that the Eastern culture in which she has always hoped to find freedom and wisdom, does not allow women to go out of the boundaries of their gender as well, she feels quite disappointed because as Carlson denotes, she "is othered in both cultural realms" ("Language and Identity" 140) as an unconventional woman.

In Scene Three, Isabelle and the Murderer are in a Courtroom in Constantine where it is expected the Murderer will be interrogated. Instead, the Judge interrogates Isabelle because of her unconventional behaviours such as being dressed as an Arab man, travelling in the desert and living in a monastery with her 'brothers' to search for wisdom. He accuses Isabelle of having "perverted nature" (Act 2, sc.3, 49) as she behaves like a man contrary to "nature defined ..., confined ..., farmed by" (Act 2,

sc.3, 49) patriarchy. She has neither female roles nor European traits as they are determined by patriarchy. Yet, the Judge thinks that it is not suitable for a young European woman to be in the desert. To Isabelle who is worried about her own safety, the Judge says “You would be safe in Europe, Miss Eberhardt” (Act 2, sc.3, 47) and advises her to return her home, to Europe. Although Isabelle insists on that she “belong[s] in the desert” (Act 2, sc.3, 48), the Judge decides that she will not travel in the desert as an Arab man any longer, stopping her “gallivantings in that offensive masquerade” (Act 2, sc.3, 49). Being prevented from travelling in the desert as she wishes for the second time, Isabelle cries out “Fenced out. Again. Always” (Act 2, sc.3, 50). On the other hand, Séverine responds “Fenced in, Isabelle. All of us” (Act 2, sc.3, 50) implying that women are always restricted and their lives are standardized by patriarchy.

In Scene Five, Isabelle, who is expelled from the desert by the Judge, meets Colonel Lyautey. This meeting has been arranged by Séverine but in fact Colonel Lyautey has heard many things about Isabelle or Si Mahmoud as he always calls her during their conversation and he has wanted to meet her. Although he is a French soldier, Séverine describes him as “an exception” and adds “The Arabs like him” (Act 2, sc.4, 51). It is clearly understood that he is quite different as he “bows” (Act 2, sc.4, 51) when he first meets Isabelle and as he respects her calling her ‘Si Mahmoud’ all the time and telling her that everyone knows her as “a young man in search of knowledge” (Act 2, sc.4, 53). Moreover, he offers Isabelle to visit the school of the Zianya sect and its leader, Sidi Brahim in Morocco for five months at first and get some information about the rebellious tribes there to inform him later. It is hard to believe in a French soldier for Isabelle who asks “Is it written that Si Mahmoud shall speak to Sidi Brahim, that wisdom might be gained at last?” (Act 2, sc.4, 53). No doubt she accepts this offer which enables her to follow her dream of travelling in the desert in pursuit of wisdom.

In the next scene, Isabelle returns from Morocco in five months as she has promised and with Séverine, they are in Ain-Sefra, “*same as the first scene*” (Act 2, sc.5, 55). Before she meets Colonel Lyautey, she tells what she has lived in Morocco to her chronicler. Meanwhile, it starts to rain all of a sudden. Unlike Séverine, Isabelle does not go in and enjoys the rain acclaiming “the rain. Get clean that way, wash the traces and the letters. Fresh sand, new letters” (Act 2, sc.5, 56) and “*she lies down*” (Act 2, sc.5, 56). Wishing the rain to clean the letters and traces which have

remained from the past, Isabelle does not avoid getting wet in the rain. Thus, she hopes to get rid of the patriarchal norms and stereotypes metaphorically.

In the final scene of the play, Séverine is in Ain-Sefra with Colonel Lyautey and the Judge and states that Isabelle is drowned in a flash flood in the desert. Upon this news, the Judge, who is the representative of the dominant culture, reports that “this person must be officially forgotten” (Act 2, sc.6, 57) as Isabelle, being a marginalized woman, has not been accepted in the dominant culture. On the other hand, Colonel Lyautey and Séverine are interested in the only things which remain from Isabelle, some journals. In conclusion, Isabelle who rejects the boundaries of gender in the Western world, embarks on a travel to the desert in pursuit of freedom and wisdom, however she dies here contradictorily before she reaches her goal. Thus, in her quest for identity, Isabelle adopts neither her Western female identity nor an Arab male identity completely or with another point of view, it can be considered that she adopts both.

Eberhardt's adopting more than one identity brings to mind that Timberlake Wertenbaker's rejection of being identified as a single being or as a playwright of a single origin. Wertenbaker who has French and American origins, grew up in the Basque country, went to school in Paris and New York, and has lived for a long period in London and so she is often defined as a British playwright. However, she does not introduce herself strictly with the category of British, American, or French playwright and states, “I don't know why you can't be many things at once” (DiGaetani 263-4) and it is seen that in her plays, she includes characters with multi-dimensional identities instead of stereotypical characters or she draws a multi-dimensional identities for them as it is clearly seen in *New Anatomies*. In the play, both the protagonist and the other women in the Parisian Salon, who are cross-dressed as men for different reasons, reflect the playwright's desire to present characters with multi-dimensional identities.

*New Anatomies* is a play that presents the alternative ways of looking at the gender issue and so it breaks conventional ‘sexual stereotyping’ being designed for a cast of only five women for eighteen different characters including males. In the play's “Note on the Staging” Wertenbaker clarifies, “Except for the actress playing *Isabelle*, each actress plays a Western woman, an Arab man and a Western man” (4). The roles are distributed like that: Natalie plays Eugenie (both Western women), the Murderer (an Arab man), and the Judge (a Western man), Anna plays Verda Miles

(both Western women), Si Lachmi (an Arab man), Captain Soubiel (a Western man), and Yasmina (an Arab woman), Jenny plays Lydia (both Western women), Saleh (an Arab man), and Colonel Lyautey (a Western man), Severine (a Western woman) plays Bou Saadi (an Arab man), and Antoine (a Western man) and lastly, Isabelle plays a Western woman dressed in Western male clothing and a Western woman dressed as an Arab man called Si Mahmoud. As Maya E. Roth argues in *Engaging Cultural Translations*, “*New Anatomies* transforms gendered boundaries in the space of performance itself, by featuring women performers in rigorously layered diversity” (159). In her staging notes, Wertebaker also adds that the costume “changes should take place in such a way as to be visible to the audience and all five actresses should be on stage at all times” (4). With this stage direction, Wertebaker intends to demonstrate that how easy it is for people to change from one identity to another simply by changing their clothes and as Peacock relates, with this act of cross-dressing, Wertebaker “makes the audience constantly aware of the play’s central concern, that of sexual stereotyping” (164). Related to this way of staging, Roth makes a more comprehensive comment and denotes that, “This staging requires performers to translate across cultures of difference—of gender, ethnicity and language communities” (159). Hence, it can be deduced that, as Roth also argues, the dramaturgy of *New Anatomies* is made with the intention of highlighting the idea of traversing gender boundaries as well as the strict lines between different ethnic groups and while doing this, the playwright uses the symbolism of clothing and cross-dressing. Nevertheless, as clothes symbolize gender or ethnicity, it is not difficult to define a person as woman or man, European or Arab according to the clothes they are in and this also means that by cross-dressing, a person can adopt any sexual and ethnical identity.

“[T]he best scenes in *New Anatomies*,” according to Foster, “are those dealing with gender and cross-dressing,” that are intentionally used to reflect “Wertebaker’s original interests” (119). In *New Anatomies*, the main character Isabelle Eberhardt is cross-dressed as an Arab tribesman almost all through the play. Her intention in it is to move across the gender boundaries defined by her European male dominated society. In other words, she rejects the feminine identity and adopts a masculine presence in order to be free, to have power and to get rid of the secondary position she has in the patriarchal society as it is unacceptable for a woman who has been raised as an intellectual like Isabelle to be restricted in

domestic life and to seek happiness in conventional feminine roles such as being a good housewife, wife and mother. Even in her early ages, Isabelle refuses the confinement in domestic life caused by her gender and at the age of 13, for instance, Isabelle is cross-dressed and depicted as “dressed in a man’s shirt” (Act 1, sc. 2, 8) and to highlight that she is not a fragile feminine figure, she claims that she is “strong” (Act 1, sc. 2, 9). Accordingly, having a masculine attitude even at that age, she never has a desire to adopt domestic roles unlike her excessively conventional sister, Natalie. As Abdel-Jaouad depicts, “From her early Geneva days, Isabelle refused to be confined and condemned by her gender to the slavery of a domestic life. She found in disguise a means of escaping her "role," that is, domestic entrapment, the predicament of the overwhelming majority of women in her generation” (106). Isabelle’s being cross-dressed as a man is just an outcome of her reaction to patriarchal structure and gender roles. In fact, from very early ages, she starts questioning these conventional norms. In Act I, scene 2, when Isabelle is seen at the age of 13, she criticizes her elder sister Natalie who is quite conventional as she wants her and her brother Antoine to behave “like Swiss clocks. Tick tock” (11). She rejects to behave in accordance with the roles which are defined by the society and instead of adopting feminine traits such as being fragile and weak, she is proud of being “strong” (9) and encourages her brother to be strong like her and not to let their father treat roughly towards him. Besides, while talking, Isabelle, who is highly intellectual and well-educated by her mother and especially father, always quotes poems that are thought to be learned by boys at that time. While Isabelle needs to be taught “to sweep instead” (Act I, Scene 3, p. 16) by their mother as Natalie criticizes, she does not have any interest in this kind of feminine chores just like her mother. Unlike her sister, she has no desire to get married and to have children. She has only one dream about travelling to the Sahara desert as she believes she will be free from the restrictions that European society imposes on her gender there. So, she travels to the Sahara desert disguising in a new sexual and cultural identity.

The most striking moment at which Isabelle is cross-dressed as an Arab man in the play is the scene in which she puts on a *jellaba*, an Arab man’s outfit. Wearing this Arab costume, she adopts a new sexual, racial and cultural identity getting away from her European female identity. For a woman who desires to gain freedom and knowledge on her travel to the desert in the East, it is definitely beneficial to be disguised as an Arab and a man because as Foster states, “Her dress enabled her to

live among Arab men as an equal” (111). So, Isabelle who knows that she will reach her dreams in a disguise of a new identity, dismisses all the terms such as ‘foreigner’, ‘European’, ‘woman’ and even her real name ‘Isabelle’ that might be used to define her earlier. She claims that only if someone calls her: “you, you there, who need vast spaces and ask for nothing but to move, you, alone, free, seeking peace and a home in the desert, who wish only to obey the strange ciphers of your fate – yes, then I will turn around, then I’ll answer: I am here: Si Mahmoud” (Act 1, sc.5, 26). Thus, it is clearly seen that the thing she puts on is not only an Arab man’s costume but also a new identity.

In the play, along with Isabelle there are other women who are cross-dressed and they all come together in the Parisian Salon scene. All of these women use the tool of cross-dressing as a means to gain freedom for different reasons. Eugénie, a traveler who has a tendency to masculinity is cross-dressed to gain freedom to travel, Verda Miles, a singer and a male impersonator for better roles, Lydia, the Salon owner, who, while dressed in the scene as a woman, admits to frequent cross-dressing, uses the act of cross-dressing to write seriously, and Severine, a lesbian journalist to have coffee without men bothering them. All of these women have experienced the limitations of being a woman in the patriarchal societies, so they try to remove these limitations through the act of cross-dressing. Yet, for Isabelle, cross-dressing has a deeper meaning as she assumes an Arab male identity in her Arab male outfit. As Abdel-Jaouad denotes, “By rejecting the symbolism of her female clothing, Isabelle transgressed and broke more than a dress code; she put into question not only gender roles and functions but also their political and ideological implications” (107). Because as a consequence of her assumption of an Arab male identity, she in fact transgresses not only gender boundaries, but also cultural and ethnical boundaries constructed by her original culture and society, that is European society.

Related to the Parisian Salon scene in which a group of women who have been subject to sexual oppression by the patriarchal society are presented, it can also be said that this scene provides an opportunity to analyze the play from a social feminist point of view. This is because social feminism is interested in the problems of all females from different classes and backgrounds. Although the play is mainly about Isabelle Eberhardt and her experiences on her quest of identity, the oppression of a single woman is not the only subject of *New Anatomies*. Being the



representatives of unconventional and intellectual women, Verda Miles, Séverine, Lydia, Eugénie and Isabelle Eberhardt all have their ideals and dreams to pursue and in order to reach them in a world where “Man is the measure of all things” (Act 2, sc.1, 34), as Eugénie says, they need to conceal their gender adopting male identity and being cross-dressed as man. Hence, they deconstruct the socially and traditionally constructed female gender roles. They are aware of the fact that they will be unable to survive and be successful in patriarchal societies as women. Having independent personalities, they do not accept their conventional gender roles and they reject to live under the hegemony of men, so they lead their lives in disguise of other identities that do not belong to them, but in a position that is free from the boundaries of patriarchal norms. Living “their lives outside the boundaries of traditional womanhood” (“Language and Identity” 140), as stated by Carlson, these unconventional woman, in one respect, questions the status of womanhood and the social construction of gender and identity which are accepted as some of the themes discussed by socialist feminist view.

In the play, another significant character that can be analyzed in the context of socialist feminism is Yasmina, the servant at Jenny and Antoine’s house. Although she never speaks throughout the play, the information given by Isabelle about her and the attitude of Jenny and Isabelle towards her provide lots of comments to be made on Yasmina. For instance, about Yasmina, Isabelle informs that “they tried to marry her to a cousin she hated. It was death or the degradation of becoming a servant” (Act 1, sc.4, 19) and so this silent character turns out to be a representative of victimized women in patriarchal societies who are forced to marry someone they do not want. As a woman who has experienced the patriarchal oppression in her earlier life, Yasmina is still oppressed as a member of the working class. The person who suppresses her is in fact another woman, Jenny. She continuously demonstrates the false superiority she has as a white middle class woman and her discontent about Yasmina’s performance as a servant complaining “I have enough trouble making that woman work. They are so lazy, these people” (Act 1, sc.4, 19). For Jenny, Yasmina is only a working class woman to be benefited from, so she disregards her identity and even her name. She, for instance, never bothers to call her with her real name ‘Yasmina’, instead she calls her ‘Fatma’ and she explains this situation claiming “Their names are unpronounceable. We call them all Fatma” (Act 1, sc.4, 19). Demonstrating a colonial attitude, Jenny discriminates against

Yasmina and neither she prefers to have much communication with this servant girl in her house nor she approves Isabelle who “talks too much to the servant” (Act 1, sc.4, 19) as they are not from the same social and cultural background and the same classes with Yasmina. For Jenny, the colonized native people or the servants should not be treated in the same way as they are treated because she thinks they deserve to be humiliated and if they are treated equally, this may cause a disorder in society. So, she warns Isabelle about the possible things that might occur if she treats Yasmina well saying, “Please remember that Fatma is a native and a servant. They don’t respect you if you treat them...” (Act 1, sc.4, 19). Thus, it is seen that Jenny who does not accept Yasmina as an individual because of her social condition and because of her cultural and racial background is a perfect example of middle or upper class women who cause intra-sexual class oppression of the working class women. As a result of this intra-sexual class oppression, as social feminists discuss, it is not possible to construct solidarity or sisterhood among women, as it is observed through Jenny and Yasmina in the play. Moreover, while working class women are known to be doubly oppressed because of both their gender and class, compared to the middle or upper class women who are oppressed just because of their gender, in the play Yasmina is seen as oppressed triply. At first, she has been oppressed because of her gender and later she is oppressed because of her working class status and Eastern background. Having an overall look at the social feminist issues that are dealt with in the play, it can be argued that Wertebaker highlights that women are not only exposed to sexual oppression by the male dominated society, but they also experience intra-sexual oppression which is rooted in class and racial oppression.

To conclude, *New Anatomies* that “explore[s] women’s potential to redefine themselves” (Bush 267) is Timberlake Wertebaker’s first feminist play. Although the play is set in the past and about the life of a historical person, it gives the reader and the audience a chance to compare the condition of various women both in the past and the present. Furthermore, while presenting unconventional women who are on a quest of new identities rejecting the gender stereotype that is imposed on them by the patriarchy, the play at the same time contrasts these women with traditional women who seek happiness under the hegemony of men as they do not know any other alternative ways of living. As it questions the conventionally constructed female gender identities exemplifying different women from various backgrounds

and as it also questions patriarchal oppression of women throughout history, it is possible to classify the play as a socialist feminist play.

#### **2.4. *The Grace of Mary Traverse***

Timberlake Wertenbaker's another feminist play *The Grace of Mary Traverse* was first put on the stage at the Royal Court Theatre in 1985. The play won the playwright the *Plays and Players'* award for most promising playwright. Like Isabelle Eberhardt in *New Anatomies*, the main character in this play, Mary Traverse abandons the confines of the domestic life in order to embark on a journey of personal, sexual, social and cultural discovery (Aston, *Feminist Views* 150). As Wertenbaker informs in the "Note" part of the play, "Although the play is set in the eighteenth century, it is not a historical play" and she explains why she chose this time setting saying that "I found the eighteenth century as a valid metaphor, and I was concerned to free people of the play from contemporary misconceptions" (66). Thus, the playwright intends to present the contemporary issues in her play using a historical setting.

The eighteenth century England is one of the most outstanding settings for a feminist playwright to use in her feminist play as it is a period in which the patriarchal society specified male and female roles with definite lines. As Shevelov has outlined, in the eighteenth century: "categories of masculine and feminine, public and private, home and world, assumed the shape of binary oppositions in which the meaning of each category was produced in terms of its opposite" (19). According to this categorization, males were superior and dominated the opposite sex both in the public and private sphere as females had lower qualities. In fact, women were seen as having inherent traits like "passivity, ignorance, docility, 'virtue' and ineffectuality" (Millett 26), traits which disqualified them for the masculine public sphere. The only place that the women in the eighteenth century England were assumed to qualify was their home and their only sustenance was their fathers or husbands. In the case that they lost their fathers or husbands and went out to work in the external world where they were normally excluded, the only work options open to women were chiefly begging and prostitution. Accordingly, they were not allowed to go out of their houses as they were responsible to preserve their chastity which is "seen as the most essential virtue in women" (Hill 138). Besides, moral values established by the

society have a significant place in their instruction” (Hill 25). So, in terms of women’s education, it is observed that feminine manners like walking leaving no traces and conversing only about feminine issues and arts such as music and needlework were concerned more than reading and writing. Nevertheless, the girls were not supposed to be intellectual or wise. They were just expected to become graceful wives who were almost invisible, not talking too much and not about everything.

In the opening scene of the play, Mary Traverse is introduced as a typical eighteenth century English girl who is practicing the skill of having conversation with a man without saying much of anything. In fact, she sits “*facing an empty chair*” in her father’s “*drawing room*” and “*talks to the chair with animation*” (Act 1, sc.1, 67). Although there is not a man sitting in front of her, Mary is not alone in the room as her father, Giles Traverse “*stands behind and away from her*” (Act 1, sc.1, 67) observing his daughter to make comments on her practice. Addressing an imaginary man, Mary only talks about trivial things like nature because her father restrains her about the subjects she can converse on. When Mary mentions her desire “to visit a salt mine,” for instance, Giles Traverse warns her, saying, “You are here not to express your desires but to make conversation” (Act 1, sc.1, 68). So, it means that Mary attempts to “acquire one form of grace: the elegant, decorous nullity of an ‘agreeable’ woman” (Cousin 160) just as her father wants her to be. Since female gender roles are defined by the patriarchal English society in the eighteenth century, she has to behave within the borders that is metaphorically drawn by her father who is the representative of the patriarchal society in their house. Besides that, there are boundaries that are literally established by her father for Mary, so she cannot go out of the house to see the external world although she is very curious about it. Her father does not even understand why she looks out of the window, instead of being grateful for the things she has in the house: “Why gape out of the window when I’ve given you so much to see in the house?” (Act 1, sc.1, 69). His attitude is so strict on this matter that it does not change even Mary wants to go to the theatre with him asking, “Wouldn’t I do better if I saw a little more of the world?” (Act 1, sc.1, 70) implying her conversation skills. “That’s not possible” (Act 1, sc.1, 70) he says for her wish as he always says for all her wishes suppressing her subjectivity and individuality.

In the following scene, Mary practices walking this time, in the drawing room after her father leaves. Walking idealized for women is another grace that she attempts to acquire. While walking, she recites the instructions given by her teachers: “You must become like air. Weightless. Still. Invisible. Learn to drop a fan and wait. When that is perfected, you may move, slightly, from the waist only. Later, dare to walk, but leave no trace” (Act 1, sc.2, 71). Thus, Mary who has been imposed on the stereotypical female roles in her education, admits: “I may sometimes be a little bored, but my manners are excellent” (Act 1, sc.2, 71). Dropping the fan, Mary calls Mrs. Temptwell to pick it up. Mrs. Temptwell has been working as a servant at Traverses’ house for twenty five years. To Mary who wants her to watch while walking, she tells that her mother “went in and out of rooms with no one knowing she’d been there” (Act 1, sc.2, 73) leaving no trace behind her. Mrs. Temptwell also tells Mary that her mother wanted to see the world outside, but she died before experiencing “that little pleasure” (Act 1, sc.2, 74). So, becoming more curious about the outer world, Mary also learns from Mrs. Temptwell that “the girl in number fourteen” (Act 1, sc.2, 73) has gone out to the streets of London disguised, asking the help of one of the servants and that she now “glitters with interest” (Act 1, sc.2, 74) after seeing the world outside. As Cousin refers, “by means of a process that her name encodes” (159), Mrs. Temptwell tempts Mary in this way and Mary decides to go out to the streets in order to “glitter with knowledge” (Act 1, sc.2, 74).

Thus, in the third scene of Act One, leaving “the imprisoning security of her father’s house,” Mary Traverse starts “to explore the forbidden London street outside, forbidden to Mary, that is, by her father” (Cousin 159). However, the first things she sees in the London streets leave a negative impression on her, so she thinks that “there’s nothing here to improve my conversation” (Act 1, sc.3, 77) and wants to return home, but Mrs. Temptwell persuades her to spend more time in the streets to gain more knowledge about the external world. The first bad experience Mary has in the streets is her encounter with Lord Gordon who tries to find a way to make himself noticed by every other people. Meanwhile he sees some women on the street and he cleans his throat to attract even these women’s attention. Yet, Mary disregards him and Lord Gordon accepts her ignorance of himself as a challenge to his manhood. “*He takes out his sword*” to make Mary regard him no matter how it happens: “I’ll make you frightened. Yes. I’ll show you my strength. Come here to the lamp-post” (Act 1, sc.3, 78). Seeing that she gives a reaction although this reaction is

fear, Lord Gordon goes a step further and attempts to seduce Mary. In the meantime, Sophie who is a poor peasant girl looking for her aunt interferes to help Mary to get rid of his harsh treatment. She saves Mary but this time Sophie herself becomes a victim and cannot escape from being raped by Lord Gordon. Mary who watches what is happening at this time, only sees a malevolent man attacking a woman and cannot understand what is happening exactly. Asking Mrs. Temptwell, she tries to make sense of it: "Rape? What the Greek Gods did? Will he turn himself into a swan, a bull, a shower of golden rain? Is he a god?" (Act 1, sc.3, 80). Having assumed that the things she has read in the books are the life itself before she starts to explore the world out of her house, Mary admits, "I couldn't stop looking (Pause.) It's not like the books" (Act 1, sc.3, 80) witnessing Sophie's rape. Mrs. Temptwell, on the other hand, evaluates rape from a different point of view and says, "Virtue, like ancestors, is a luxury of the rich" (Act 1, sc.3, 80), so she thinks that Sophie "won't mind" (Act 1, sc.3, 80) being raped while presuming how powerful Lord Gordon will be after the rape saying "He'll feel like one" (Act 1, sc.3, 80) referring to the Greek gods Mary mentions. Indeed, Lord Gordon who meets Mr. Manners afterwards tells his friend that he has changed into "a different man" (Act 1, sc.3, 81) after the rape since he thinks that he has gained "power" (Act 1, sc.3, 81) with this event.

In Scene Four, it is observed that neither dirty streets nor rape that she has witnessed make Mary return to her safe place, her house, instead she feels more curious and wants to learn more about the outer world. In the beginning of this scene, Mary, who follows Lord Gordon and Mr. Manners, is seen outside a coffee house with Mrs. Temptwell. In the eighteenth century, coffee houses which emerge as an outcome of public sphere are public arenas where only men come together to make debates about social and political issues. So, Mary and Mrs. Temptwell are not allowed to go in by the Boy who works as a waiter in the coffee house. He just allows them to "see through the window" (Act 1, sc.4, 82), but this reminds Mary her confined life in her father's house and she insists: "I've spent my life looking through window panes. I want to face them" (Act 1, sc.4, 82) referring to the intellectuals like "Mr. Fielding, Mr. Goldsmith, Mr. Hume, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Garrick, the Doctor, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Hogarth" (Act 1, sc.4, 82) who are told to be in the coffee house by the Boy. Yet, seeing that it is not possible to go in the coffee house or in other words, the world of men or the world outside dominated by men, Mary thinks what she has observed in their world until that moment: "I've seen them

walk the streets without fear, stuff food into their mouths with no concern for their waists. I've seen them tear into the skin without hesitation and litter the streets with their discarded actions. But I have no map to this world. I walk it as a foreigner and sense only danger" (Act 1, sc.4, 83). Feeling that she has no place in the male dominated external world, Mary admits that she "was happy in [her] rooms" (Act 1, sc.4, 83). Mrs. Temptwell, on the other side, tries to persuade her to travel in their world more and wants her to see the positive sides of this travel, "You'll no longer be an ornate platter served for their tasting. No, you'll feast with them. No part of flesh or mind unexplored. No horizon ever fixed. Experience! (*Pause*). I could manage it for you" (Act 1, sc.4, 83). Mary likes the idea of "run[ning] the world through [her] fingers as they do" and accepts to continue her quest of the real world and she responds, "But I want the world as it is, Mrs. Temptwell, no limitations, no illusions, I want to know it all" (Act 1, sc.4, 84). Thus, being fascinated by the idea of experiencing a new world which has no restrictions and getting more knowledge about it, Mary decides to go on her quest.

In the first scene of Act Two in which Giles Traverse and Mr. Manners converse at the Brothers Club it is learned that Mary has left a letter to her father writing, "she'd gone to investigate the very underside of nature" (Act 2, sc.1, 85) and it has been three days since she left. Mr. Manners advises Giles, who is worried about his daughter, to forget about his daughter and to keep this event as a secret since it will harm Giles's political career. In the meantime, Lord Gordon comes in and tells his intention to marry Giles's daughter who he thinks that he has never seen before. To his wish, before Giles, Mr. Manners responds: "Giles's daughter died yesterday, of a bad chill" (Act 2, sc.1, 87). Although marriage is the only thing that he has dreamed for his daughter, Giles is unable to realize his dream now since his unconventional daughter has different dreams and desires from his.

The next scene gives background information about Mrs. Temptwell and makes the audience understand the reason why she is spiteful against the Traverse family. It is learned that when Giles was a farmer in the past, he bought her father's land and did not leave them even their cottage although he promised. Upon this, Giles protests saying, "I gave those people work" (Act 2, sc.2, 88), but Mrs. Temptwell reminds him that her father died while working for him. So, having a desire to take revenge on Giles Traverse who is the reason of her father's death, Mrs. Temptwell, somehow reaches her aim and causes Mary to disgrace her father. Hence,

Giles's daughter is 'dead', as well, even if she is not literally. As Susan Carlson also denotes, "Mrs. Temptwell, with a smouldering anger over her family's economic demise, is taking a more personal revenge on Mary and her family by tempting Mary out of privilege" ("Language and Identity" 142). In addition to her personal revenge, it is observed that, as a representative of working class, Mrs. Temptwell is actually revengeful to the Traverse family since they are upper-class and they suppress the people who are 'lower' than them.

In Act Two, scene three, Mary is seen again, but this time as experiencing the realities of the external world by herself. Mrs. Temptwell only "stands in the background and watches" (Act 2, sc.3, 89). The scene starts with a naked man's speech on sex and pleasure, thus this man called Mr. Hardlong tries to encourage Mary who is "*fully dressed*" (Act 2, sc.3, 89) to have sexual relationship with him since he has been hired for this. After examining his body, Mary "take[s] what [she] want[s]" (Act 2, sc.3, 90) as being directed by Mr. Hardlong. Mary says that she wants "at first, power. I am the flesh's alchemist" (Act 2, sc.3, 90) and she experiences sex with a man for the first time. Although she feels delighted as well as powerful for what she has experienced, Mr. Hardlong feels nothing sentimental as he has done this to earn gold and to have Sophie, to both Mary's and Sophie's surprise. Sophie has been called by Mrs. Temptwell to work for a lady as she needs work and money. So, like Mary, she has not known that Mrs. Temptwell has promised Mr. Hardlong to give her as "the rest of [his] payment" (Act 2, sc.3, 92). The other thing Mary is surprised at is Sophie's attractiveness to men. She cannot understand why Sophie attracts men much more than she does and why Mr. Hardlong will pay Sophie "for the same thing [they] did" (Act 2, sc.3, 92). When she asks this to Mr. Hardlong, he responds "I gave you pleasure, Mary. [...] Did you offer me any?" (Act 2, sc.3, 93). Thus, it is seen that in this experience of hers, Mary is in the same position with Lord Gordon who cares about only his own needs and goals. Hence, Mary thinks that she has gained more knowledge about the realities of the male world as well as power and now she wants to learn much more.

In the next scene, Mary is on a quest in another part of the men's world, that is gambling in a large den. While Lord Exrake and Mr. Manners are playing a card game called piquet, Mary enters in the den together with Mrs. Temptwell and Sophie. When she sees men playing cards, she remarks, "Cards, numbers, chance, mystery and gain. Oh what a rich and generous world" (Act 2, sc.4, 94) and she starts



playing piquet with Lord Exrake. Playing quite well, Mary defeats Lord Exrake and then she wants to try cock fight against Mr. Hardlong. At the end of this rivalry which is highly symbolic, Mary's cock wins or if it needs to read the symbols, Mary challenges male sexuality with her cock fighting against Mr. Hardlong's cock. Defeating firstly Lord Exrake and then Mr. Hardlong, Mary now challenges another man, Mr. Manners for a race of two Old Women who are passing by them. However, this time the person who is defeated is Mary herself since her hag loses the race. Losing the race and all her money, Mary loses the power she tries to gain in this symbolic world of men, but she does not hesitate to use the knowledge she gains. When her hag comes to ask for money, for instance, Mary "*ignores her*" (Act 2, sc.4, 109) at first, but the Old Woman insists and asks Mary to be kind. However, Mary, who has observed the real world so far, has learned that there is corruption and cruelty everywhere. Instead of money, Mary offers to give her "something priceless" and asks whether she has heard of "knowledge?" (Act 2, sc.4, 110), thus beating her with a whip many times she informs the Old Woman that "there is no kindness. The world is a dry place" (Act 2, sc.4, 110). As it is seen, on her quest of the external world which she has been very curious about, Mary unfortunately starts to lose her feminine side which is affectionate and sensitive while trying to gain power like men in their world.

Having observed the male behaviors so far, Mary has learned that one can be powerful either owning money or being cruel towards weaker people. As it is seen in Act Two scene four, she starts to adopt these male behaviors and strives to gain power in the world of men doing the same things and thinking in the same way as men do. She even understands why Sophie "causes desires in others" (Act 2, sc.4, 94). Although Mrs. Temptwell underestimates Sophie as she "has no desires" (Act 2, sc.4, 94) implying that she is silent, Mary observes that her silence is the reason of her attractiveness. As Cousin defines, "Sophie is a blank, an empty sheet on which men write themselves" and Mary who has an exaggerated desire to be powerful like men "discovers in herself a desire to utilize Sophie in the same way" (162-163). Just as Mr. Hardlong does to have sex with Sophie, Mary offers some money to her for the same reason. Sophie takes the money, but she does not know why Mary gives it to her until she explains: "Yes, but you must work for it. *Pause*. Nothing for nothing. That's their law. When they offer you money, you know what for. Well?" (Act 2, sc.4, 106) and she "*turns to Sophie and lifts up her skirts to her*" (Act 2, sc.4, 106).

Thus, Mary who has challenged male sexuality fighting her cock against Mr. Hardlong's, this time not only challenges male sexuality and but also glorifies female sexuality by having sex with Sophie. Asking the men in the den to watch them while having sex, she says, "Why is it, gentlemen, you turn away, you feel disgust? Why don't you look and see what it's like?" (Act 2, sc.4, 106) and tells them what it is like in these words: "Look. It's solid, rich, gently shaped, fully coloured. The blood flows there on the way to the heart. It answers tenderness with tenderness, there is no gaping void here, only soft bumps, corners, cool convexities" (Act 2, sc.4, 106). As it is clearly seen, Mary has sex with Sophie not just to describe how pleasant female sexuality is. Her actual aim is to show everyone in the gambling den that she is powerful and she can be as cruel as men and so she will not be the oppressed, weak, silent kind any longer.

Act Three begins with Mary's plan to meet her father, Giles Traverse. In the first scene, Mary and Mrs. Temptwell are waiting at Vauxhall Gardens to meet Giles. In this scene, it is learned that Mary is pregnant, but she is not happy because of that. Meanwhile, Sophie brings Mary's father to Vauxhall Gardens deceiving him as if she is a prostitute and lying that they will have sex. However, when they come to Vauxhall Gardens, she takes him to Mary who is disguised as a prostitute. While she is unbuttoning Giles, she continuously talks. This situation causes disturbance for Giles who has not recognized his daughter, yet. In fact, Mary aims to remind herself to her father saying, "Do you have children, Sir, to grace our old age? Men often tell me I remind them of their daughters. You look sad, Sir, is your daughter dead?" (Act 3, sc.1, 116), but Giles does not recognize his daughter until she uncovers her face. When he even sees her face, he denies that he has a daughter and says, "You're a whore" (Act 3, sc.1, 117) as if it is not possible for a whore to be a daughter at the same time, as criticized by Mary:

*Is a daughter not a daughter when she's a whore? Or can she not be your daughter? Which words are at war here: whore, daughter, my? I am a daughter, but not yours, I am your whore but not your daughter. You dismiss the 'my' with such ease, you make fatherhood an act of grace, an honour I must buy with my graces, which you withdraw as soon as I disgrace you. (Act 3, sc.1, 117)*

For Giles who has "the ideology that assigns women into separate, mutually exclusive categories" (Cousin 164), whatever Mary says does not make any sense. He says that he has given her everything, to which Mary responds "Except experience" (Act 3, sc.1, 118) in the real world. Although her father says that to keep

her from the world outside which he experienced and seen as filthy, cruel and vice, he made her live a beautiful life in a beautiful house, Mary is very angry with her father since he confined her in this 'beautiful' house. So, she does not want to return when her father offers to bring her back into his house learning that she does not work as a prostitute. She rejects to be her father's "graceful daughter" (Act 3, sc.1, 119). Instead, she wants her father to give her half of his money. Thus, she will help him to keep his lie about her death by not telling anyone that she is alive. To her father who accepts her offer, but becomes very surprised at her being cruel like a man, Mary replies, "Experience is expensive and precise" (Act 3, sc.1, 120). After her father leaves, Mrs. Temptwell asks Mary if experiencing male cruelty gave her pleasure, to which Mary responds, "No. Sadness. And then, nothing. Nothing" (Act 3, sc.1, 120). Thus, it is understood that although Mary assumes male traits like cruelty to have power and becomes successful in that to some extent, she is not able to leave her feminine traits behind as completely as to get pleasure from cruelty.

In the next scene, Sophie who is by herself at Vauxhall Gardens, meets Jack who is a working class man. Although Sophie says only 'yes' or 'no' while they are conversing, they get on quite well. Contrary to this scene, in the following scene two men from upper-class, Mr. Manners and Lord Gordon are at Vauxhall Gardens. Lord Gordon is still in pursuit of being visible and asks Mr. Manners who is "the man most feared in Parliament" (Act 3, sc.3, 122) to make him visible. Yet, Mr. Manners confesses that he only serves order and he advises Lord Gordon who wants to serve the country like him that order must be always kept and "whatever happens, nothing must change" (Act 3, sc.3, 124).

In scene four, Mary who has taken money from her father is seen in "elegant lodgings" (Act 3, sc.4, 125) conversing with Sophie and Mrs. Temptwell. In the meantime, she hears a shouting in the street and asks Sophie what that noise is. Sophie explains that the working class people are protesting the high price of white bread which goes up because merchants are hiding sacks of flour. Meanwhile, Mary continues asking Sophie questions about her thoughts, her feelings and her dreams. Although Sophie does not say anything interesting about herself, the things she says about her lover, Jack's dreams attract Mary's attention. She says, "even Sophie's Jack has more interesting thoughts than I do" (Act 3, sc.4, 128) learning that "Jack dreams of a new world" (128). Mary who thinks she is now in "another bounded room" (Act 3, sc.4, 129) and does not do anything different to have a real experience

of the world outside, reminds Mrs. Temptwell that, “You promised more, remember? They must have more than this. What? Yes ... they go to war. They go to war ...” (Act 3, sc.4, 129). Thus, she expresses how wide the scope of men’s world is, adding, “Or they dream of new worlds. They let their imaginations roam freely over the future, yes, they think about the country, and then they rule the country” (Act 3, sc.4, 129). While complaining about being stuck in a new ‘bounded room’, Mary becomes aware of the fact that her thoughts and her dreams, like all other women’s, are actually bounded.

In the following scene, having been influenced by Jack’s dream of a new world, Mary comes together with Jack. At the beginning of the scene, Jack complains about not having the ability to talk although he has lots of things to say to people like freedom, equality, justice, rights and the idea of a new world. On the contrary, Mary has good conversational skills, but nothing to say. Hence, she offers, “I could speak for you, Jack, if you taught me what to say” (Act 3, sc.5, 130). However, Jack thinks that as an upper-class woman Mary would not understand the meaning of equality, to which Mary responds, “I know the humiliation of being denied equality, Jack, and that it is a dignity due to all, men and women, rich and poor” (Act 3, sc.5, 130). Thus, highlighting the inequality between men and women, Mary believes that the new world “will be a world ruled by us, for our delight, a world of hope for all” (Act 3, sc.5, 130) and will not be ruled by the continuing authority any longer. To realize their dreams, Mary plans to go to Parliament together with Jack. Thus, she will have another experience in another realm of men’s world. Yet, in this new experience, different from the previous ones, she does not only want power, but she also wants people’s goodness.

In scene six, Mary and Jack go to the Houses of Parliament, but it is not easy for a woman to enter the House since “no petticoats in the Houses of Parliament” (Act 3, sc.6, 131) are allowed as it is said by the Guard. However, Mary and Jack do not give up and talk to the people outside about freedom, the future of all and a new world that will be run by the people themselves. Yet, it is clearly seen that it is not easy to change the mind of people like the Guard and Locksmith who are accustomed to the permanent order under the rule of the King, no matter how unjust and cruel it is towards them. In the meantime, Mr. Manners who supports the continuing order invites Mary into not exactly the House, but one of the rooms of it where the politicians will listen to her. In fact, Mr. Manners represents the Houses of

Parliament and aims to silence Mary as she might influence more and more people outside with her words. When Mary leaves with Mr. Manners, the Guard says, "I've seen people go in there and come out very different" (Act 3, sc.6, 135) and this comment the Guard makes is like a clue of what will happen later.

The next scene presents the dialogue between Sophie and Mrs. Temptwell who make preparations for a midnight meeting. Mrs. Temptwell who always hates Giles Traverse and revenges on him aiming to make his daughter become "as low as" (Act 3, sc.7, 137) herself tries to persuade Sophie to help her. She attracts Sophie's attention to the class difference between "freeborn Englishman" (Act 3, sc.7, 136) like Mary and servants like them. To make this inequality between these two classes clearer, Mrs. Temptwell tells how Giles Traverse's brother who was a magistrate at that time, used his power and had her grandmother hanged as a witch, in order to gain the control of her land. For that reason, she thinks that, as Geraldine Cousin also refers, "Mary is from a class that takes while others give" (167) and she tries to show Sophie this face of Mary. In addition, she thinks that Mary will give them more harm with her idea of a new world since she only aims to continue her quest of experience and does not care about other people's lives. However, Sophie does not agree with Mrs. Temptwell and supports Mary. In fact, although she "substitutes (substituting) herself as the victim" after she saves Mary from a rape, Sophie is always loyal to Mary (Carlson, "Language and Identity" 142). Even being objectified by Mary does not hinder her from remaining with Mary all the time. Through the relationship between Mary and Sophie which is explained by Carlson as "a critique of the class system and its ability to freeze identity" ("Language and Identity" 142), it is seen that these two women cannot get away from the characteristics that they have because of their social classes. Because of that, while Sophie keeps serving Mary no matter she has lived, Mary continues to treat Sophie and Mrs. Temptwell as servants even when she protests for equality and liberty for working class people.

In the following scene, for a midnight conversation Mary, Mr. Manners, Jack, Lord Gordon, the Guard, Sophie and Mrs. Temptwell have come together. In fact, they have met to talk about the new world, but during their conversation they talk about lots of different subjects like the Church of England, the Catholics, the Protestants, the Pope and at the end of the scene all of them "*chant*. NO POPERY. NO POPERY. NO POPERY" (Act 3, sc.8, 143). The main reason of this change of direction is Mr. Manners who always promotes the continuing order. He tries to

make the others believe that a possible change in the order caused by the Catholics, for instance, will result in a disorder and chaos in the society and he also tells them that the Protestants and the working class will be exploited by the Catholics if they are supported by the government and the Church of England. Having changed after talking to the politicians in the House, Mary is also influenced by the things that Mr. Manners tells and so she does not promote the idea of a new world as hectically as before.

In the last scene of Act Three, Wertebaker stages the Gordon Riots of 1780 which broke out as a result of the Protestant-Catholic conflict at that time. This event which “did not spread beyond London” (Porter 119) causes thousands of people to go out to the streets of London. As Mary is the person who leads the people to protest against the Catholics and the government, seeing this massive crowd she boasts, “Thousands and I have roused them” (Act 3, sc.9, 144), “it’s by my command. I’ve done it all” (Act 3, sc.9, 146). However, soon the riot goes out of the control and the crowd start to burn the buildings and the streets which belong to the Catholics. The biggest disaster is lived in Holborn where distilleries of the Catholics are burnt and it results in the death of lots of people here. Thus, contrary to the boasting Mary at the beginning of the riot, a disappointed Mary comes since she has been involved in this destruction. “I wanted something good. I had dreams” (Act 3, sc.9, 149) she mourns as she has not wanted the result to be like this. To stop this “public nightmare” (Act 3, sc.9, 149) as defined by Giles, Mary asks her father for help and Mr. Manners tells that he has to send the soldiers to shoot the rebels. Although Mary opposes him, Mr. Manners insists, “There is nothing so cleansing as massive death, Mary. People return with relief to their private little pains and stop barking at the future. It’s what they want. This will last forty years at least, forty years of rule and order” (Act 3, sc.9, 150). Yet, the order and the rules of the men’s world which Mr. Manners advocates do not give Mary neither pleasure nor the power she seeks in this world, so she rebels, “Damn your order and your rules” (Act 3, sc.9, 150).

In the first scene of last act, Mary is portrayed as “*a mess*” (Act 4, sc.1, 152) as she feels unhappy about the destruction of people at the riot. She has even had Sophie look after her baby daughter in the country for some time. Being hopeless about the future of herself and the world, she wants Sophie to bring her baby back as she intends to kill her. Contrary to Mrs. Temptwell who hates Mary and all her ‘kind’

as much as to be happy about their death, Sophie stands by Mary and tries to show her the beautiful sides of the world. With the help of Sophie and “*an incredibly beautiful song*” (Act 4, sc.1, 156) sung by her, Mary starts to get away from the negative thoughts in her mind and she says to herself, “Do I have it all wrong? Sing, Sophie. If I were God your song would appease me and I would forgive the history of the world” (Act 4, sc.1, 156). Giving the baby to Mary, Sophie tries to make her feel better saying, “Touch a baby’s skin. It’s the same thing” (Act 4, sc.1, 156). Meanwhile, the carts which carry the rebellious men who are going to be hanged are passing through the street and Mrs. Temptwell, looking out of the window, sees Jack in one of these carts and shows him to Sophie. In the following scene which is set in Tyburn, the executions take place. Contrary to the previous scene, being in despair Sophie accuses Mary for Jack’s execution and wants to take revenge on her by killing her baby. Changing roles with Sophie, Mary now stands by her and tries to console her in her arms while Jack is executed in silence, refusing to say even a single word for the last time.

The last scene of the play which is set in a garden in Giles’s Potteries, brings Mary, Sophie, Giles, Little Mary and Mrs. Temptwell, who participates them later, together and “affirms the continuing existence of grace” (Cousin 168). The scene opens with “Beauty. Seen, unseen. I want to touch the light on the river. But we can’t even see light. Perhaps one day we’ll understand it” (Act 4, sc.3, 159) said by Mary who has started to see the beautiful sides of the world. While Mrs. Temptwell who claims that she has right to be there as it is her father’s land and Sophie insist that “We must not forget” (Act 4, sc.3, 159) the past, Giles and Mary are full of hope for the future, which is also symbolized by Little Mary. They hope to have a better future and a better world to live in, as expressed by Mary at the end of the play, “I’m certain that when we understand it all, it’ll be simpler, not more confusing. One day we’ll know how to love this world” (Act 4, sc.3, 160). So, it can be concluded that at the end of the play, Mary is again in pursuit of knowledge, but this time as a mother and a daughter, not trying to have male traits in their world.

As it is observed, being on a quest of knowledge and power throughout the play, the main character Mary traverses the gender boundaries that are established by the patriarchal society. Nevertheless, it is not possible for a knowledgeable girl like Mary to be satisfied with the limited life conditions presented to the females in the eighteenth century. She reveals her desire to experience new things out of the house

even when she is practicing the art of conversation under the scrutiny of her father to be an 'agreeable' woman who should not be wise enough to talk about male issues. Hence, trying to hide her intellectual capacity while talking, as Carlson states, "Mary's language suffers in the shadow of male hegemony" ("Language and Identity" 142) since her language is under the control of patriarchy. So, she is not allowed to talk about, for instance, architecture not to cause other people to "think [his daughter] spend[s] time out of doors" (Act 1, sc. 1, 69) by her father. As Mary Karen Dahl expresses, "Giles effectively constructs Mary as a subject who will perform as society dictates" (153). It is clearly seen that, Giles Traverse, under the influence of society and its unwritten moral rules, thinks that his daughter's domesticity is very important for a prosperous marriage in the future as it is believed that women move away from their female roles when they go out of the domestic sphere. So, it is not possible for Mary to go to the public places she would like to see such as a salt mine. When she wants to go to the theatre with him, for instance, he says, "There's no need to see a play to talk about it" (Act 1, sc. 1, 70) and offers to bring her daughter the playbill. The only wish of Mary who learns the life from the books, is to see "a little more of the world" (Act 1, sc. 1, 70). Although her father says "it's not possible" (Act 1, sc. 1, 70) for her wish, with the encouragement and temptation of Mrs. Temptwell, Mary goes out of the boundaries of the private sphere and hence her female gender to embark on a journey to the world outside. However, as the external world is dominated by men, after her first experience she supposes that she will be powerful like them if she adopts the male traits she has observed. The first time Mary understands that the real life outdoors is completely different from the life she has read in the books is the rape of Sophie. Exemplifying just one of the men's cruel acts, this event presents Mary "two opposed poles of experience – that of the violator and that of the victim" (Cousin 162). As she does not want to be victimized like Sophie in this foreign world in which she has just taken a step she decides to adopt the role of the violator or in other words the role of man. In her next experience, she tries to understand how men feel powerful having sexual relationship, so she hires a male prostitute and later she even enforces Sophie to have sex with her in exchange for money. Thus, behaving like a man, Mary aims to objectify Mr. Hardlong and Sophie sexually. Then, in another part of the men's world, she gambles with men like a man, has a cock fight with Mr. Hardlong and again like a cruel man she humiliates an old woman as she makes Mary lose all her



money in a race. In her last experience in the men's world, she makes people believe in the idea of a new world speaking like a political leader and cause them to rebel against the government. Taking place in different parts of the external world dominated by men, Mary also experiences various feelings and traits that are peculiar to men such as sexual power, financial power, cruelty, vice, dominance and leadership. Yet, she cannot get rid of being objectified, excluded and humiliated by the men she encounters as she is a female. In the gambling scene, for instance, she is always harassed by Lord Exrake with sexual implications like "a beautiful young lady can always pay one way or another" (Act 1, sc.4, 96) although she has money to gamble. At the coffee house or at the Houses of Parliament, she is not allowed to enter as she is a woman. Thus, it is clearly seen that Mary feels "the humiliation of being denied equality" (Act 3, sc.5, 130) as a female, in both public places and her house. However, in the last scene of the play, as a woman she seems to have achieved her desire of having a powerful identity as she "exhibits a new consciousness about the world that surrounds her" (Sullivan 148).

To be able to gain power and knowledge in the external world which is dominated by men, Mary Traverse leaves not only her feminine gender roles at home, but also her class identity. Being the daughter of a wealthy merchant and a politician who strives to be in the cabinet, Mary is actually a member of upper class. Yet, after starting her journey in the world outside, she seems to become one of the lower class people. As she is not under the protection of her father any longer, when she is in need of money, for instance, she chooses the only option to earn money for a lower class woman, that is prostitution (Sullivan 147). In another scene, while propagating for equality and a new world after meeting Jack, who is a working class man, she looks like a member of the working class. Thus, beyond traversing gender boundaries on her quest of identity, Mary also traverses the class boundaries in the course of the play many times as long as her initial social identity permits. Just as she cannot get rid of being classified as a woman while traversing gender boundaries, she cannot help treating people as their servants. To give an example, she confesses that during her sexual intercourse with the hired male prostitute, Mr. Hardlong, "[she] forgot a little about [him]" (Act 2, sc.3, 93) and did not offer any pleasure to him while she is after satisfying her own sexual needs. Mr. Hardlong accepts that his role is serving her as well and "[he] had to look after [her] well-being" (Act 2, sc.3, 93) as if Mary is his master. Moreover, Mr. Hardlong is not the only person that accepts

Mary has enslaved him for her own pleasure. Being already a servant, Mrs. Temptwell tries to persuade Sophie to see Mary's enslaving attitude towards them "now you'll slave to bring up her reject?" (Act 3, sc.7, 136) upon learning that Mary has asked Sophie to look after her child. So it is observed that although Mary seems not to have an upper-class status after traversing the boundaries of her father's house, she cannot get rid of the characteristics she has adopted as an upper-class woman, and because of that she goes on expecting other people to do things for her.

Wertenbaker's dramatization of Mary Traverse as a character with a complex identity reminds the audience the dramatist's characteristic of drawing multi-dimensional identities for the characters in her plays. Like Isabelle Eberhardt, Mary Traverse is also able to cross gender and class boundaries. Thus, it is possible to see both characters in different identities. However, unlike Isabelle's, "Mary's identity seems so unstable that one questions if she even has one after all" (Ritchie 406). The protagonist who is a conventional upper-class girl in her father's house in the first scenes of the play, moves out of her house into the streets of London and her identity continuously changes from then on. At first, she is mistaken for a lower-class girl who can be easily raped by Lord Gordon and for a beggar by Mr. Manners. In the gambling den, she engages in typically masculine activities and she almost seems like a man. In Vauxhall Gardens she emerges as a prostitute and in Act Three she adopts a role of a politician who is able to influence thousands of people with her speech. However, she becomes unsuccessful and feels so hopeless that she even plans to kill her own daughter. Having experienced all of these different identities, at the end of the play, Mary is unexpectedly seen as a hopeful mother. Accordingly, throughout the play, Mary is seen while questioning the issue of uncertain identity. In the gambling den, for instance, Mr. Manners tells Mary that he knows who she is. Upon this, Mary replies, "How can you when I do not even know myself?" (Act 2, sc. 4, 99). She is so obsessed with adopting male traits that while trying to be as cruel as men, in the same setting, she strikes the Old Woman who runs a race for her and loses. As she is not able to adopt a male identity completely, the protagonist remembers that she gracefully gave this old woman a coin one day outside church (Act 2, sc. 4, 110). It is seen that Mary is confused about which identity she owns and which identity gives her more happiness. She also questions whether a person might have more than one identity when she confronts her father as a prostitute, "Is a daughter not a daughter when she's a whore? Or can she not be your daughter?"

Which words are at war here: whore, daughter, my? I am a daughter, but not yours, I am your whore but not your daughter” (Act 3, sc. 1, 117). With this speech of Mary, it can be interpreted that Wertebaker reflects her view about that a person may have more than one identity.

Of all identities Mary Traverse adopts, the ambitious politician is quite striking. As the play was written “during the height of Thatcherism”, the dramatization of a female character who struggles to gain power in a male dominated political world, is not a coincidence (Ritchie 411). The protagonist Mary Traverse reminds the audience Margaret Thatcher with whom she shares her initial letters first of all. This is because both women strive for power and success in the male dominated political world. However, while Margaret Thatcher is remembered as an important figure in British political history, Mary Traverse becomes unsuccessful and turns out to be a puppet that is used by the male politician, Mr. Manners. In her political experience for establishing a new world where everybody will be equal and free, she cannot reach her goal.

As a character who strives to have power, it can be claimed that Mary Traverse represents a liberal feminist ideology. Although she does not work for her own improvement, but for a mass movement, “she is far more motivated by a desire for personal power than she is by a desire to improve the world” (Ritchie 417). In her political experience, she wants to be a leader, but she disregards that it is a male world. When she realizes that she is able to influence people with her speech, she feels that she is powerful, but in fact what she does is acting like male politicians in their world. In other words, she accepts the status quo and works for its continuation. This also reveals Wertebaker’s critical view on Mary’s liberal feminist climb to power as she dramatizes the destruction it causes (Ritchie 417). Nevertheless, her attempt to establish a new world does not come true and results in destruction while the dominant system continues.

Timberlake Wertebaker’s choice of characters from different classes and the superior-subordinate relationship between them make the reader look at the play from a socialist feminist view, as well. To start with, it is clearly seen that, since they destroyed her life, causing the death of her father taking his land and consequently her decline in the class system, Mrs. Temptwell is very angry at the upper class Traverse family whose house she works in as a servant. Because of that, at the very beginning of the play she is portrayed as a working class woman who is very eager to

decrease Mary's social class status, as well, and she clearly expresses her intention while speaking to Sophie later in the play: "She'll be as low as us when I'm finished" (Act 3, sc. 7, 137). However, whatever they live, it is difficult to be 'low' for the upper class people and they cannot help humiliating servants as it is seen in the example of Giles Traverse:

*Giles : I trusted you with the care of my daughter. Was Mary not kind to you?*

*Mrs. Temptwell: As she might be to the chair she sat on. She cared for my use.*

*Giles : What more can a servant expect? (Act 2, sc.2, 88)*

While trying to take revenge on Giles Traverse tempting Mary to gain knowledge in the real life outside, Mrs. Temptwell herself also witnesses in the external world that the lower class is always oppressed by the upper class, so she realizes that she is actually angry at the class system and all upper class people rather than the Traverse family:

*I hate you, Mary, I hate your father, I hate your child, .... it's no longer for what you did to me, no, it's for what you are. I know who you are, now, your kind. You're the evil spirits of the world, you keep us bound. Everything you touch goes wrong, but you always save yourselves and then go poetic over other people's bodies. I know all we need is your death and then it won't go wrong again. Then there can be a new world. I'm starting here, but we'll get all of you. (Act 4, sc.1, 155)*

Hence, through Mrs. Temptwell's words about the vices of the present social structure and her idea of a new world which is free from the hierarchal class structure, Wertebaker presents the social feminist view over the class discrimination in society which causes the oppression of the working class by the upper class. After the riot which takes place in the play, during the executions of the rebels who come from working class background like Jack, Mrs. Temptwell learns that Lord Gordon will not be punished although he propagated in the riot as well, so she highlights the injustice in the class system saying, "You don't like to hang lords" (Act 4, sc.2, 157). She thinks that upper class people always have privileges that are given to them by their own 'kind' who also represent the government. Moreover, just like social feminists who discuss that women are oppressed not only because of their gender, but also because of their social, cultural and economic status, Mrs. Temptwell also thinks that women like Sophie are doomed to be oppressed since they are members of lower classes. So, it can be stated that Sophie is in fact portrayed as a doubly oppressed woman in the play. She is firstly oppressed since she is a woman and secondly since she is a working class member. As soon as she enters the play, Sophie

is raped and during the play she is sexually oppressed for many times. Upon witnessing Sophie's being raped by Lord Gordon, Mrs. Temptwell attracts Mary's attention to Sophie's social and economic status which deprives her of virtue and says "virtue, like ancestors, is a luxury of the rich," so "she won't mind" being raped (Act 1, sc.3, 80). Besides, in order to describe how she is oppressed by the upper class Traverse family, she tells Sophie, "I'm a servant. Nothing my own, no small piece of ground, no hour, no sleep she can't break with a bell. Do you understand, girl?" (Act 3, sc.7, 136) and she warns Sophie not to allow Mary to use her as a servant to look after her child after all the oppression and destruction she caused "She had you raped, she made you a whore, she caused the misery that killed your child" (Act 3, sc.7, 136). However, as a senior servant, Mrs. Temptwell herself also oppresses Sophie and allows her to be oppressed by a man. She lies about that she will work as a servant for a lady, but she actually employs Sophie to save half of Mary's money which will be paid for the hired male prostitute otherwise. The most dramatic part of this agreement is that to save her master's money, Sophie needs to have sex with Mr. Hardlong in exchange for money:

*Sophie* : You said I was to work for a lady.

*Mrs. Temptwell* : So you are. Mr. Hardlong's price was high. You're saving Mary half her gold. That's what servants are for. (Act 2, sc.3, 92)

Hence, as a servant, Mrs. Temptwell oppresses another servant ironically and highlights the reason of servants' being employed by the powerful class.

Through the relationship between Mrs. Temptwell and Mary, between Sophie and Mary and also between Sophie and Mrs. Temptwell, in addition to the oppression of the working class people by the upper class, it is possible to discuss the other type of class oppression, that is intra-sexual class oppression. In the relationships mentioned, the people who oppress the working class women are again women but they are from the upper class. Thus, as it is discussed by the social feminists, the oppressor of women is not always the patriarchy, but the dominant and powerful upper class women may be as oppressive as men.

In *the Grace of Mary Traverse*, however, Wertebaker initially criticizes patriarchal power and male dominance in the society which are the roots of women's oppression. In this way, the playwright makes a radical feminist critique of patriarchy. In addition to sexual oppression over women, in the play it is possible to observe the patriarchal oppression over women which is seen in many different

forms. Throughout the play, women and men are continuously compared with each other. As they live in a male-dominated society and as patriarchy causes a class division in society, women are not considered equal with men. Although it is a known fact that these two genders have different characteristics, it is controversial that men have more superior characteristics than women. Yet, the male characters in the play who are from the eighteenth century English society highlight their superiority and suppress women in every possible opportunity. They claim that reason, for instance, is only attributed to men, so women who are deprived of reason cannot even talk about it as Giles Traverse reacts her daughter when she asks his idea about a woman's talking about reason, "a woman talking about reason is like a merchant talking about nobility" (Act 1, sc.1, 69). In fact, the truth is not that men do not want women to talk about reason, the truth is that they do not want women ever to talk. While they enjoy the condition of being free to express themselves and to do anything to be noticed by the society, they ascribe the characteristics of being silent, subservient and obeying to the idealized women, hence they know that they will be able to suppress and have superiority over them. In Act II, Scene 1, for instance, Lord Gordon, who searches the ways to be powerful, so to be noticed and respected by everyone, remarks that he wants to marry and that he "want[s] a wife to look up to [him]" (Act 1, sc.4, 86). He tells Giles Traverse that he has decided to marry his daughter and questions him, "You've said your daughter is pretty and clever. She is not too clever, is she? She won't talk at breakfast? I couldn't bear that" (Act 1, sc.4, 86). Lord Gordon thinks that a silent and subservient wife will make him feel more powerful and thus he will have superiority over her. So, it is observed that while women are expected to be silent at home, they are expected to be absent in the public sphere. Because of that, the Boy who works in the coffee house does not allow Mary and Mrs. Temptwell to go in saying "you can't come in" (Act 1, sc.4, 82). While explaining the reason why the men in the coffee house do not want women to go in there, he reports, "They don't like to be disturbed" (Act 1, sc.4, 82). He also adds, "They don't like ladies' talk" (Act 1, sc.4, 82). With these words, he also implies that women converse about trivial subjects, but men make witty conversations. Mary, who has not been allowed to talk about reason by her father before, is now beyond the limits and questions the assumed differences between men and women asking the Boy "What sex is wit?" (Act 1, sc.4, 82). Thus, as radical feminism argues and it is clearly exemplified in the play, the patriarchal society structure which is male-

centred and male-dominated causes some privileges to occur for men and men use these privileges to suppress women. To change this social structure, radical feminists suggest a new social structure in which women will not be oppressed any longer, so they aim to deconstruct patriarchal dominance (Aston, *An Introduction*, 63) and promote the women's. Just like radical feminists, in the play the main character Mary wants to change the present social order and propagates for a new world with some other characters. Although their aim is to establish a new world for the working class people and provide equality between social classes, as it is a woman who influences thousands of people with her speech, it can be interpreted that when women have a right to speak, they can make the world a more beautiful place. The other female character that has an influence to be able to make the world a better place is Sophie as she owns maternal feelings. Since radical feminists promote maternal values which they believe will change the world and make it a better place if they replace the values of the patriarchy, Sophie is accepted as a character who reflects radical feminist view (Ritchie 417). Moreover, it is seen that in the play Sophie has achieved to make the world a beautiful place, at least for Mary, stimulating her maternal feelings. As Martha Ritchie remarks "The grace that Mary finally achieves, through the help of Sophie, is a spiritual state that Wertebaker associates with womanly love, beauty, non-hierarchic solidarity, and hope" (414). Thus, in the final scene of the play, Mary is seen for the first time as an affectionate mother and as a woman who tries to see the beauties around her.

In conclusion, in *the Grace of Mary Traverse*, Timberlake Wertebaker reflects the restrictions and oppression of women from various backgrounds, in every part of patriarchal society through the adventures of Mary Traverse. In the play, it is observed that a woman, whether she is from upper-class like Mary or working class like Sophie, is doomed to be oppressed and restricted by a man or by another woman who is more powerful. While this situation can be accepted as a destiny by most women, the unconventional women, like Mary, are unable to lead a life under the hegemony of patriarchy in their bounded private spheres and they are overwhelmed with the desire of gaining knowledge of the world which is dominated by men. In the play, Mary starts a journey, going out of her house with the aim of experiencing the external world which is different from hers and gaining freedom and knowledge about it. On her quest of a new identity, the main character gets away from her feminine identity and experiences being both powerful and powerless while trying to

be like men in their world. However, at the end of her quest, she understands that real power is being a woman and as long as women share their own richness with the rest of the world, the world will be purified from all ugliness and cruelty.





## CONCLUSION

In this thesis, two of Timberlake Wertenbaker's prominent feminist plays *New Anatomies* (1981) and *The Grace of Mary Traverse* (1985) are analyzed in detail with the purpose of discussing whether the main female characters of these plays achieve their aim on their quests of gaining a new identity which is beyond the limits of patriarchal norms. Besides, the plays are also studied within the framework of feminist theories to discuss which views they reflect.

Being dissatisfied with their conventional gender roles that are imposed by patriarchal societies, both Isabelle Eberhardt and Mary Traverse undertake a journey traversing the boundaries of gender. While Isabelle Eberhardt starts her journey in disguise of an Arab man through the deserts in North Africa where she believes that she will find freedom and wisdom, Mary Traverse goes out of the boundaries of her father's house in order to gain power and knowledge in the men's world. Taking the period in which the plays are set into account, it can be easily said that the experience these characters live is very difficult for the females in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to live as they are oppressed by the patriarchy.

At the end of her journey through the Arab deserts where she has always dreamed of finding the freedom that she cannot gain in her patriarchal European culture, Isabelle Eberhardt is disappointed with her experience. Although on her quest of a new identity, she aims to free herself from them, the restrictions and oppression that being a woman in a patriarchal society leads to, do not stop following her. Since she leads the life of a nomad, being dressed as a man instead of leading a domestic life, Isabelle is accepted by neither French nor North African society. As traversing national, cultural and religious boundaries is a kind of breaking with the origins, she gets away from her European culture and the European culture rejects her since she also rejects the boundaries of her socially constructed gender identity. Moreover, after she is attacked by the Murderer since she is dressed as a man, Isabelle realizes that the Eastern and Muslim culture that she has associated with wisdom and freedom, is also gender-biased and does not welcome the unconventional women. Thus, it is observed that, as Carlson also refers, Isabelle "is othered in both cultural realms" since she goes out of the limits of her stereotypical female identity ("Language and Identity" 140). At the end of her quest for identity,

Isabelle adopts neither her Western female identity nor an Arab male identity completely.

Although *New Anatomies* is a play about the life of a single woman character, just like *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, the difficult conditions of other women who adopt false identities or inferior positions instead of their conventional gender roles constructed by patriarchal society are also reflected in the play. For that reason, it is possible to discuss the play in the socialist feminist perspective. Furthermore, the themes of intra-sexual class oppression, hence the lack of sisterhood, the discrimination between classes and the division of gender roles which are encountered in both plays are also the themes of socialist feminist view. In *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, in addition to socialist feminist view which is mainly observed as the superior-subordinate relationship of people from various classes is reflected, the radical feminist values such as maternal love and female values are also highlighted as a solution to the oppression of women in the patriarchal society which is shown as the cause of all problems both in the play and the radical feminism.

Thus, underlining that the patriarchal society causes oppression of women while it gives power and the privileges in the public life to men, in *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, Wertebaker portrays a main character who embarks on a journey to the external world, in pursuit of freedom and power leaving her domestic life and conventional female identity behind. On her quest of a new identity in the men's world, she behaves like a man in order to be powerful at the cost of destroying other people. However, through the end of her experience which involves the ugliness of sexual abuse of women by men and cruelty of them towards women, she realizes that she cannot free herself from being oppressed and limited by the males, behaving like them. At the end of the play, interestingly, Mary finds her identity in her motherhood which leads her to see the beauties around her. As Carlson states "[s]till seeking to understand her world", for the first time "Mary stakes a hopeful claim on the future" ("Language and Identity" 143) which is symbolized by Little Mary. Thus, having a positive attitude towards the world and the future, Mary hopes to learn how to love this world one day.

To conclude, through the female characters in *New Anatomies* and *The Grace of Mary Traverse*, Timberlake Wertebaker deconstructs conventional female identities that are constructed according to the norms of patriarchal societies. Furthermore, making these protagonists undertake a journey on a quest of new

identities, the playwright shows the reader or the audience whether they gain freedom and get rid of oppression in their new identities. However, with this study it is observed that women are doomed to be oppressed and restricted as long as they are labeled as inferior and passive beings who should be in the private sphere all the time. Even if they strive to get rid of the restrictions of the male dominated societies and go out of the domestic fields, this only changes the way of subordination for women as they will be seen as sex objects in the world outside when they are not the objects of their fathers or husbands. Thus, it is concluded that to gain freedom as a female, women need to change the image of woman in men's minds, not themselves. This is because, as long as they are seen as inferior and powerless beings by men, women will never get free from the constraints applied on them by men. In this context, the only thing that women need to do is to show how powerful they are as women.

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