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**A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF FEMALE PROTAGONISTS
OF THE PLAYS "HEDDA GABLER", "TRIFLES" AND
"TOP GIRLS" IN THE CONTEXT OF "CAPTURED BIRD
SYMBOL"**

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ÖZET

Edebiyat tarihinin en eski zamanlarından bu yana tiyatro oyunlarının bir toplumun düşünce ve kültürel değerlerini yansıttığı bilinir. Oyunlar her zaman yazarların toplumu eleştirip insanlara sosyal mesajlar verdikleri birer araç olmuştur. Amaçları toplumdaki problemleri konulara değinerek toplum değerlerini yükseltmek ve insanlığın gelişimine yardımcı olmaktır.

Özellikle aydınlanma çağından sonra kadın çalışmaları edebiyat alanı oyun yazarları için kuşkusuz vazgeçilmez konulardan biri haline geldi. Kadın çalışmaları halen oldukça popülerdir ve bu tezin de ana temasıdır. Kadınların problemlerini incelemek için feminizmden etkilenen üç farklı yazar seçildi. Feminist edebiyatının

temsilcilerinden olan bu üç yazar toplumdaki benzer sıkıntılardan bahsetmişlerdir. Ibsen'in "Hedda Gabler", Susan Glaspell'in "Önemsiz Şeyler" ve Caryl Churchill'in "Zirvedeki Kızlar" adlı eserleri çalışıldı. Şüphesiz hepsinin kadının sosyal statüsüne ve toplumdaki rolüne, haklarını kullanmasına ve ikincil olarak algılanmasına yönelik pek çok etkili iyileştirici katkıları olmuştur. Tezin amacı bu üç eserdeki kadın karakterleri kuş sembolü kapsamında incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminizm, Kadın çalışmaları, cinsiyet rolleri





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SUMMARY

It is known from the very early periods of literature history that theatre plays reflect the thoughts and cultural values of a society. It has always been a tool for playwrights to criticize the society and deliver some social messages to people. They aim to touch on the problematic issues to enhance the values of society and help for the treatment of humanity.

Insights into women are unavoidably one of the indispensable issues for dramatists in literature especially after the age of Enlightenment. Woman studies are still popular and the main concern of this thesis. In order to analyze the problems of woman, three different playwrights who were affected by a certain ideology called

feminism are chosen. Those representative dramatists of feminist literature criticize almost same problems in society. The plays; *Hedda Gabler* written by Ibsen, *Trifles* written by Susan Glaspell and *Top Girls* written by Caryl Churchill have been studied. It is no doubt that all those have had so many influential healing contributions to the social status of woman in society and in reshaping the perception of woman role, her rights and her subordination. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the characteristic features of the three main female characters in those three works within the context of bird image.

Key Words: Feminism, woman studies, gender roles



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Bilimsel Etik Sayfası.....	i
Yüksek Lisans Tezi Kabul Formu.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ÖZET	iv
SUMMARY	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I.....	7
1.1. The Place of Woman in Real Life and in Myths.....	7
1.2. Feminism and Types of Feminism.....	15
1.2.1. <i>The First Feminism Wave</i>	18
1.2.1.1. Liberal Feminism	18
1.2.2. <i>The Second Feminist Wave</i>	20
1.2.2.1. Radical Feminism	21
1.2.2.2. Cultural Feminism	23
1.2.2.3. Marksist Feminism	24
1.2.2.4. Socialist/Materialist Feminism	25
1.2.2.5. Black Feminism	26
1.2.2.6. Postmodern Feminism	27
1.2.2.7. Existential Feminism	27
1.2.2.8. Linguistic Feminism	28
1.2.3. <i>The Third Feminist Wave</i>	29
1.2.3.1. Ethnic Feminism	30

1.2.3.2. Lesbian Feminism.....	30
CHAPTER II.....	32
<i>2.1. The Place of Symbolism in Literature</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>2.2. A Captured Falcon, Hedda Gabler.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>2.3. The Canary Minnie Right.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>2.4. A Wild Bird at the Top, Marlene.....</i>	<i>51</i>
CONCLUSION	67
WORKS CITED	72
Primary Sources.....	72
Secondary Sources	72

INTRODUCTION

Like a mirror, literature reflects the dominant conditions of an era. It may include many different, interwoven and peculiar issues related to human life comprising wars, tragedies, innovations and improvements. These all determine the nature of an era as well as affecting the general mood of people. In this sense, the main source of literature turns out to be human experience, which simultaneously makes it a different kind of tool for writers. Thus, the primary aim, here, is to create consciousness for people by criticizing the problematic issues, disorders and mistakes that would occur in the society.

When the subject is the treatment of humanity, woman becomes one of the main issues. A feminist writer and an influential philosopher John Stuart Mill claims in his book *Subjection of Women* that "...the legal subordination of one sex to the other- is wrong itself and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement" (3). No one has any privilege over another. Although the society is shaped with the collaborative effort of both woman and man, motherhood has a very important role in the development of any civilization. Mothers have a functional mission being a bridge between the family and the society. With her fertility feature, she is the only one who provides the continuum of life. She usually takes the responsibilities such as housekeeping, child maintenance, both her husband's and her own personal care. She also teaches, educates and transfers what she knows to the new generations, so that she provides the circulation of social and traditional culture. If she has a good-qualified education background, positive state of mind and psychology, she would be more beneficial and can built up physiologically and physically healthy, open-minded new generations. Free and self-confident mother identity is important for social circulation that must be regarded.

Throughout history, the evaluation of mankind has been shaped by the relations of man and woman. Different tasks have been charged on them to identify what they are expected to do. Bem (1993) claims that while children grow up, "...they are expected to learn their own roles related to their own gender with their parents' guidance, peers' observations, media or other socializing tools" (qtd. in Lee 6-7). Lots of variables may affect the gender perception and determine the social position of wo/man. Traditional background, social and cultural inheritances, customs, the era, religion, environment,

economical and political backgrounds of the government and many other factors teach them to adapt into their gender roles. In fact, both genres have the same liberty rights. However, the social dynamics do not allow it to be as fair as it could be. Regarding the law of nature, the ruler always becomes the one who has power. From the very early times, social dynamics are managed by physically and financially powerful ones. Women are raised dependent on them and convinced of having low self-confidence and insufficiencies. Patriarchy is one of the most important forces among those dynamics. In order to focus on the patriarchal dominance over the females, Ibsen once said that “a woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day, which is an exclusively masculine society, with laws framed by men and with judicial system that judges feminine conduct from a masculine point of view” (qtd. in Suleiman 28). With her physically weak manner, she is always open to abuse and oppress of the powerful one which make her become silent and sacrificing. It hinders her from developing a satisfying self-confident identity and noticing her own inward potential of power.

Nineteenth century was the era when the perception of gender roles was controlling the society. “Ideology of domesticity” (Fuchs and Thompson 2,45,46) was constructed between women and men by dividing them into two different spheres in social, political and cultural life. The public sphere was reserved for man; the private sphere was for woman. Lots of restrictions and responsibilities were charged on woman who stocked in house. While it encouraged males who were more independent, powerful and aggressive, it ignored sensitive, emotional and merciful women (Slavkin and Stright 24). After the industrial revolution, most of the women began to work outside of home. This meant that they began to divide into so many pieces physically and psychologically both at home and at work. In addition to their preexisted responsibilities at home, the stress of work life was charging more responsibilities on women. Yet, despite being at the very centre of the public, there was a general perception that pushed them through the background of public. Motherhood instinct, traditions, customs and cultural orders, all determine her position in the society and generally expose her to gender discrimination.

In order to overcome the gender discrimination, exploitation, the dominant pressure of patriarchy or violence on woman, a new ideological struggle occurred called feminism in 1884. The demand of the movement was to make new regulations about

human rights. For this reason, it is not related to woman, but also it is related to man. Indeed, the effort was against the traditional regulations regarding the gender discrimination and the oppression of the patriarchal system. In order to achieve that goal, the basic thing was to heal the existed situation of oppressed one, woman. All around the world, women were exposed to gender discrimination and they struggle against the oppression of patriarchy. For this reason, feminism has easily spread all over the world and became really popular in every domain. Many writers were influenced by feminism and could not stay indifferent. Among all the others, Ibsen, Caryl Churchill and Susan Glaspell became the prominent playwrights who defended this ideology and women rights. More specifically, they criticized the social position of woman and supported her individual identity in the society.

This thesis, in the line with the standpoint of these three authors, aims to analyze the characteristic features of the three main female characters within the context of bird image. Though the use of bird symbol is a well-known literary tool, it is unique to find the same symbol occurring in similar thematic motifs within three works of different authors. To determine the characteristic features of the female characters, themes, symbols and the historical influences of the time period, specifically from the feminist perspective are analyzed. In this context, the historical development of woman's social status, and the various factors that affect woman's situation throughout history are investigated. To be more precise, woman's exclusion from the social life without any rights and problems she has been facing for centuries are all presented. Then feminism, its developmental process and types are analyzed.

The social conditions of the environment have a great effect on the characters in each play. Although the plays were all written in different places, it is not difficult to understand the reasons of the characters' reactions to certain situations. The biggest common problem for all the characters, in three of the plays, is the patriarchal oppression. The main female characters and their relations with the motives of the era are analyzed. In order to clarify the characteristic features of the female characters, the direct and indirect details are analyzed. At first, to restrict the study, the themes emphasized by the authors are determined in each play. Those themes reveal some determinant clues about the female characters such as; freedom, isolation, motherhood, captivity, suicide, physical and psychological violence, gender roles, money, power and

more. These are the most common themes that the playwrights used in the plays to identify their misery. Each of the characters has different problems. They suffer from social deficiencies, loneliness, philological and physical abuses and negative effects of the responsibilities of having a baby, being a working mother, being a housewife. The way of demonstrating each character's desires, conflicts or dilemmas, using symbols has a great importance. They are effective in describing the characters indirectly. Symbols are intentionally used in all plays by the authors. They indicate the experiences of woman. It is a way of telling the message in an artistic way. The realities beneath the symbols always convey important clues about the characters. In order to make the research stiffer, the characters are investigated with the symbols used for them. As birds' common instinctual behaviors are familiar with human beings, they become a representational imaginary used especially for woman. Thus, bird is a common symbol used for each of the females in the plays. Each of the writers assumes the female character as a kind of bird, related to her characteristic features. Especially when the characters are analyzed within a feminist view, it can be easily inferred that those birds are captured. Patriarchal system is the biggest reason of their captivity. Women are the victims of patriarchy. Their oppressor is sometimes her own ambitious character or her husband or the capitalist system. The false gender perception from the very early of civilization has a great influential effect on societies even today and the times when those plays were written. Their miserable lives, as a captured person, support the determined bird image. In this sense the meaning of bird image for each character is tried to be explained with the themes and the symbols. In order to be able to achieve all the varieties depending on the particular concern, some specific questions should be asked such as; what is the writer's aim in using that symbol? Are the characters really captured as a bird or are they free as a bird? From a feminist perspective, is a caged bird which is associated with the patriarchy a right symbol for female characters or not?

Within the context of the present study, the main female characters in the selected plays are analyzed in regard to symbolism. The symbols used for the characters introduced. *Hedda Gabler* (1890), a psychological play concerned with the dramatic life of a woman, is the first play to be investigated in the current study. The major character's inner conflicts expose her to become a victim. Hedda's sterile life leads her to some destructive behaviors. Throughout the play, there are many themes related to Hedda's character. They are repeatedly given through the symbols. From the beginning

till the end, those symbolic details make contribution to the psychological portrait of Hedda. The most important themes found suitable for her social position and physiological mood are oppression, power, captivity, freedom, isolation, pregnancy and suicide. They are spirally reflected by means of an excellent wording style.

The second play is Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* (1916) which is a short version of *A Jury of Her Peers* (1917). It is a one-act play and is in fact based on a true story. Ben-Zvi explains the background of the story as below:

“In fact, *Trifles* is based on a true story of John Hossack who was murdered with an axe as he was sleeping in 1900. His wife, Margaret was the prime suspect. She claimed that she was sleeping next to her husband but heard nothing. This was not a convincing explanation for the jury. She was found guilty. Like a detective Glaspell joins the trials, investigates the case, visits the farmhouse, interviews with the attorneys, and studies the witness inquiry. This case provides an inspiration to write this kind of a drama” (Ben-Zvi 143-145).

She was interested in this story and begin to write with an inspiration. Minnie's story is about her isolated misery life. Her husband's psychologically and physically abusive behaviors bring Minnie to the edge of madness. When her husband kills the bird, she reaches the end of her patience. With an uncontrollable anger, she gets her revenge by killing him, but the real reason was to gain her freedom and release her bird like soul from a loveless marriage, which is a cage for her. Makowsky calls the play a “modernist revenge tragedy” (qtd. in Murphy 51). There are many themes such as; oppression, isolation, humiliation, revenge, freedom and sisterhood.

Top Girls (1982) by Caryl Churchill is the third play investigated in this study. Generally speaking, it is a paly that deals with woman values. The main character is Marlene who has received a new position as a top manager in an agency. It also describes the stories of other female characters within a social aspect of working class in patriarchal and capitalist point of view. Most of the characters have a historical importance working in the contemporary business world and society. However, each of them has different stories that are full of sufferings and challenges. As they are victimized by the patriarchy dominance, they get used to enduring the system with different strategies. They either get the role of a man or they simply adopt the typical

female qualities. Despite their success; they feel unhappy and unsatisfied. The focus is on capitalism, class differences and inequalities between the two genders. The themes are; captivity of capitalism, class differences, sisterhood, patriarchy, money and power.

Finally, in the conclusion part of the study, bird image is ultimately found to be the most suitable and meaningful symbol for female characters throughout the all three plays because the data obtained from the symbols inform many similarities especially analyzed from a feministic point of view. The miserable lives of women, their physically and psychologically captured feelings support the suitability of this common symbol. In different places in the world and in different time periods, the patriarchal system, and the unequal gender discrimination victimizes women. They are not as free as a bird but captured and isolated from the social life. They try to find a solution to get rid of their oppression and captivity. Since they do not feel themselves as free as a bird, their reaction or defense towards the patriarchal system generally includes sacrifice. Hedda commits a suicide and sacrifices her own life. Minnie kills his husband and removes the continual thread but at the same time sacrifices her freedom. Marlene sacrifices her motherhood and her female identity for her career. Despite some personnel rights given legally throughout years, sorrowful stories of woman have always been similar for centuries. There is not much development in her social position from the past.

CHAPTER I

1.1. The Place of Woman in Real Life and in Myths

Since Paleolithic and Neolithic ages, man is always in the front line of history stage. His psychical power makes him closer to outside rather than home. While the attitudes like fighting, killing, conquering, protecting, and hunting are attributed to man, cooking, cleaning, the maintenance of children, beauty, pudicity are mostly attributed to woman. Her privilege feature of giving birth blessed by God provides the continuum of life and makes her indispensable and valuable. In the Paleolithic period, woman was the symbol of fertility, abundance and productivity. She is believed to be the “Mother Goddess”. The signs found in caves tell that the importance of man was not known for the continuum of lineage (Sevim 8). Hence, there was no privilege among man and woman. In the Neolithic period, especially after realizing the contribution of man in pregnancy, she loses the common belief of being “Mother Goddess” and adorable productivity importance. During this period, she was considered as a tool that nourishes and maintains the seeds of man (Berkday 61-134). She used to work outside to help man in the fields. Yet, with the beginning of settlement into villages, the rules of communal life occurred. New energy sources such as ox, water and wind were discovered. In this sense, man did not need the physical power of woman anymore. She was abandoned to the inside of home (Sevim 10). Meanwhile, the common patterns of societies began to change with the communal life and they brought lots of disadvantages for woman life (Sevim 10). Man began to be seen in the front stage of history. He set up trading relationships, private ownership, colonialism mentality, rules of law and state organization. As a result, all those developments provided a basis for strengthening the patriarchal system. He always tried to set his psychical and economic freedom and strengthen his social position in the society. His self-confidence increased gradually, and he found opportunities to develop his social and personal skills. However, in order to stay alive and powerful, he began to be more cruel and violent. The struggles for social status began, which were the reasons of hierarchical class differences among people. Meanwhile, woman withdrew herself more into the domestic domain and began to stay in the background compared to man. Her sexual and domestic roles as a servant in the family were the common perception in society. (Sevim 11).

Fatmagül Bektay asserts in her book called *Woman in Monotheistic Religions* that having a desire to become dominant over one another is the starting point of the problems between two sexes. Sevim says different philosophers discuss this dominance conflict. For example, Plato claims that woman is the dependent one but the only dominant one is man. Both Sevim and Bektay claim that “Aristoteles asserts the powerful and dominant one [man] should take the control of the weak and dependent ones [woman]”. For Aristoteles, mind and intelligence belong to man (Sevim 15-16; Bektay 134). God bestows sperm that carries the vital spirit of God (Bektay 134) for humanity. This idea results in a divine relationship between man and the God. Thus, man defines himself as a divine force of God on earth. On the contrary, woman’s fertility feature and instincts, bestowed by God, make man dependent on her without dispute. Bektay claims that in Quran there is a similar relationship between the seed and soil. Bakara verse 223 tells “your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so you come to your place of cultivation...”. (Quran) Bektay says it is this dependency that makes him anxious about woman. Man is dependent on woman to continue his lineage and feel obliged to protect his solid for his seeds. Those different bestowed natural differences and the capacities require woman to be protected from others. It connotes many other debates like purdah and legitimates the victory of patriarchy (Bektay 52-66).

In history, the establishment of governments, their developmental process, the level of prioritizing social values show diversity. Therefore, the way of their reactions and aspects are also different from each other. That’s to say, the developmental process of the eastern and the western can be different from each other. For example, in Hellenistic culture woman was so precious. It was a common thought that woman was worth to be suffered for and was as an award gained after a victorious battle. It is also known that the reason of Trojan War was for the sake of a woman. Despite the general thought which was about her unreliability, woman was also important in Ancient Greek. (Sevim 15) For the Romans, women were dominant outside of homes. However patriarchy is an important system that regulate most of the rights (Sevim 18). For Chinese people who have different culture and customs, woman is thought like an invaluable object. Geishas are known as the ones who do not discuss the rules and obey all without questioning. They serve to their man at home because the most important thing is the happiness and the comfort of man in China. According to the historians and

Confucius, woman should always be dependent on man and harmonize with him with a loyal obedience. Also, it is known that in China, women were called with certain numbers they were given instead of their names (Orhan 22). In ancient Egypt, the noble roots of a family and breeds had a great importance. The ancestry and the purity of royal blood had to be protected. In order not to give any damages to the throne, incest relationships were approved (Sevim 13).

Mythologies are also important tools in determining the cultural ideologies and articulate the values of any society. They are not ordinary stories. They are indirect vehicles that tell the truth of the era from different perspectives using some icons and symbols. Most of them enlighten the relationship between man and woman and criticize juridical, ideological and traditional sanctions by underlining the real problems occur in the society. Most of them related to the anxieties of men about women's status. Woman is told as a contrast with the harmony and stabilization so the reason of evil beginnings (Kılıç 134). For example, in ancient Greek, patriarchal society was dominant and man had the control opposed to woman who was obedient and passive. It was believed that woman would turn to their evil nature if they did not deal with domestic issues. In those Greek stories, parallel with the structure of patriarchal ideologies, the first male one is created by God Prometheus. The other Gods and Zeus get angry and retaliates by creating Pandora who symbolizes Eve. They add evil seeds into the soul of Pandora that would cause trouble. Then she was sent on earth with a box which keeps some evil things. Pandora feels curious about the things in that box and cannot stand to open it. When she lifts the lid of that forbidden box, she ends the 'Golden Age' of gods and men. All illnesses, suffers, misers, devilry things spread out on earth. Pandora as a woman cause the Golden Age over. Greek myth defines Pandora as a scapegoat so that it exculpates by accusing woman with her disgrace mistake (Tanilli 19). Another example from mythology is *Medea*. It is one of the famous plays written by Euripides. Some scholars consider *Medea* as one of the first works of feminism. The roles and expectations of both men and women are stereotypical. Her sorrowful story begins when her husband Jason abandons her with two children to get marry to another woman. Medea gets furious and suffers a lot. She gets so much angry that she becomes a destructive character. She wants to torture and kill him. She decides to get revenge even though it costs everything she has. Her revenge desire is greater than her love of children. With an intention of protecting her children from the danger of the enemies,

she murders her own children. She sacrifices her children for revenge (Hopman 155-183).

In Japan mythology there is an epic of creation that explains the consistency of the islands in Japan. In the epic, Izanagi is defined as the male God and Izanami is defined as the female God. After falling in love with each other, those two Gods begin to walk to the opposite poles around of a nucleoid shaped circle until they meet. When they meet, the female one, Izanami salutes the male one. Izanagi thinks that it was not an appropriate behavior. Then they have two babies called Hiruko and Awashima. However, there is a problem that those two children have an ugly appearance. The reason is the first salute that the female one Izanami gave. According to the myth the woman cannot be the first speaker that brings bad luck. They put the two crooked children onto a boat and leave them through the sea. They repeat the same ceremony again but this time the first one who salutes is the male one, is Izanagi. In the following years they have eight healthy children who become the eight big islands in Japan. In this way, it can be suggested that myths convey strict roots of patriarchal customs. It is such a symbolic cover for pushing woman to the background. Patriarchy is based on binarism that defines the woman as "other" from man. Those examples show that woman is accused of being evil, bringing bad luck and encouraging sin (Özbudun 40-43). Man has an importance in society that he is not equal to any creature on earth, but woman is an object used for appreciation of man's supreme existence.

On the other hand, religion is a very deep phenomenon felt inside. It is such a system that directs humanity and societies. Being the oldest, most effective and powerful presence connection between humanity and society, it has always been the basic source of life. It prompts certain worldviews for people whose attitudes inevitably be affected depending on their preferences. Because of its influence, it manipulates people, which also mean society. There is also a strong connection between woman and religion. The viewpoints of woman for the three divine religions are different from each other. All promulgate Adem as the first created human being. He is accepted as the ancestor of human being. The Almighty first created him from mud and blew from His own soul into him. Then He created the first woman, Havva. For Jewishness, the Almighty prohibited both Adem and Havva eating the fruits of knowledge tree. However, the cunning snake in the Garden of Eden persuades Havva to eat one assuring

that she could know everything as much as the Almighty. It encouraged both Adem and Havva to eat the apple. After eating it, they lost their purity and innocence. They were thrown out of the Garden of Eden and abatement onto the earth (Torah 25). For Judaism woman has an economic value for her father. When she gets married, she cannot keep any heritage right. If she were raped, she was lapidated by other people. She was pushed out of the synagogues. During her menstruating periods, they are defined as dirty, deficient or defected. Tanilli says Jewish men pray and thank God for not being created as a woman (22). When those situations are considered, it is understood that women are humiliated and are marginalized by male. For Christendom, Havva is persuaded by evil which is disguised as a snake. It is believed that all Christians will pay for Havva's sin. Eating the prohibited fruit, they commit their first sin and get out of the paradise. In the mediaeval ages according to the Christians' view Adem is the processor of Jesus and Havva is the processor of Virgin Mary. Adem is at the same time the symbol of committing sin and death, Jesus who was created from the spirit of God, is the resource of life. Symbolizing Havva as *Blessed Virgin Mary* makes her divine and untouchable. However, this approach loads new charges on woman that keeping virginity and praising the maidenhood underline her gender identity and evoke some sexual ideologies about woman in time. This focus on her gender identity brings woman into the forefront and gives harm to her gender struggle. For example, nowadays in trading it is common to use the woman body in advertising and marketing sectors. This perception is based on this view towards woman.

In the east in Arabian Peninsula, before the spread of Islam, the baby girls were something seen as worthless and unnecessary. They were buried alive by their father. After the acceptance of Islam, this was completely changed into a new perspective. The importance of woman was appreciated. Contrary to the views of Jewish and Christianity beliefs, Havva did not seduce Adem in Quran and she is not humiliated in the holy book. On the other hand, it was not the snake but the evil that chased Adem (quran.com). He tasted the apple and it is said in Quran that it was his own entire fault of desire. It is also underlined that when Adem and Havva forswear with a full of repent it is said that they were forgiven by the Almighty (quran.com). Although the explanations of the verses may cause some debates according to the person who explains them, Islam always protects woman rights and does not allow them to be isolated from the society. In fact, it does not create any difference between man and woman; it considers human as a whole.

As it was mentioned before, human attitudes cannot be independent from the cultural and traditional patterns but on contrary, they cannot stay as pure as it was once. Time is the most important reality that shapes the attitudes of society, moral and the gender perception. It means, as a living creature it renovates itself and has some dynamics in progress. For example, in medieval times woman were busy with the works of handcraft and their rights were protected by edicts of imperials given out (Kadioğlu 15). Kadioğlu claims Christian women in that time, were working in the churches as nuns and help the priests. The monasteries were used as hospitals and schools. Yet, through the first half of the thirteenth century, their efforts were hindered by the church authorities. These attempts were to break off the relation between woman and churches. Thus, it would keep them apart from education and social issues that make the control of woman easy. Man's social and economic liberty make them dependent on man authority. This forms the basis of the manner to woman in nineteenth and twentieth century. (Sevim 25-26) In Medieval times, marriages were such a contract of an alliance that woman seem to be an object for both sides because the relationships were based on men-self-interests. She is supposed as an object of her father until getting married. Child brides and marriages without girls' consent begin to be common in societies (Bock 22). Moral corruption was at extremely high levels at that time. Prostitution and witch hunting were popular, and were also supported by the churches, but the punishments were only for woman. Woman were accused even when they were innocent and got severe sanctions like lynching or being burnt by the public. Those injustice accusations create a perception regarding man that "men were as noble as Jesus [and] women were deviant extensions of evil" (Berktaş 35).

In 1789, French Revolution (1789) burst out. Feudality was demolished and cause important progresses for humanity especially for women. It provided new and better beginnings for her. The revolution increased the mindfulness of equivalence of woman to man, which meant she was not less human or less citizen than man. With *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) everybody is accepted to be born as equal and independent with each other. This matter supports the feminist ideology and would encourage the supporters in the future. Although the revolution began as a women movement, with the inclusion of some other revolutionary organizations, it turned out to be man oriented. Women did not stay state. They established different kinds of political associations. However, men were not pleased with those associations

and in 1793 all of them were closed with a manifesto that informed women not to use their political rights. Woman cannot be out of private domain. It was necessary for her to stay backwards. (Sevim 34-35). This humiliating decision was an attempt to keep her indoors and hinder the possible independent dreams on political rights of woman. However, it was too late for a prevention as women always tried to be heard by the officials.

In the eighteenth century and the Victorian era, domestic relations based on patriarchal system. It was believed that a traditional domestic woman requires to get married and have children. Martha Vicinus (1972) explains it as “the cornerstone of Victorian society was the family; the perfect lady’s sole function was marriage and procreation [...]. All her education was to bring out her “natural” submission to authority and innate maternal instincts” (qtd. in Westermann 7). Man was the only authority, who is powerful, earns money, makes decisions, and meets the family requirements. Bourgeois praised money and power. As men were powerful money makers, he was appreciated, and so the patriarchy got stronger and was extolled by the society (Sevim 8-30). In this regard, getting married to a noble one was very important for bourgeois women. Nevertheless, on the other hand, marriage is considered as a handicap for middle class women as when women get married, they lose their civil rights to property or the custody of children (qtd. in Westermann 8). Men preferred the marriages of convenience which was advantageous for him. After marriage, woman’s property, security and pudicity all belong to her husband. Man was responsible for the comfort of his family (Kadıoğlu 58). There was no romance or loyalty among the married couples. It was such a union of two families that arrange everything about the wedding. The discrimination between the genders was really high. For example, if a man had killed a woman by beating, he would not have been punished by law but if the situation had been vice versa, the woman would have been burnt at the city square in front of people (Sevim 28). Moreover, working women generally do not earn enough money to make a living. Therefore, they were always dependent on others. Moreover, working women were considered as mannish and repellent by the society. The purpose of this man-made perception was to keep woman under control. In spite of all the negative attitudes against woman at that period, woman began to give reactions to the violence they were exposed to. Many writes began to write about woman rights, their agony and favored how precious they were for society. The prejudice towards woman

was tried to be discarded. In this regard Poullain de la Barre became the first person who put the feminist ideology structure forward for the first time. Their reaction grew out of the written form and brought about big protest demonstrations. In time, their struggle gets stronger with the appreciation of conscious people. By the same token, most of the aristocrats shape their own feminist ideologies in the bourgeois halls and improved themselves to be capable of defending the rights of woman. Women learned law, human rights and the terms like equality, justice, liberation, independence, freedom. With great expectations of liberty, immigrations increased to the Country for Liberty, America. Those processes made men feel irritated and nervous.

In the nineteenth century capitalism captured the world and affected negatively the life of woman as everybody did. The discrimination between the two genders was not over. While men were working in good conditions, women were working in contrast poor conditions. Thus, working conditions for long hours prevent them from getting married and giving birth. Especially the number of abortions increased. (amedonline.com) On the other hand, capitalism had some positive contributions for women. It helped them get rid of the pressure of patriarchy and being accepted by the society proving that she can survive standing on her own legs without a man. In that period, the rate of literacy increased but getting diploma after graduation was still a great problem for women. As Churchill criticized in her work *Top Girls* that they had so many social problems such as travelling alone or they had to make a decision whether they wanted to have a family or a career. Nevertheless, as time heals most of the things, in 1845 *The Reform of Women Laborers Union* was accepted. In 1848 they became stronger with the acceptance of *American Women Legal Equivalence Union*. Some of the liberal organizations were supporting women. In some magazines the problems of women were told which helped to awaken the feminist conscious. Also, they began to write about their own suffer and demands.

In the twentieth century, innovations, developments and reformations enacted seriously in every sector. While women were expecting improvements in their situation, they found themselves in world wars and economic crisis. These were the reasons for changing the current situation about human rights. It was time to become together for the country defense and national independence. Women had important roles in those wars. After the agreements, negotiations and some alliances between the countries, the

general atmosphere began to change. In most of the countries the number of men reduced. In order to revive the labor force in many sectors women began to get educated and began to be active outside of home. Technology, media and communal communication network began to improve. Related to the improvement of technology and social media, some other branches such as marketing, advertising started to gain importance. Regarding the demands parallel with those improvements to capture the attention of the consumers in sale sectors, woman's sexual image was used in many marketing and advertising areas. She became a sexual object for advertisements. The most noticeable example is the Barbie doll that began to be produced with an irreproachable body. They are for children in every house.

In World War II, responsible and patriot women declared their eagerness to unite for their countries. Like Virginia Woolf, many of the writers wrote about woman and declared their reactions. However, most of them were forced to leave their country or be arrested. New developments for women came about in this period. The most important one was the equivalence perception spread among societies especially in Europe. Women demanded liberty in abortion and giving birth. In 1960 the feminist ideas gained popularity again. They started to organize indignation meetings. All their aim was to remove the old image of woman and establish the new one. At the end of the 20th century, feminism became a scientific study area. They investigate her historical process in patriarchy, her social role, gender identity and her current situation. With the turning of woman studies into academic discipline, woman studies gained a new perspective which allowed them to learn more about feminism and feminist theory. Although the pioneers who preceded the woman studies investigating them at universities sacrificed their titles, their effort became successful and feminism attracted the attention all around the world.

1.2. Feminism and Types of Feminism

Like any human being, society has a soul that educates itself, becomes rich or poor, gets irritated, gives reactions to problematic issues and receives heritage from old generations. Those heritages may be solid like historical monuments, money or such sort of things. Or they may be abstract traits like values or behaviors. It is known that temporary behaviors gradually become permanent when resulted in gaining benefit, appreciation or consolidation. Therefore, they transform into becoming strict rules

consistent with people's needs. To understand the cultural heritage, the relationship between those behaviors and the needs should be compared and seen how they become natural for people in time. Society possesses a really important role in shaping people, culture and the structure of general atmosphere in a community. Patriarchy has been one of the main reasons for oppression for centuries. People mentally and delightedly know how serious the sanctions of patriarchal system were for woman but generally they remained passive or clearly ignored the problem. Being afraid of not utilizing the advantageous benefits of this order made the majority of the people as passive supporter of patriarchy. In this process the most surprising, challenging, and controversial issue to be discussed is that lots of woman consider this situation as natural. They accept the rules of patriarchy and dependency something normal. Being exposed to the misbehaviors of man does not disturb many of them. For centuries, the traditions and the customs have encouraged man to be free while woman has been exposed to injustice (Hooks). Hooks claims that woman is a compact object in a manmade world. Because of her weak and sensitive nature, she is open to oppression and abuses. This is almost the same for all women around the world. Despite all her skills and capacity of her intelligence, she is a victim of the physical power of man. In order to find a solution for her unequal status, rights and the roles assigned by the patriarchy, she has been struggling since the eighteenth century after the age of Enlightenment. With the abolishment of the feudal system, the capitalist system was established in the seventeenth century, but yet, woman becomes more humiliated. Those struggles induced the concept of Feminism.

Feminism is an ideological movement that defends the removal of all kinds of pressure and controls applied to women in public or private areas. It considers all the problems from woman perspective. It is not a manner against man but only criticizes the patriarchal structure which appreciates man more. Hooks claims in his book *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* that feminism is a movement aims to remove gender discrimination, gender exploitation and the dominant pressure on woman in the society (Hooks 7-12). It is always related to the equal rights for both genders rejecting gender superiority and gender exploitation. It is an attitude of women who tried to raise mindfulness for her suffering. In order to be active in politics and in legal, administrative and communal life and survive in a capitalist world, it gradually begins to spread out. There are many reasons for spreading feminism all around the world.

They can be psychological, legal, biological, religious, economical, and social. Yet, surely whatever the reason might be, it is a fact that all those reasons charge a universal meaning on feminism and makes it multidimensional. The more patriarchy and capitalism humiliate woman, the more she gets stronger to be able to win man's favor. It is a matter of impulse and response function. Most of the time she feels jealous even of her own fellows. She develops a rivalry and oppression policy and loses the sense of sisterhood, support and mercy for each other. With a denigrating effort, she develops such an ideal "May the best one win". Feminism tries to remove such wrong perceptions become a part of our daily life. They provide acceptance and support by influencing many people. When it is considered with this point of view, it should be considered as a social movement aiming the retreatment of society. For this reason, it is not just related to womanish issues or not bust out against man. It criticizes the rigid male mind implementation ideology for ages. Feminism asks fair responsibility distribution of work at home, equal salary opportunities at work and the liberty of criticizing the irregularities that occur in the society. Still, it should not turn into negative attitudes towards man leaning on the hatred evolved in the past, rather, it should focus on the gender discrimination with a sisterhood perspective. Feminist movement has had three waves. Each wave has brought certain developmental solutions or remedies for gender inequality. All those theories have had their own insights into that problem and are still trying to come up with good strategies to be understood. Each has made vitally important contributions to improve woman status and her position in the society. In fact, all incorporate the same ideas from several different perspectives. Moreover, over the years their perspectives may shift on different origins.

Feminism will tell woman who she is. In that way she will compare past and present and will notice her own potential. However, to find a solution for this socio-cultural problem, a collective treatment is a must. The government should investigate the solutions for woman to obtain equal rights and manage the regulation process without any injustice preferences. On the other hand, feminist movement supporters should make their critics impartially. With an aim for independently living woman without being oppressed, feminism investigates the past experiences and take some precautions then follow the affects on the society. In this sense, it is not only related to woman but also to man (Hooks 7-11). Moreover, without getting stucked into racism, religion, it becomes a universal movement out of borders.

1.2.1. The First Feminism Wave

The first feminist wave begins in eighteenth century and goes on until the World War I (1900). Mary Wollstonecraft 's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) was an important defender at that time. The feminists were generally faced with a challenge for two important issues, civil code and political rights. Their demand was not to be excluded from the communal places. Only the man were the citizens. They had no right to vote or they did not have chance to purchase or sell any property. Thus, people began to produce theories to form new reformations, innovations and regulations against the patriarchy. The feminists generally challenged for two important issues; equality and the political rights. (Donovan 21-73)

1.2.1.1. Liberal Feminism

The exact beginning date of this movement is not known. When feudalism was over in England and capitalism began to spread out, middle class woman begins to feel excluded from public sphere. Although the era was called the enlightening era, it was very common to think that the public sphere belonged to man and the private one belonged to woman. In such an atmosphere, dominated by patriachy, the issues about woman equivalence compared to man did not go beyond the words. Woman demanded more rights. Liberal Feminists claimed that if man and woman were not different from each other, women should have same rights as men did by law. They demanded the same working conditions and same educational opportunities just as man did. Olympe de Gouges, who is considered as the first campaigner of the feminist movement, wrote *The Declaration of the Rights of Women* in 1791 (Sevim 34). She demanded political power that includes the rights to vote and property rights. Her declaration was defensive that "a woman has the right to be guillotined; she should also have the right to debate"(34). They obtained the right to divorce but then got arrested and sentenced by guillotine. (34). *French Revolution* (1789) did not have much encouragement as the rights given to woman were withdrawn back by the government. *The American Declaration of Independence* (1776) was only for man, Caucasoid race and bourgeois class. For this reason, it was criticized as it did not have any benefits for woman or for

ending the black slavery. John Stuart Mill, Harriet Taylor, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Wollstonecraft are the people who have important encouragement for this period. Most have important works. For example, Harriet Taylor's *Votes for Women* (1867) which is about the attainment of voting right for women, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Woman* (1869). Those works defend the woman rights within the liberal politic structure. Mill (1869) states that in a society freedom is not possible with slaves and dependants. Mill, Wollstonecraft and the others claim that apart from the biological difference, the intelligence capacity is equal for all individuals. The main reason for woman using their intelligence capacity less than man is the unequal education opportunities. If equal opportunities were provided for woman as well, they could also have the same jobs. Wollstonecraft indicates that the reason for this defective idea is the misperception of her own identity. Woman feels herself as a slave, responsible for serving male that hinders her individual development. For this reason, they gather at the same common point that woman should be educated, and her rights should be widened, otherwise the consequences will be destructive for the society and harmful for the general family structure. If the pressure, abuse and violence were reduced and the required respect were given to women, it would be more profitable because there is a connection between the society and mothers. (Sevim 23-60). Thus, woman was ready to go out from domestic places into the public places having equal rights with man. This attempt spread all over the world and was appreciated and supported with many public meetings. Many association and councils were found.

After the World War I, women began to work at different jobs. With the establishment of Versailles agreement, equivalency was accepted. Most of the women acquired equal rights. On the other hand, for fascists woman was still a servant and responsible for her children. Giving birth and growing children up were civic responsibilities. It was still very clear that woman was in the background. In socialist societies the process was so slow that the patriarchal system was protected for its continuity (Sevim 46-47). Until World War II women were hopeful but when the war burst out, with the declaration of mobilization in most of the countries, all the given rights and job opportunities were withdrawn back again from her. Because man needed jobs and support the economic recovery.

1.2.2. The Second Feminist Wave

In the 20th century, the second feminist wave spread out. The withdrawal of woman from public places into the domestic arena after the World War II, provoked feminists and fastened the movement process. Now women were more experienced, more predetermined and conscious. They wanted to work. The most dominant aim was to release women from the pressure of patriarchy. Patriarchy rejected all roles of woman related to gender and oppression (Sevim 43-50). This determined attitude of woman in return, was to find a solution for her unclear situation in communal and domestic places. It criticized the authorities in government and demanded innovations about woman rights. For example, accepting her biologic fertile productivity and paying what she deserves in return, considering her constructivist feature as a mother and growing her children up as a good citizen. Woman's invisible labor at home needs to be paid in a capitalist world. It is another dimension of labor exploitation in the societies developed with gender ideology. These are related to the gender politics considered within the patriarchal capitalism. Millet explains in his book *Sexual Politics* that woman's unequal position in societies is a production of the gender politics being transferred from the very early times of history. It is a kind of patriarchal-capitalism capturing the woman. For this reason, marriage is a trap for woman that captures her into domestic area (Sevim 52). In line with this point of view, new and easy applicable methods are improved in birth control. This process provides a certain freedom for women in their relationships by getting rid of the negative feeling of pregnancy. In some countries, abortion becomes legal but, in many countries, it was applied secretly and illegally which was very dangerous and could cause to become barren, sick or death. Feminists begin to demand abortion become legal and applied in a safe, hygienic situation. They tried to separate the sexuality and giving birth.

Sisterhood perception gains an ideological importance in the second wave period. It is a perception that brings woman together and focus on being uniting against on the similar problems of woman. Sisterhood means becoming stronger.

In this period, feministic movement can be considered as a kind of independence. The second wave supporters refresh the feminist perception. Betty

Frieden founded NOW (National Organization of Woman) in 1966 (Sevim 51). This organization had an important role in the developmental process of woman freedom and raising the conscious of woman rights. Different demands cause feminists to have debates and divided them into different feminist groups like liberal feminists, socialist feminists, psychoanalytic feminists, post modern feminists, independent feminists, lesbian feminists, black feminists.

1.2.2.1. Radical Feminism

Radical Feminism is a reaction for the Liberal and Marksist feminisms. The Radicals claim that Liberals and Marksists were insufficient in finding solutions for woman problems. It protests the war and domestic uncoordinated period in 1960 in New York and Boston (Sevim 78). Josephine Donovan claims that the real reason of woman oppression is not the capitalism but the patriarchal system (395-400). They claim that patriarchy is a strict phenomenon that is so hard to eradicate because its roots are so deep inside the conscious both in man and woman brain. Traditions, culture and rituals feed this conscious also. The structure of this traditional perception is fixed with the birth. That means the gender discrimination begins in the family. Woman is so much busy with pregnancy, maternity, housework, serving emotional and sexual needs of man. She is not aware of her own situation or does not realize how much she is burn out. Man derives his power from the dominant status at home and feels confident in social relationships with other people. For this reason, while marriage becomes like a cage that hinders the freedom of woman, for man it is a free area. Radicals believe that in public or at home it does not matter where she is, being exposed to discrimination, pervasive oppression and exploitation is an unavoidable caption for woman. In any case of resistance, the threat of rape, being beaten, murder or violence are always possible. These are other dimensions of her poor situation. Anxiety of being abused provides the continuity of patriarchal system and the dominance of man. This situation is a vicious circle. Losing his dominance over woman is a threat for male hegemony. Man's potential violence tendency, aggressive and abusive manner is the way that patriarchy controls all people.

Firestone (1979) claims that woman's unattainable feature is her biological creation (qtd. in Sevim 76). Her fertility feature distinguishes her from man. For this reason, without this kind of a biological outfit, man always tends to control her fertility. The thought of any weak position always makes man nervous and aggressive because sexual and emotional power of libido directs man, but he does not interweave those two powers. That means he can separate the two senses from each other but for woman it is vice versa. She cannot control her sexual and emotional senses. The vulnerable sensitivity of women make woman servants. For example, when she loves, she tries to be appreciated and admired by the opposed sex. She does her best, which makes her dependent on man and ties her to patriarchy. This ambition of being loved by man makes her blind to her own freedom. Her desire of being appreciated by man is very common that it is possible to give some examples. In Thailand, the women of Long Neck Karen tribe wear circles around their neck to be attractive and beautiful to man. The challenge is that if the circles are taken out, they die because of sudden breaking of neck bone. On the other hand, in China woman wrap their feet to have small feet because men like small feet woman. Wearing make-up or corset are the efforts to be beautiful, attractive and admired by man. Commercial sectors and social media support her desire and use it in advertisements by making a standard beauty perception. Whereas considering the total, man is advantageous again in many ways. The effort of woman catching up with the standard makes her open to be exploited and she is foreground with her sexual features. Radicals defend the rights of those who are the exploited victims of advertisements, pornography, social media.

The Biological differences reveal especially the inequivalence between man and woman. When the biological differences are removed in the society, equivalence can be provided. For example, with new regulations reformed by the government, woman will not be responsible for pregnancy, the maintenance of a child or giving birth. Instead of these dispensations some solutions are presented such as abortion or artificial insemination. With a biological mother, a woman can have a baby and become a mother without giving birth. Or she does not have to look after the baby (Sevim75-85).

One of the most important works for Radical feminists is Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex* (1949). It gives woman a secondary role in an existentialist way. Simone de Beauvoir claimed that women freedom is directly related to her womb.

Shulamith Firestone states in *Dialectic of Sex* (1970) that without removing out the biological differences, freedom cannot be provided for woman. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* is another important work for this movement. Millet claims that patriarchy sustains its sanctions with violence, beating, raping, face veil and such variety of obligations. All of the supporters and writers defended the same thing that woman deserves to be appreciated. However, the patriarchal system has cultural and social roots that are very strict and hard to defeat.

1.2.2.2. Cultural Feminism

Cultural Feminism is one of the feministic approaches that focus not only on the political and economical acquisitions but also the cultural achievements. American Feminist Margaret Fuller gives a start to the Cultural Feminist movement with her work *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845). Fuller claims in her work that woman has been taught to obey the patriarchal rules instead of what her senses suggest (Sevim 62). She points to the importance of education, voting, critical thinking and self development of woman in public sphere. They should lead a life with self confidence and life experiences. Cultural feminists investigate the ignored or unreported things produced by woman in history. They try to stop the patriarchal customs that are transferred for centuries. To exemplify, cultural feminists investigate life of red-Indian woman and try to reveal out the injustice she was exposed to in history. On the other hand, for many years Chinese women were used to binding their feet and wear tiny shoes called "lotus shoes" (Sancaktar 45-46) which are 3 or 5 inch in length. These shoes hindered their feet development normally. The aim of this custom was to enable those young women to get married to a rich man and was accepted as a symbol of prosperity.

In contrast to liberal feminists who tries to tell the similarity between man and woman, cultural feminists are proud of woman's fertility feature and bring the womanish senses forth. Cultural Feminists totally adopt matriarchal order with harmony, tolerance and sensible point of view. In the 20th century Cultural Feminism was assigned a different dimension with the work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman *Woman and Economy* (1898). Gilman claims the real reason of woman oppression is her economic dependence on man. She claims in order to heal the society, it is necessary to

utilize the instinctive, kind and sensible point of view in every domain. She is respected when she gets rid of being exploited. Patriarchal rules hinder woman from living her own personality independently. Gilman's radical suggestions about sharing the domestic responsibilities with man are considered differently. Although after 1920 cultural feminism loses its intense popularity, it gains popularity in 1970 again within the second feminist wave (Sevim 60-62).

1.2.2.3. Marxist Feminism

Marx and Engels were the two leading forefathers of Marxist Feminist movement while Lenin, Alexandra Kollontai, Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg were also important defenders (Sevim 66). Marxists focused on woman subordination both at home and in society. They claim that economic dependence of woman on her husband is the reason of oppression. At the outside, low payment, bad working conditions are evidences for her insignificant labor. Marxists aim, at this juncture, was to stop her exploitation and investigate the domestic trivializing. They tried to reveal out the relationship between the domestic productivity and her value at home. The reasons for not being considered productive at home, and the reasons for her trivialized labor in as well as boring and unqualified working conditions with low payment were all scrutinized. When her position at home was analyzed, it stuck out that as a babysitter, cook, or cleaner, she did not have any economic opportunity which obliged her to be dependent on her husband's service. Sevim states this obligation has no difference from prostitution (Sevim 69). In their situation it is not related to their immorality but their economic worries.

According to Marx the real reason for her oppression is not the gender differences but class differences resting on the capitalist order and economic impossibilities. Marxist Feminists believe unless class struggles, and capitalism are over, woman will not be as equal as a man (Sevim 64). As her exploitation is not only at home but also continues at work with low payment conditions, Marxists tried to raise the consciousness of working class and charge the right fee for her labor. At this point Engels had two suggestions for the solution; the first was to socialize her via encouraging them to work outside home. Yet, women also had many responsibilities at

home. This meant working in two different shifts both at home and at work, which required more energy and time. Hence, Engels suggested that the housework should be charged to a certain fee determined by the government. The laborers' responsibility would belong to the government. This would allow women go on strikes like a real citizen. On the other hand, she had rights to give decisions about many issues such as delaying the housework or deciding the number of children she would have, all of which could be considered as a protest.

Another issue for Marxist feminists is the alienation of woman in the society. Her alienation and not feeling herself belonging to the society are another result of capitalism and an important social problem. Maternity issues keep woman at home so in return, she rarely participates in social activities as much as man do. At this point, Marxist feminists defend that Socialism may bring equivalence and make woman economically stronger, which may remove the alienation and enhance her self-confidence.

1.2.2.4. Socialist/Materialist Feminism

Socialist/Materialist feminism evolves out in 1970 against the ideals of Liberals and Radicals. Socialists prefer to find out the lacking part of these two ideals and try to make a synthesis out of them. As opposed to the traditional political and economical policies, Socialists defend public profit with public property rather than private profit and private property. They have a socialist point of view and also disapprove the liberal ideas. Socialists do not attribute their responsibilities only to the patriarchy or class differences. They believe that all women are sisters. (Caryl Churchill'in Oyunlarında Feminist Yansımalar 82).

In order to prevent the oppression of woman, they come up with two theories. One of them is "dual systems theory" and the other one is "combined systems theory". The first one claims that patriarchy and capitalism belong to different social domains and have different profits. It is not easy to explain important socio-problematic situations with a common variable like economy. Many different variables may interfere and effect the conclusion. To understand the reasons for oppressive attitudes

towards woman, socialists claim that both factors should be analyzed, and the relationships should be determined.

Dual Systems Theorists points that the most important fact of patriarchy is the supervisor who controls the labor of woman at work. The supervisor is generally a man. This is a kind of solidarity and unification among men make them stronger and create situations to oppress women easily. For the *Combined Systems Theorists* capitalism and class differences cannot be separated from each other. They focus on the problems working in bad conditions with low payment altogether. They consider making woman marginalized from social life as the real oppression (Tong 75).

1.2.2.5. Black Feminism

The development of Black Feminism begins in 1980's. Feminist movement was criticized as being racist, ethnocentric and heterosexual especially by the colored people (Sevim 87). They wanted to inform the deficiencies in health service or education institutions and some related laws about those issues and police attitudes towards colored ones. Before 1980, they were ignored, and their problems were not disclosed. Moreover, none of the literature anthologies mentions about colored woman writers' works. In U.S, black women were in the lowest part in the economic hierarchy (Hooks 55). The exploitation and slavery perception in the capitalist system made black public an object. As a slave, they were workers for whites and exposed to economic exploitation. Davis (1981) in her work called *Women, Race & Class* states that they worked in really difficult situations. Although being paid quite low payment, they worked in difficult works such as driving plow in the fields, being responsible for the animal maintenance in barns. They were also used in coal mines instead of animals charged for pulling the carriages, railroader, navy in the factories or maids at home. On the other hand, they were defenseless against their abusive and violent master's who considered rape or beating as their usual rights. Their situation was extremely difficult that Hazel V. Carby states that colored woman struggles both for the racism with man and sexism against him. Both created pressure on her are within each other but woman was at the midpoint of that discussion (qtd. in Sevim 99). They were exposed to myriads many of sexual, psychological and physical abuses for years. Sojourner Truth declared

in *Ain't I a woman?* and created an effective atmosphere focusing on the unity of the feminist movement that struggles against race, class or gender discrimination (Tong 54). Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, Barbara Smith, Barbara Christian, Valerie Smith, Mary Helen Washington, Toni Morrison, Gloria T. Hull and Toni Cade Barbara were all forerunners of black feminist movement that they tried to reconsider all black literature and its history. They have great importance in reshaping the black feminism and tried to reveal out the colored woman's value prominent with a different point of view. Analyzing black woman from a different perspective, she revealed her differences, beauty, her struggles and the pressure of sexism, racism and class differences. Most of them focus on the solidarity of black population especially on their values, culture, language and peculiar features (Davis 30). The differences of black women from white ones was totally opposed to the sisterhood union. The color of her skin symbolizes the darkness of her grief.

1.2.2.6. Postmodern Feminism

Postmodern feminist aspect became prominent in 1980's. Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Catherina Clement, Linda Nicholson, Nancy Fraser, Mary Joe Frug are the most important names who defend Postmodern Feminism (Donovan 319-347). They focus on the personal differences among people. They claim that generalizing the differences of different communities cannot always be possible. Class differences and priorities for certain groups (lesbians, black people or ethnic groups) of people are to be considered for postmodernists. (Donovan 319-347). It should be analyzed within its own borders and in certain period. Cultural freedom of a society has roots that cannot be denied or isolated from its origins. Local and special characteristics or independence dynamics of a culture should be considered. They reject the universal and ethical principles and associated them with internet age and social sciences. They accept the changing world and its developmental differences.

1.2.2.7. Existential Feminism

It was revealed after the Second World War. The aim was the treatment of society. The financial and emotional damages created a vague, chaotic and anxious atmosphere. There was not an optimistic atmosphere after the war. Suffers,

disappointments, losses and deaths were the basic determiners of this century. The root could easily be associated with that gloomy mood in the society. The existentialists claim that people compulsorily live on earth. The existence of people is unique for everybody and personal. Thus, one completes his/her own existence and also responsible one for the things happening (Tong 197). Simone De Beauvoir's work *The Second Sex* is the most important study in this ideology. Another ground breaking representative name of the movement is Jean Paul Sartre with his work *Being and Nothingness*. Beauvoir claims that in order to awake her potential and achieve self-development in woman, there is no need to look for the biological or psychological differences. Those differences cannot be preferable before birth. So, bringing those differences as a hindrance that retains her from freedom is nonsense. Here Beauvoir does not ignore the biological or psychological differences, but the focus is on the demonstration of those differences as negative and crucial. In this respect, there must have been more reasons to call man as the main creature or the woman as the *other* one. It means a woman does not consist of only with her body or her biological features. It is a long process that makes her body as a vehicle for different kinds of aims. For this reason, her personal existentiality should be accepted instead of her existentiality for others. With this theory, he also rejects the ideology of Freud which appreciates the masculinity. In fact, the real problem and the biggest hindrance is the wrong perception of her own potential power. Her position of woman inferiorized by both genres. Even first she accepts her own situation. Therefore, the biggest hindrance is the wrong perception of her own potential power (Sevim 71-74).

1.2.2.8. Linguistic Feminism

This approach is developed with the effects of structuralism and post-structuralism. Structuralism accepts the language as stable and unchangeable. Demir and Acar (1992) claim that it uses structures to explain the basics of the whole past and traditional patriarchal system. For example, in a language, words do not determine the meaning of a text. The meanings of those words are shaped within the years and can only be understood when it is considered in a whole perspective. This means social, economical or political etc. domains have importance on meanings of the words. Nevertheless, this point of view changes with the post-structuralism structuralism as it

gives more space to more ascribed meanings which enhance the probable commands about it. On the other hand, both genres anyhow focus on the analyses of the effects and benefits of literature and languages in certain institutions or education arena. More specifically, the subject for both genres is the man and woman dialects whereby it would be more probable to discover how these systems work for both genders. This process has four different constituents such as language, discourse, differences and deconstructivism. Language is at the centre of a human being. It controls everything about human and is used for expressing the feelings of human. Discourse is a certain piece conveying the different categories related to the concept of the discourse. The discourses consist of opposite elements and all are in a relationship with each other. Analyzing the meaning of those opposite terms or units requires deconstructivism (Demir 104).

1.2.3. The Third Feminist Wave

The third feminist wave begins in the early 90s. The developmental process of the era created new forms for feminists. Those new forms cannot certainly be separated from the previous ones. At times, they even affect each other. As for the problems they were nearly the same when compared to the past, which could be listed as sexual liberty, gender equivalence, race, class and transgender rights most frequently. New generation was lucky because most of the old challenges about equivalence and human rights were solved. The development of technology and media and finally communication fastens this process. With the technological developments of communication, the perception of popular culture, consuming habits all change the dynamics of feminist movement. In a concise manner, both the pressure of the old patriarchal ideas and feminist aspects find a new cover and are gathered under the third wave. The first movement in this period was “power feminism”. Naomi Wolf considers the power as a desire that woman achieved. It was not interested in the class or race differences, rather it focused on the equality especially in economic, social and politic areas considering the previous period of feminist movement as being victim. They think that the new generation has a wide range of freedom especially in their sexuality. Thus, Naomi Wolf, Katie Roiphe and Camille Paglia are the most important names and have an influential contribution in the third wave. They advise the new generation feminists should enjoy the freedom they achieved (qtd.in Sorisio 137-138). Another movement is

DIY which means “do it yourself” or “girl power” in this movement the focus is on the girls. They encourage girls to be powerful, strict, brave, and to have enough cultural, social and political experience (Donovan 385). Baumgardner and Richard’s *Manifesta* (2000), as a new contribution, accentuates the ideology of a new wave of feminism. They defend the importance of past and considerably dwell on the vitality of sisterhood manner. Hence, lesbians’ feminism becomes popular while drawing attention to the current issues of woman current issues of woman such as sexism, racism, patriarchal pressure and investigating a wide spectrum of women from different socio, economic, ethnic and sexual identities. (Crawford, 51-54).

1.2.3.1. Ethnic Feminism

Ethnic feminists claim that from the very early phases of feminism movements, the problems of Caucasian women should be paid more attention. They gradually become the main standing point for ethnic feminists. The problems of people who belong to different social class, ethnic roots, and sexual preferences or from different race are always ignored. Therefore, the sisterhood aspect has not completely reflected itself. Those who have been marginalized by Caucasians especially in America gathered together with an aim of getting rid of the biggest pressure of being the *other* in the society (Tong 216). In this sense, multicultural feminism has a common point for different ethnic groups including the women who have same ethnic and racist problems. The oppressed women who are isolated from capitalism, patriarchal system and have racist problems in the society. Immigrant women can also be included in this category. They want to enhance a notion of the importance of having an identity and being accepted as an individual by the society.

1.2.3.2. Lesbian Feminism

Lesbians became powerful in public with the support of feminists’ supports during 1970s. It was first put forth by the radical feminists as Martha Shelly advocated that lesbians should not hide or feel ashamed of their sexual preferences if the matter is freedom for women without any pressure. Lesbian feminists wanted the same effort

given for equal gender roles for the sexual freedom (Sevim 86). They were isolated from the public places and were humiliated as *other* although they did not feel as a woman biologically. This made their marginalization to possess a dual direction just similar to the ethnic feminists.

Lesbian Feminists criticize the heterosexuality just because of considering it as a chain of patriarchal system. They published many works in literature and considered heterosexuality as a kind of exploitation of woman body. Yet, their critics provided important developmental process.



CHAPTER II

2.1. The Place of Symbolism in Literature

In this thesis the plays are the main data. It includes the words, word patterns and dialogues. The themes which are directly or indirectly emphasized and repeated by the authors form the basic correlations between the symbols. Those themes are prompted with certain symbols. For this reason, images and symbols are very important for this study. Some other related articles, thesis, critics and studies are the additional data that are examined in accordance with the main sources.

Throughout all the plays, symbols are the starting points that are basically important in explaining the characters and telling their stories. By providing a different perspective, they give a chance to understand the characters better. Thus, in this thesis the plays are investigated focusing on the words, word patterns and dialogues associating certain themes with certain symbols in light of some other related articles, theses, and criticisms which serve as the additional data utilized in accordance with the main sources. In this sense, it is inevitably crucial to dwell on the symbolic elements of the thesis in congruous with the symbolism in literature.

Symbolism has an old history and symbols are used constantly for quite a long period of time in literature. Langer claims that symbolism has a wide arrow of arts including literature, music, painting, theater and more (3-41). Symbols are used in many sectors such as the authors, film directors, politics, and advertisers use them in their works. Seeping into arts in such a way puts it into the middle of everyday life. They help to express the message better and enhance communication among people. Becoming a part of everyday language requires its usage especially in the literary world. As Alfred North Whitehead emphasizes in his anthology book that “symbolism itself is a part of language” and adds “... it is inherent in the very texture of human life. Language itself is a symbolism” (qtd. in Langer 40-43,236-258). The symbolist movement began in France in 1880s (Olds 155-162). This reaction was against

Naturalism and Realism movements and prompts spirituality, imagination, and dreams. The symbolists writing style is different from any scientific description as they include imagination, fantasy and emotions (Langer 3-41). Their aim is to create abstract forms, images or ideas beyond what appears to one's sense in another level of meaning. Charles Baudelaire, Stephane Mallarme, Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud are precede poets who are important in symbolsit movement (Olds 155). At the end of the nineteenth century, while losing its dominance in France, it began to spread all around the world. It influenced many authors and playwrights in literature. Especially Norwegian writer Henrick Ibsen (1828–1906), August Strindberg (1849–1912) and Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) are some of the frontiers that prevalently used symbols in their works (Olds 155-162).

Wellek (1968) claims that the word symbol comes from a Greek word “symballein” (qtd.in Wiener 338). Symbols represent the reflections of ideas that occur underneath the appearance of what is told with words. It is a complex system that is used with four skills-reading, speaking, writing and listening. One can ascribe many different meanings to a symbol. In a text, they are generally deliberately chosen repeated words. A symbol gains its meaning in a context and changes as the the text develops. Sometimes the words seeming irrelevant together may refer something else from its first meaning. Human brain can interpret both linguistic and non-linguistic forms in a context and implicate what is implied or meant with the codes. These codes can be relavant to the setting, the place, the time, a person, an action or an object. They stand for something beyond the visible images (Sperber 12). Langer suggests the general definition of symbol as “a symbol is any device whereby we are enabled to make an abstraction” (47). It means they form the abstraction of the concrete units in language. She explains symbols as “... a shorthand sign for a wider and implicate meaning” (29). The abstract ideas are the embodiment with logical expressions within a connected congruent to give the target message. At first, they seem to have a surface meaning, indeed, they emphasize the most important details and keeps some “hidden meanings” (Sperber 17-50) under the text to contribute the development of the theme. In other words, they support the subtle manner and the themes. They raise the awareness and reveal the true reality to make the readers or the audiences perceive the play with their imagination and interpretation (Sperber 17-50). Sperber claims that the reader decodes the symbols by transposing back into the original meaning

unconsciously. Imputing certain characteristics gives another level that is completely different. Zhao mentions that using symbols "...is an integral component of fiction [that] enriches the narrative by pulling its message down to the level of unconscious" (43-45). Using such an artistic tool makes the work more valuable and provides a feeling of aesthetic.

Using symbols are very popular nowadays because the importance of visuals has increased significantly. They make communication easier. For example; if there is a skull with crossbones figure, it indicates there is something dangerous or worth warning. Colors may also contain different meanings. For example, generally, black symbolises death or danger, whereas white refers to purity or red is used for jealousy or passion. On the other hand, animals are also used as symbols in literature. In primitive times, before man's language, animals are seen on cave walls as symbols used for communication. Hence, it is possible to assert animals are one of the oldest and most symbolically rich methods of metaphoric expression. There are books called bestiaries which are basically about real or mythical animals used as symbolic figures. From the very early times, the writers charge many religious or moral messages for the readers to treat the society. For example, bear symbolizes the devil, lion has a meaning of leadership and elephant means the strength and a helpful hand for people especially when symbolized for Jesus Christ. There is particularly one important legend in Christendom that gives moral and ethical messages to people. An elephant leans against a tree called Mandragora waiting for her female giving birth in deep water. The elephants have such a nature that if they fall down, they cannot stand up again without any support. Suddenly an enemy hunter comes and a part of the tree to make the elephant fall down when it leans to sleep. It happens as it was planned, and the elephant falls down crying out loudly. Twelve other elephants come to help it, but they couldn't achieve a success. Then a little elephant comes and lifts it up with its trunk. Now, in this context, the fallen elephant symbolizes Adam and the female one represents Eve and the little elephant represents Jesus Christ who is a helper and rescue the humanity (Druce 1-71). Birds are nowadays becoming a common symbol used for woman. In *Birds in Literature*, Leonard Lutwack explains that "It is a widespread and an extremely ancient belief that the soul assumes the form of a bird or, put more extremely, that all birds are the physical embodiment of human soul" (Lutwack xii). The connection is not only between birds and humanity but also between instinctive tendencies existing in woman

like maternity. The commonest representational symbol employed by the majority of authors for female characters in their works is the bird image. Lutwack also informs that “...of all wild animals, bird has always been closest to human-kind... the resemblance of their activities to common patterns of human behavior [that] makes them exceptionally suitable for anthropomorphic imagery.” (Lutwack x-xii). Peculiar attitudes of birds such as making nests and their sense of motherhoodness arouse the attention in literature. This instinctive similarity allows writers to create an emotional and more aesthetic relationship between bird and woman. In many cultures, there is a proverb that emphasizes this similarity “man makes houses, woman makes homes”. This proverb exactly means; It is the female one who makes the nest which underlies her sacrificing love of her family and great responsibilities in or out of the house as well as her socio-cultural importance in social life.

2.2. A Captured Falcon, Hedda Gabler

Ibsen’s drama has an important effect both on literature and theatre history. His works provide important contributions for literature. There are three writing periods in his literature life. In 1850, he entered the first period; Romantic verse dramas. He wrote about Norwegian history within a mood of a patriot and a partisan of the 1848 revolutions. The plays, *Brand* (1866) and *Peer Gynt* (1867) are famous. Those dramatic works with highly romantic characters are poetic and deal with the past. He also had much experience as stage manager and in-house playwright.

The second period of his career lasts between 1877 and 1899. He gave a new aspect to drama that changed the development of modern theater. He gave up writing mythic-poetic drama and preferred to write realistic social-problem drama in prose. His works were different from his earlier period in all aspects. With this second period, the realist movement began. His success was being able to recognize people, their life, behaviors, morality and the social problems of his own time. His aim was to create a social change and raise social awareness among people. In those plays, which are called “problem play”, the emphasis is always on the social issues and the psychological problems taking part in the characters. They show the truth in a realistic dramatization. He wrote about life in middle-class suburbs of small towns giving everyday situations

with ordinary characters. Without ornate diction and poetic effects, he used the characteristics of ordinary conversation. His characters speak effortlessly. For example, in *Hedda Gabler*, the speech is in Norwegian and they reflect the natural daily conversation patterns.

The third period during which he was influenced by symbolism. He used symbols in a sense of reality in prose dramas. His works convey a deeper meaning underlying beneath his imagination and inner thoughts in this period. As the French naturalist Emile Zola defines art as a reflection of temperament that most likely mean that a playwright's personality shines through his work without intention. His choice of symbols shows so much about his attitudes towards life which is exactly the same for Ibsen and his works in this period.

As a dramatist he was also interested in painting and photography via which he made accurate embodiment of his observations using symbols. His descriptions about settings, characters and plot are well organized by means of symbols which he skillfully manipulated in description; Ibsen used those images for describing settings and creating the characters. One of the most important examples of his realistic plays is *Hedda Gabler*. The play has an importance for conveying symbolic images which makes a profound effect on symbolism.

Ibsen is also one of the feminist writers who defend the woman rights and dictated their problems. *Hedda Gabler* is an impressive example for feministic plays. To begin with, the name of the house has a symbolic importance. The play takes place only in Tesman's new house which is called the "Falk's Villa" (Act II p:61). The previous owner of the house Mr. Falk was a cabinet minister who was a member of the parliament and probably had a superior status and a powerful position in society. Mr. Falk's power may reflect on Hedda and influence her because she loves power and gives so much importance to the social status. Another reason for using that bird image may be to make a connection with Ibsen's one of earlier plays, *Loves's Comedy*. In this play Falk is the name of the main character. It has a free but rebellious spirit against society. Falk, like a falcon, wings high into the sky to feel the feeling of freedom. His high ideals and powerful potential isolate him from the society. Many of Hedda's thoughts and actions seem to be the same with Falk. Falk refers to falcon. A falcon is a wild animal which is not a cage bird. It has a free spirit and loves to live at the extremes

of heights. Hedda has the same free spirit as a falcon. In this play the captured victim is the falcon Hedda. Still, her masculine background makes her feel captured in her marriage and into the the house. She does not want to be a part of that cage because she thinks a cage is a prison and also a threat for her freedom.

In this regard, another symbolic evident for Hedda's dominant character is the title of the play (Forshey 23). It conveys a feministic message. Although her new surname is Tesman, the title of the play is still Hedda's maiden name *Gabler*. This implication refers to her dominancy on her husband throughout her marriage. On the other hand, the denial of her new surname points to the class distinctions. In the article, *Hedda and Bailu: Portraits of Two 'Bored' Women*, the author He C. states:

“The use of Hedda's maiden name [Gabler] for the title...[suggests] the difficulties Hedda has in adjusting to the middle-class environment of the Tesmans- to become, in a real sense, Hedda Tesman”. (447-448)

She has some difficulties in adapting the hierarchical structure of her new environment. Her husband is a professor belonging to the middle class and does not earn much. As she was once leading a luxirious life of an aristorat father, she refuses to be a part of the lower class. She is unsatisfied, spoilt. Rising to the upper class is an important matter for Hedda. For her, a good marriage means power, respect, money and security. She thinks marriage is the easiest way of being accepted by the upper class because life is difficult without a man with status. She gets married to a respectable man before getting too old. However, she is in a dilemma because the realities are different. Although she has lots of ideals and desires to have power, she finds herself in a despair, loveless, dull marriage. Jürgen is a boring ancient history scholar. He assumes marriage as a duty of satisfying the domestic requirements of his wife so that she can be happy at home. As a product of the nineteenth century, he believes that women were destined to become respectable maids like his aunt and Thea who are responsible for the household routines once she is married.

General Gabler symbolizes the authority figure and the patriarchy. He was a powerful, courageous, self-controlled and influential man. His presence is felt in the house from the beginning of the play. Hedda's proud and authoritarian commanding attitudes towards lower ones are inherited from her father. In Act I, Aunt Julie refers Hedda as "General Gabler's daughter" (Act I 14). Even the scene directions "a portrait of a handsome, elderly man in a general's uniform" (Act I 12).

The pistols are also important signs of patriarchy. "The hanging pistols on the wall" all indicate the powerful affects of patriarchal pressure. On the other hand, Hedda uses the pistols apart from their peculiar purposes. Whenever she uses the pistols, her real intent is to control the others's fate and have the power. Generally, in the army, a soldier uses pistols with the purpose of defending himself or saving his honor to maintain his authority which may result in a victory gained beautifully or ends with an honorable death. But in contrast, in the play, they do not serve for such sort of a mission. They are used for different purposes that change depending on Hedda's intentions and the state of her mind. For instance, in the second act, Hedda holds the pistols like a child holding a toy and she teases with Brack pretending to shoot him. In the third act Hedda gives them to manipulate Eljert committing suicide, and in the fourth act the pistols are mortal in Hedda's suicide.

Thea is a symbolic character for the indication of class differences. Thea and Hedda have a background that they were previously school-mates. Although they know each other, Hedda does not like her. She is clearly jealous of her. There is no sisterhood bonding between those two women. Thea is the only one whom Hedda is obviously in contest because Thea gets her love once felt coward to be with. Seeing low-middle-class Thea abandoning her loveless marriage and follow Eilert Lovborg to town makes Hedda mad. Hedda asks "[b]ut what do you think people will say about you, Thea?" (Act I 40). While Thea dares to change her life, the bolder Hedda remains trapped by the tenets of her class. Hedda's fear of scandals, losing respect and her aristocratic background prevent her to leave Tesman. She is not brave enough to leave her husband for another man as she gets annoyed for possible gossips and speculations.

Thea's hair is another important symbol. It represents the personalities of Hedda and Thea and their fertility. Hedda's hair is "brown but not particularly abundant" (Act I 22). Thea's hair is "...is remarkably light, almost flaxen, and unusually abundant and

wavy". (Act I 29) Thea is creative, sacrificing, warm and has a sense of humor. On the other hand, Hedda is neurotic, cold, and unattainable. In the past, when they were at school she was pointing Thea degradingly "the girl with irritating hair that she was always showing off" (Act I 28). Even once she threatened her with burning them "...when we met on the stairs you used always to pull my hair... Yes, and once you said you would burn it off my head." (Act I 35) Later, when the two women are alone at home, Hedda, repeats her threat as if it were in their adolescence years:

"Oh, if you could only understand how poor I am, and fate has made you so rich! (Clasps her passionately in her arms) I think I must burn your hair off after all" (Act II 85). Hedda's violent gesture and Thea's almost hysterical reaction "Let me go! I am afraid of you, Hedda!" (Act II 85)

This is, in fact, a serious threat. Her hands and fire are the weapons that Hedda uses against Thea. Apart from sisterhood, there is a real fight between those two women within a competition. However, in the end it is Thea who gains.

The imprisonment of her own free spirit and her passion belonging to the upper class is described as "thirsts for life" (Act II 76). Her passion for life distinguishes her from others. She is eager to manipulate the weaker ones and tries to prove her intellectual superiority. Her arrogance and selfish behaviors make her feel superior to others. She says, "I want to feel that I control a human destiny" (Act II 85). She only wants to receive without giving in return. She betrays most of the people around her. She behaves insincerely and keeps other people's weak situations in mind to use them later. For example, she pretends to be a friend to Thea and learns everything about her private life but later she uses them for her own selfish purposes. She just looks down on the weak characters like Thea and Aunt Julia. She cannot abstain from herself from rude behaviors towards them. For instance, when she sees Aunt Juliana's hat, she scoffs it, ascribing to the maid "She has left her old bonnet lying about on chair" (Act I 24). Her deliberate interfering behavior makes Aunt Julia feel embarrassed and insulted. Another example can be seen when Lovborg reminds their previous relationship and confesses his feelings to be still the same as before. Nevertheless, she withholds herself and encourages him to die. All these are the signs of her power desire. Her betrayal attitudes reveal her selfishness towards the people around and also towards her own female identity. She was clearly pregnant and getting fat, but she refuses her pregnancy and

does not want anybody know this fact. She was so much self-centered that she does not want a baby which means domestic responsibilities.

Hedda always complains about her boring wedding trip and her husband's continuous speeches about medieval civilization. She finds them uninteresting but rejects being busy with the womanish things. For this reason, she accepts the friendship of Brack. Judge Brack is an energetic handsome family friend. He generally comes to gossip with Hedda. Being an admirer of Hedda, he is pleased with being their family friend and suggests "triangular friendship" (Act II 56). It is another symbol that represents a trap. It means becoming the third person in Hedda's private life. On the one hand a third person can be interpreted as friendly but on the other hand it means a lewd attempt at seduction. Agreeing this offer as a friendly one, Hedda wishes to keep Brack close to herself. She thinks that having a consistent visitor to her new home means a connection to the outside world that relieves her in the face of dull Jürgen. She has no sexual intimacy intention opposite to Brack's has in his mind. Nevertheless, through the end of the play her positive manner, enthusiasm and excitement for life is destructed by this triangular trap. She feels as captured. Her self-obsessed character contrasts to her desires. He C. thinks that "...the boredom in [Hedda's life] is deadening" (449). He further claims that Hedda is in fact afraid of losing her authority and the possibility of any scandal. She wants freedom but does not want to lose anything she has. Lovborg offers to break the chains of captivity but as "her ideal is to live beautifully" (454), she rejects it. Then, when he wants to commit suicide, feeling proud of her destructive selfish manner and with a great satisfaction she asks him to "do it beautifully" with one of her father's pistols. Lovborg's accidental death is far from beauty. Hedda asks Brack about the "vine leaves" on Lovborg's head. This is a symbol in Greek mythology as the vine-leaf crown is used by God Dionysus. He is the god of wine, bacchant and pleasure. He is a drunken man wearing a wreath of vine leaves on his head. Lovborg means freedom, happiness, rebellion, being against of orders, rules and patterns. Lovborg is the person that she wants to be, but when Hedda learns Lovborg was rehabilitated to get rid of alcohol with the influence of Thea Elvstead, she thinks his irresponsible and free nature will be suppressed. Thus, she does whatever she can do to distract him. For this reason, she continuously offers wine to Lovborg and insists on going to Brack's party. It is not because of her hospitality but it is a betraying ruinous plan. If her plan runs, Hedda says Lovborg will return from that party with vine leaves in his hair, and that

means he will become drunk again. Hedda urges him to destruction, imagining him "crowned with vine leaves" like an Olympic hero. However, here the winner is not the one who wears the vine leaves, but it is Hedda who drives him to destruction.

The cunning judge, Brack, realizes that it was Hedda's pistol that found with Lovborg. Thus, he threatens Hedda for any public scandal or she will have to consent his sexual advances. Her shock turns into despair now. Hedda cries out "Oh, what a curse is it that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?" (Act IV 126). "[s]o, I am in your power, Judge Brack," (Act IV 129) says Hedda. This time, she faces a physical captivity rather than a selfish one. He C. states:

"ironically, Hedda, who has had the desire and ambition to manipulate the fate of others, ends up living under someone else's control. It is the reversed pattern of life she cannot submit". (450)

She loses the control of her life because towards the end of the play, she affectionately passes through Thea's hair. "here you are, Thea, sitting with Jürgen—just as you used to sit with Eilert Lovborg," (Act IV 130). She asks if she could inspire Jürgen same as she used to inspire Lovborg. Jürgen says that Thea provides the feeling of inspiration and asks Hedda to sit with Judge Brack, while they study on the manuscript. Lovborg's manuscript is an important symbol that represents the unborn child of Thea and Lovborg. At the beginning, Lovborg describes it as his and Thea's child. The collaboration and friendship between them are referred through this manuscript. Hedda cannot bear the idea of both Thea-Lovborg's and Thea-Jürgen union. Ignoring and freeing themselves from the reputations and speculations around them make Hedda jealous. Burning Thea's hair was only a thread, but Hedda's passion of giving harm to the couple directs her. She burns the manuscript and destructs their future: "Now I am burning your child, Thea! Burning it, curly-clock! Your child and Eilert Loevborg's. I am burning- I am burning your child" (Act IV 130). By destroying that work she accomplishes herself. Furthermore, the manuscript she possesses represents a material hold, she still has on Lovborg's destiny; "the power to shape a human destiny" (Act II 85).

She gradually feels stuck when Jürgen suggests Thea to have a room in Aunt Julia's apartment. Thus, without disturbing Hedda, they can meet there every evening to work on the manuscript. When Hedda says evenings will be boring for her, Jürgen asks the judge to come and have time with Hedda in the evenings. Brack says "every blessed evening with all the pleasure in life, Mrs. Tesman! We shall get on capitally together, we two!" (Act IV 131). Like a wolf in a sheep's cloth, he treacherously implies the sexual implications. Now she is obliged to the sexual blackmail of Judge Brack by her husband. Gaining a chance, Brack attempts to get the control of her body and mind. If Hedda accepts that intimacy, she would lose her dreams and take the risk of scandal that would destroy her prestige in society. Hedda again feels captured and she fails. It is a socio-cultural problem that slowly, silently but intently surrounds Hedda. This time her captor is the sexual oppression.

She realizes that she will never escape from the restrictions and demands of her captor. She feels weak and hopeless about her future freedom and she sees herself in a cage again. Before her suicide she calls out "you the one cock in the basket" (Act IV 131) which refers to her desperate mood. She lost her husband and Eljert so Brack is the only one-cock-in her life-in the basket-. She has no solution, but to take a decision. This scene might be perceived as the climax of the play. She either decides to abolish the chains of captor or remain enslaved. Hardwick (1974) discerns that "Hedda began life with passion and ends a failure" (qtd.in Forshey 26). She does not want to live for another person. She dies for herself as she had lived for herself. She proves herself that she was free and untamed. Death is a real freedom for her at her position. Higonnet considers in her article "*Suicide: Representations of the Feminine in the Nineteenth Century*" that women suicides become a "cultural obsession" in this century. She claims that woman suicides in literature are the results of pressure they encountered and are committed voluntarily in relation to romantic feminine ideas (114). Professor Stone states that people who die by committing suicide do not want to die. They simply want to "stop the pain" (Stone 30). Suicidal attempters have many reasons related to their biological, psychological and social backgrounds. However, rational people like Hedda generally face an insoluble problem. Being desperate and under pressure make them feel stuck like Hedda (Stone 1-38). Suicide can be considered as the easiest way of getting rid of problems and complexities of life, but a selfish act done in misery. As it is an important social problem of the era, it also became a key motive for literature.

Literature links suicide to the dispersion of identity of the characters. The suicide motives for male and female are given differently in literature. For man, stress and responsibilities are the main causes. For woman it is portrayed as an individual emotional act same as Hedda's. Joan Templeton (Ibsen's *Women* 207-230) asserts that one of the reasons of Hedda's suicide is "defiance reaction". She learns from Brack that she was in fact responsible for Lovborg's death. Brack threatens for a cause of shocking scandal. Contrary to her idea of freedom, she became a slave of her own faults and has to face the threat. As she does not want to be involved in a scandal, she feels miserable. Rather than living powerless and cowardly among people without respect and freedom, she chooses to die and does it beautifully. Hedda shot herself cowardly, but beautifully and aesthetically. It is the last expression of her cowardice.

Another reason of her suicide is Hedda's undesired pregnancy. Woman may feel compulsory for the responsibilities and feel depressed with an unexpected pregnancy. For example, Freud connects the reasons of woman suicides in relation to unexpected pregnancy in the following words: "being pregnant is an act of poisoning oneself, bearing a child is drowning and delivering a baby is throwing oneself from a high (130). Hedda's marriage has already been a cage and now, her pregnancy reinforces her potential role as a homemaker, which will be a threat for her freedom. Furthermore, a pregnancy will make her ties between Mr. Tesman, his relatives and the house stronger. Hedda, clearly refuses to serve the patriarchy. As Templeton claims that Ibsen once mentioned in one of his works saying "Only Hedda will not serve. She does not want to live for a man, but like one, i.e., for herself" (*Words on Plays* 28). She neither wanted to be regarded as a subordinated wife of her husband nor accept Brack's sexual intentions over her which are the reflections of the patriarchy. She only serves for her own freedom. Suicide is an expression of her freedom demand. On the other hand, Hedda's only thirty-eight hours is witnessed, which is a very short time to decide the exact reasons for her suicide. Therefore, reviewing the general situation of Hedda can be helpful to enlighten the causes, which pauses the way for her suicide.

2.3. The Canary Minnie Right

Literature reflects the community's traditional and moral identity and the gender patterns in a society. In 1960, America was a male dominated society. At those times, socialism and feminism were popular ideologies, and therefore the focus of most of the American literature was on woman and their lives. In *Trifles* most of the symbols include feministic characteristics of Victorian time. Helena Kaysar calls this type of plays as "feminist drama" which "reveals the complexity of women's chaotic lives and subverts assumed notions of women's social powerlessness" (qtd. in Manuel 57). Manuel also suggests that with a feminist perspective, Churchill focuses especially on searching for individual identity and independence. In this way, *Trifles* becomes important in revealing important facts about social positions of women and their domestic roles. The description of the daily lives of rural women and their individual struggle with patriarchy emphasize gaining political rights for women (Manuel 59). As the main character is under the pressure of her husband's rules, she is automatically supposed as a second-class citizen in a patriarchal society. Her domestic restrictions isolate her from outside world and pushes her to loneliness. The reflections of patriarchal dominance can be observed as domestic oppression in the play. For this reason, Arthur H. Quinn claims *Trifles* to be a "domestic drama" (qtd.in Manuel 57). The subject of a domestic drama is ordinary people and the plot always concerns with ordinary issues such as traditional family, households, lower- and middle-class society and its problems such as poverty, sickness, crime and family strife.

The themes are given with the help of the story-telling technique. The traditional elements in this technique are; setting, plot and characterization. In the play, the setting conveys two realms; the first is time that includes the elements of era and the second is the place that means the kitchen. The main character is introduced with the symbols given in the kitchen, so the description of the kitchen has a great importance. The second traditional element is the plot and subplots. The main plot is the marginalized life of Minnie. The subplots maintain the plot and help to reveal the conflicts and illustrate Mrs. Wright's hard life. Loneliness, isolation, imprisonment, captivity, oppression, female identity and bonding are some of the sub-themes that are told throughout the play. The final traditional drama element is characterization. Mrs. Wright and the other women are important elements in characterization. The symbols are tried

to be given with the themes to support the characterization and the development of the main plot.

The first and the clearest symbol is the title. It emphasizes that the existence of woman is not necessary, it is trifle. From the beginning till the end, humiliating attitudes of man towards women are often repeated. For example, Mr. Hale teases about women and says, "women are used to worrying over trifles" (3). Yet, generally in any crime story, the most important evidences are the things, which seem trifle. It is an irony that although, the men discuss and look for major evidences about the crime, not a single thing has been found in the house apart from trifles. Surprisingly enough, when the women sat near to the messy table and talk about those things such as a loaf of bread, nervously sewn quilt, ruined preserved fruits and a broken birdcage and a strangled bird which is the most noteworthy evidence, they discover much more about the crime than the men do. Like the pieces of a puzzle, they gather the details together to solve the big problem. Though they are the uneducated ones, they are the ones to solve the mystery and find out what happened in the house. Trifles led them to the facts.

Despite never seen or talk throughout the play, her name and surname have symbolic meanings, which emphasize humiliation. Ben-Zvi states about her name that *Minnie* refers to "minni" or "minimize" and refers to someone, who has little value. Their surname *Wright* has a symbolic meaning also. As its pronunciation is same with the word "right", it can be said that she has no right to free herself socially. After the marriage, her husband gains all "her rights under the law", which means deserving all rights legally (153). However, it can be concluded from the perspective of Minnie that she has minimal right to do something.

Isolation and violence are the themes focused. These two themes are bound to each other as isolation is another type in some cases of violence for any living thing. The theme isolation is best given with the description of the setting at the beginning of the play "now abandoned farmhouse" (1). This description creates an impression that once there were people or it was different in the past. It can be understood from the words of Mrs.Hale that the farmhouse is far away from neighbors. She describes it by referring Minnie as she "stayed away because it was not cheerful, she never liked this place, maybe because it's down in a hollow and you do not see the road, a lonesome place" (8).

The second setting is given with the description of the kitchen is described as "gloomy"(1), dark, cold, messy and on the whole an uninviting place with half-done things. The description of the kitchen reveals a lot about Minnie and her hard life. Noe thinks those half-done things such as the "unwashed pans under the sink, the loaf of bread outside the bread box and a dish towel on the table" (1) symbolize Minnie's mental confusion. He states that "these props help to establish the presence of a disturbed consciousness" (39). Moreover, Hedges summarizes the conditions of women on farms that her ideas are presented by Larson in the following words;

"...such details, which evoke the drudgery of a farm woman's work, would not have been lost upon Glaspell's readers in 1917. Hedges tells us what the pail and the stove, along with another detail from the story—a dirty towel on a roller—would have meant to women of the time. Laundry was a dreaded all-day affair. Water had to be pumped, hauled, and boiled; then the wash was rubbed, rinsed, wrung through a wringer, carried outside, and hung on a line to dry. "What the women see, beyond the pail and the stove," writes Hedges, "are the hours of work it took Minnie to produce that one clean towel". (qtd.in Larson 5-11)

The preserves on the shelf are the symbolic objects used as a prompt to tell Minnie's isolation and loneliness. While the men were looking for evidence, they came across some frozen and molded preserves on the shelves. Later, when the women were alone in the kitchen Mrs. Hale notices that there was only one jar of cherries that was still good. Smith claims that the preserves symbolize "her secrets kept under pressure burst from their fragile containers. The single intact jar of cherries symbolizes the one remaining secret, the motive to complete the prosecutor's case" (175). Like those cherries Minnie was "bottled up" in the farmhouse and bears the pressure of John.

Minnie lives under the pressure of marriage and she is captured by the rule of her husband. Captivity, imprisonment and her lack of communication with other people are illustrated through a party telephone circuit. She is forced to stay indoors and not allowed to see anybody in neighborhood. A telephone circuit was planned to set among the neighbors including the Wright family. However, John refused it by stating that he only needs "peace and quiet" (1). Whereas, Smith claims that in the early twentieth century, loneliness and insanity are the most important problems in rural areas especially for women. At that time, either they are rich or poor, the marriage and the

pressure of the responsibilities cause the feeling of imprisonment on females. Communication network may be helpful for Minnie to overcome loneliness. However, being social creates a threat for John as he thinks that Minnie only belongs to him (172-184). Like a bird, she is sentenced to live in her cage-like house alone without communicating with others. Hedge (1986) explains that in order to overcome the loneliness and the boredom of monotonous life, many women buy canaries and hung the cages outside of their houses. The canaries provide music and happiness, a “spot of beauty” that “might spell the difference between sanity and madness” (qtd. in Larson 5-11). They make people happy and become a friend in urban areas. In the play, the canary is an important symbol of Minnie’s character. She listens to it with a great desire for freedom. It is symbolically equated with the desire for freedom. Makowsky (1993) states that the canary symbolizes the pressured cheerful side of Minnie. He also states traditionally bird songs symbolize the voice of the soul (qtd. in Murphy 52). As the two women remember that once Mrs. Wright used to sing like a pretty bird in her younger days, but her husband wipes out her enthusiasm and her passion for life. Mrs. Hale remarks “she was kind of like a bird herself—real sweet and pretty, but kind of timid and fluttery. How—she—did—change” (8). Mhayyal also indicates that “...the bird is a child for her. The canary's voice suppresses the silence of an authoritarian husband and replace the sounds of the unborn children" (717). The canary is also a very important object in emphasizing the violence. When John killed the bird; he destroyed the soul of Minnie. Minnie received it as a message for herself and thought that the real target was herself. Mhayyal claims that “the aim of violence is silencing or muting the voice” (716). That’s why, in this play Minnie thought that it was an act of silencing her voice. As a victim, Minnie reacts in the same way to her husband’s abusive behavior. Both of their reaction is to make the other one silent. Mr. Wright was strangled by the same way as he killed the canary. This displays that Mrs. Wright killed her husband to take revenge for the killing of her bird. On the other hand, Alkalay-Gut claims that she takes her revenge, because her husband prevented her from communicating with others by saying “it is not just because he killed the bird, but because Minnie herself was a caged bird . . . and he strangled her by preventing her from communicating with others" (The Importance of Trifles 6). In both cases, without thinking or planning, she directly takes the revenge for all of the years of abuse and oppression. This time Minnie could defend herself against her husband (1-9).

Another symbol, which also provides a clue on her isolation is knotting the patchwork rather than quilting. Hedge (1986) states that doing patchwork, sewing, braiding carpets are collective activities for women, for getting rid of boredom and becoming sociable in that era (qtd. in Larson 5-11). He also claims that women raise money in this way. In contrast to those ideas, Minnie neither communicates with people nor raises money. In order to comprehend the story better, one may know the techniques of patchwork quilt. It is made with trivia and discarded pieces of clothes. In order to enlarge the squares, those small pieces are matched together, and then sewed one by one. Alkalay-Gut describes the patchwork in the play as "log cabin". She tells the "rectangular scraps are sewn around the original square followed by a series of longer scraps which are measured to the increasing size of the quilt. . . . the general pattern is one that emerges with the quilt" (The Importance of Trifles 2). In the play, the quilt is a symbol of Minnie's life. There are some differences between sewing and knotting. They symbolize legal or moral definitions of the crime. The scraps are taken and put into a nice, neat quilt, but the block she was working on is not neat (1-9). Mrs. Hale says "it looks as if she did not know what she was about!" (7). The unelaborated sewing is a sign of nervousness. She probably did not know what she was doing. At that point, the irony becomes clear and is perceived by the audience. Despite men's inability of finding the clues, they still tease at the women and humiliate them. Yet, the cunning women reveals the incidence and understand everything about the crime. They urgently replied the men in one of the most important quotes that "she was going to --knot it" (9). Here "knot" is an obvious symbol for the crime. This is the decision that Minnie had to make. She either would quilt it, meaning that she would go on enduring the isolation and abusive behaviors of her husband or she would "knot it" means that she would change it. Knot in the quilt is a symbol referring to the knotted rope around her husband's neck. They will 'knot' tell it to anybody. The sisterhood bond among the women is indicated with the word "knot" in the play. They get united and form their own alliance, because they feel empathy for each other (Smith 179). For instance, Mrs. Peters was at first very obedient to law and her husband, but the more she faced with the reality, the more her opinion changes. When she understood that Mr. Wright had killed Mrs. Wright's bird, she recalls a memory of her childhood. A boy killed her kitten in front of her, she says "if they hadn't held me back I would have hurt him" (10). This alludes to the fact that she could understand how Mrs. Wright felt, when Mr. Wright killed her bird. They could understand how lonely it would be without the sound of a bird which prompts

Mrs. Hale to say something about her baby that died and how it would be the same feeling. They begin to convert fully and actually try to cover up all evidence about Minnie's guilt. When the Attorney asks about the bird, they reply as "the cat got it" (7). Here, the cat is a symbol used for Mr. Wright. As the two women understand Minnie's difficult life Mrs. Hale says, "I know how things can be – for women" (10). They began to appreciate the crime and begin to develop a sense of sympathy and pity for Minnie as a victim. The two women's intention is ascertained as the woman bonding. Alkalay-Gut called it as "total feminine community" and Smith called it as "female bonding" (qtd. in Yi-chin 244). Yi-chin claims in his article that it is not always very easy to have a sisterhood bond between the women as there should be some common background or similar frustrations, suffers or dissatisfactions against social relations (244). In this sense, while the two women were investigating the kitchen and criticizing the domestic violence, they, in fact, realize their own value in the patriarchal system. They realize that they are sharing the similar fate with Minnie. This provides a kind of sisterhood bond which only occurs between Mrs. Hale, Mrs. Peters, and even Minnie. There is an unseen solidarity between them. It is clearly understood that when the County Attorney criticizes the mass in the kitchen, Mrs. Hale defends Mrs. Wright by saying "there's a great deal of work to be done on a farm" (4). The answer of the Attorney is rather meaningful that he says, "ah, loyal to your sex, I see" (4). This loyalty brings them together; hide the evidences instead of accusing Mrs. Wright as a murderer.

Finally, Minnie wants her apron brought to the jail. Mrs. Peters finds it a "funny thing to want, for there is not much to get you dirty in jail" (5). Alkalay-Gut points out that the apron symbolizes Minnie's servant spirit (Murder and Marriage 71-81). Her sense of self is still "a serving slave". She used to serve and so, wearing an apron is old habit that she feels secure in it. Her imprisonment still goes on. The only thing that has changed is the place she stays. Living under the pressure of her husband and bored with the responsibilities of households for long years, she is not ready to a new start psychologically. It means she moved from one prison to another. Her imprisonment is not only physical but also spiritual. She suffers from a "learned helplessness syndrome" that her experiences do not allow her to feel free. Seligman explains this syndrome that in such tragic and traumatic situations, people begin to feel a hugshapede inner stress so, they cannot control their behaviours (Seligman 407-411). Minnie's permanent stress

in her inescapable marriage gives harm to her self esteem that she still sustains her old habits. Although, the apron is not a must to have in prison, she still wants to wear it.



2.4. A Wild Bird at the Top, Marlene

Churchill is one of the most important and leading British playwrights of the late twentieth century. She is known for her feminist idealist principals and deals with the gender issues. *Top Girls* is one of her most popular feminists works. In this play, she criticizes the traditional gender roles and sexuality, which disregard and victimize women with racial, sexual, political and economic issues in the modern world. The play does not have a traditional pattern of Aristotle. Several experimental attempts on the dramatic structure are applied. They are new and radical for routine theatrical techniques. She uses “unconventional and innovative theatrical techniques such as manipulating and dismantling the linear plot, setting, place, time and characterization, overlapping dialogues, double casting, are some examples of her new pattern in her plays” (Tyser 14). To exemplify, *Top Girls* consists of three acts, so it is supposed to end when the third act finishes, but it ends with Act Two. This can be an example of her using non-linear plot technique. Another one is the manipulation of time. The play starts with a celebration of Marlene’s promotion as a managing director with six women from history, literature, art and mythology. They are different in regard of their race, nationality, education, experiences and the period they live. They have different cultural backgrounds, values and characteristic features. Each tries to overcome a peculiar obstacle occurred in her lifetime. On the other hand, celebrating a business woman’s success with those guests in a contemporary situation means the manipulation of place. The purpose of disregarding the linear time and gathering all these women at a modern table and let them tell their own oppression tales, show that inequalities against women repeat throughout the history (Reinterpreting History and Restructuring Female Identities in Caryl Churchill’s “Top Girls” and Timberlake Wertenbaker’s “Our Country’s Good”. 725). Churchill also uses “role reversals” and “double casting” in the play. Multiple roles are played by same actresses that means sixteen characters played by seven actresses. Each of the characters plays another different character, in another act, except for Marlene. For example, the actress, who played the role of Isabella Bird, an educated upper-class woman in Act One, also played the role of Joyce, an illiterate lower-class woman in Act Three. Dull Gret also plays Angie in other acts. All those elements, she used in her plays make the play complex to understand but connect the different contexts and subtly suggest continuity in women's history. Role reversals show that the situation of the women is always the same, both in the past and present. All of

them suffer from the same kind of problems for years. They try to survive against all the suppressive attitudes of the patriarchy (Caryl Churchill'in *Oyunlarında Feminist Yansımalar* 31)

The first part of *Top Girls* has some traditional features of post modernism. The plot moves back and forward in time with those historical or imaginary characters. Kramer, in *Top Girls: Post Modern Imperfect*, says that it is a “postmodern eclectic play” (qtd. in Jernigan 235). By introducing the historical characters in Thatcher time, the postmodernist impact is emphasized. However, the second and third acts have realistic aspects that show the challenges of working women and gender inequalities in the modern world (qtd. in Jernigan 235).

“Overlapping dialogues” are another feature of Churchill’s style in this play. This technique includes the characters’ simultaneous talks. The characters interrupt each other randomly, which can cause confusion and make it difficult to understand what is going on. Whereas, there are many reasons for using this technique. First, when people are excited, they can interrupt each other in discourses, and each single word loses its significance. In that case, the emotions are expressed in a confused way. Secondly, according to Naismith people also talk simultaneously, when they have “competing egos” (15). It means they are not really interested in what others say. This is a sign of the selfishness and egoistic sense of the female characters, that they consider themselves at the top in the social hierarchy.

Feminist elements are intensively important in this play. The most impressive point is having no man in any act. All the characters are women. In such a female utopian world, women adapt themselves into the male world. It is a kind of protesting the male *hegemonia* in the traditional theatre and a reflection of the Women’s Liberation Movement in England. It addresses to “the second wave feminist movement” and includes Socialist-Materialist Feministic elements (Caryl Churchill'in *Oyunlarında Feminist Yansımalar* 81-85). The main character Marlene is not a sympathetic and a decent character. At the beginning of the play there are six-women characters, who gather at the ‘Top Girls’ employment agency in order to celebrate Marlene’s promotion. All women are demonstrated as courageous and successful. They only talk about their own success stories that made them top. At this point, the play may be supposed as a liberal feminist one, but then it is revealed that the situation is very different from what

it appears to be. It gradually turns out to represent socialist ideas with the reflection of the sufferings and challenges of all women characters. With an aim to avoid from the oppression of patriarchy, all women adapt themselves into the male world with many sacrifices. For this reason, many scholars such as Aston, Reinelt, Diamond, Fitzsimmons and Erkan consider the play as “a socialist feminist play showing the negative effects of the twentieth century capitalism” (Caryl Churchill’in *Oyunlarında Feminist Yansımalar* 81-86). At this point, a question arises just as Marlene asks “...why are we all so miserable?” (Act I, Scene I, 72). The characters question whether they are victims or heroines. In other words, any woman adopting masculinity into her identity is really at top. In an interview called *Interviews with Contemporary Women Playwrights* by Betsko and Koenig, Churchill says: “What I was intending to do was make it first look as though it was celebrating the achievements of women and then – by showing the main character, Marlene, being successful in a very competitive, destructive capitalist way – ask, what kind of achievement is that? The idea was that it would start out looking like a feminist play and turn into a socialist one, as well. The question the play puts forth is whether Marlene is a real “Top Girl” or not. Is any woman, aiming for masculinity, and gave up from her maternity, familial and gender role, really a “Top Girl”?” (Betsko and Koenig 75-84). The real matter is becoming the slaves of capitalism by relieving the female identity mean a real independency for woman. Economic independence makes women feel more self-confident, but at the same time it makes them slaves to the system. Working in hard conditions to get promotion or having long office hours to earn more causes woman to forget her kind and sensitive female nature, which is a contrast to the sisterhood perception and to the nature of women.

In this play, captivity of capitalism is an important theme. According to Hooks, the situation of all women in a capitalist system is determined by the class differences they belong to. The modern woman is affected from the capitalist system, because she wants to get what she deserves. When she finds a good job in a good position, which is a rare situation, she forsakes everything even her gender features. Having the same rights and earning the same amount of money with man, being independent economically, socially become priorities. Yet, on the other hand, most of the women, belonging to lower class, are the ones whose labour is exploited (52-54). For this reason, the play is based on two symbols; money -power- and gender. The sociological hierarchy is also

associated with those two symbols. The problem of the main character turns around on those two symbols. Money is very important for Marlene. All her story begins with her desire to earn it. When she escapes from home at the age of thirteen, she only wants to control her own life without any pressure, earning a lot of money and become powerful. She wants to get rid of the ties of the working class. She "...hate[s] the working class" (Act III 139). She cannot bear its sanctions and domestic violence which are routines of working class. For her, money and power belong to upper class in the social hierarchy. The desire of being powerful and prosperous makes her wilder and causes her to control people, who are at the bottom of hierarchical range. She wants to be dominant over the people, who belong to the working-class (Tyser 57). As a successful business woman at the top she suppresses the lower-class fellows. That is opposed to the sisterhood perception which is defended by the socialist feminists. In the play, class hierarchy is presented with social discrimination especially with the relationship of two sisters and Angie. Marlene is a dominant, wealthy and independent middle-class woman. Joyce and Angie belong to the low working class. There is a gap between those two spheres. It is best reflected by Marlene's visit to them. She brings some gifts; a perfume for her sister and an unfit dress for Angie. Those gifts demonstrate the symbolic economic differences between the middle and working classes and the two sisters: "Angie's ill-fitting dress reflects her [Angie's] inability to fit into Marlene's life and world" (Tong 135). The unfit dress symbolizes the unfit existence of Angie. Thus, she does not have a place in Marlene's world.

Patriarchy is a big gang above women in the play. The negative effects of patriarchy are shown with the father symbol. Fathers have a really deep impact on each of the characters' lives. They are the dictators at home, so the sufferings of women begin at home. The main character, Marlene's father symbolizes the male gender. She generalizes behaviors of men with regard to her father's. She thinks that her alcoholic father is responsible for her mother's unhappy life. Whereas, Joyce thinks that their father was equally oppressed while "...working in the fields like an animal" (Act III 138). Marlilyn Frye (2008) argues that "oppression can be oppressive to both the oppressed and the oppressor". (qtd. in Ravari and Sivabala 157). Frye also adds "oppressed people who are faced with oppressed situations every day become insensitive to them, which means the oppression that they face becomes invisible to them" (157). Marlene cannot bear the oppressed situation and weakness of her mother.

She feels herself trapped and is determined not to be in a dependent, helpless and submissive position like her mother.

Oppression is another important negative result of patriarchy. In fact, it feeds the bond of sisterhood. That means, the oppressed ones may be better at understanding one another and they may stand close to each other in an empathetic sense just like Mrs. Helge and Mrs. Peters in *Trifles*. However, in a capitalist patriarchal system, the individual success of a woman is not meaningful for both man and woman. This demolishes the compassion, solidarity and support among people. In other words, capitalism and sisterhood are at the two opposed poles. Millett notes that patriarchy creates class distinction and sets the women against each other: "One of the chief effects of class within patriarchy is to set one woman against another...and in present between career woman and a housewife" (38). The harsh nature and competitive pattern of capitalism consume the bonding manner of sisterhood. To be at the top, a woman does not abstain from oppressing even her own fellow. Marlene clearly thinks it is better to oppress than to be oppressed. She once states that: "...you'll be in at the top with new girls coming in underneath you" (Act I, 86). She is so much selfish that while everybody talks about sufferings and miserable life stories, she feels proud of her own promotion. Another example is related to the jealousy of Mrs. Kidd. Marlene's promotion is generally supposed as a male position. Mrs. Kidd wants Marlene to resign from her new position as a boss, otherwise that would be unacceptable for her husband. She dares to threaten Marlene of being maltreated by him. She does not deem any other woman worth for that kind of a position. She directly defends patriarchy. The reasons of interruptions, overlapping dialogues are all related to the lack of bonding between the women characters. They do not listen to each other. They speak parallel things in disconnected dialogues. Westermann mentions in her seminar paper that this kind of a self-centered conversation collapses the communication and turns into a monologue dialogue in the first act (1). There are no interactive speeches except the monologues. The dialogues in some parts of the play are also rude and bullying. Most of them belong to Marlene. She offends others verbally to preserve her authority. She believes that such an aggressive communication style will enhance her power. Once through the end of the play Marlene says "...piss off!" (Act II, Scene III, 113) to Mrs. Kidd. Even while the two sisters argue about their past mistakes, she raises the tension of the conversation and never comes up to any solution. Nell and Win are also resilient towards the bullying

behaviors of Marlene at work. For this reason, they call themselves as “tough birds” (Act II, Scene III, 102). and Marlene as a “smashing”. (Act II, Scene III, 99). Here the word “smash” can be assumed as having a symbolic meaning. The real reason underlying beneath of rude behaviors is the ambition to have a place in the patriarchal system. It makes people more powerful, courageous, but at the same time merciless. The more they are disregarded by the patriarchy, the more they become rude and wild. Ironically enough, time makes them more lonely.

Being at the peak point on top requires loneliness. It has a direct parallelism with capitalism. Margaret Thatcher is one of the most important symbols in the play. She is the first woman president in England and an important symbol of feminist success in the patriarchal system. She goes through the top of career stages with highly super potential. In other words, as Erkan mentions in her book called *Feminist Reflections in Caryl Churchill's Plays* that she symbolizes of “Super Woman” or “Iron Maiden” (Caryl Churchill’in *Oyunlarında Feminist Yansımalar* 1-8). For this reason, “the new image of woman” at the top that Margaret Thatcher symbolizes in her period is questioned (7). In this regard the play does not only criticize the patriarchy; it also deals with the current achievements of feminism. Marlene’s lonely and career-oriented character is best illustrated through Thatcher’s position. Both of their stories depict the loneliness of a modern career woman at top. Kavanagh, Koenig and Betsko think that “Thatcher was respected, but not liked” (qtd. in Caryl Churchill’in *Oyunlarında Feminist Yansımalar* 42). Eventhough Thatcher was a female; she was not appreciated much by the lower-class women. Because they were still ignored by the government despite their expectations. There weren’t any positive developments in women rights including voting and working situations. She did not do much in favor of women and feminist movement. Especially the working-class women were not satisfied with her decisions, but the upper-class women were pleasant. Lips (1999) and Maccoby & Jacklin (1987) claim that “individuals who do not behave according to traditional gender stereotypes are judged as less likable and less attractive than individuals who display gender-appropriate traits and behaviors” (qtd. in Lee 6-7). In *Top Girls*, just like Thatcher, Marlene was respected but not loved much by people. She does not have a real friendship. All the guests at the restaurant are dead or fictional, not contemporary. Nobody in the play likes Marlene except Angie. That is, what she adores is her power, not Marlene’s personality. Here, there is an irony reflected with Marlene’s self-worth.

She adores patriarchy and adapts male values that means she gives up her female tendencies like motherhood. In that sense, she is not a “superwoman” and the play is about her failures rather than her successes. Unlike Thatcher, Marlene has nothing more than her career at agency.

The historical and fictional characters, who take place in the first act have supportive effects in understanding the main character, Marlene. The stories of those women should be closely analyzed as a symbol. Griselda is a fictional character of Geoffrey Chaucer’s “*Canterbury Tales*” written in the thirteenth century. “Patient Griselda” is a woman character who suffers patiently (Chaucer 195-378). In this play she is the symbol of obedience. She was born to a poor family in rural England. Like a fairy story; the poor girl gets married to a marquis. The marquis is a wealthy man with a high status in the society. When the marquis asked Griselda’s father for Griselda’s hand, he couldn’t refuse the marquis’ proposal, thinking this marriage is a blessing for them. If she was asked, she may refuse it, but in order to get rid of their poverty, her father accepts the proposal as shown in the passage below:

GRISELDA: ...and he came and spoke to my father...My father could hardly speak. The Marquis said it wasn’t an order, I could say no, but if I said yes I must always obey him in everything.

MARLENE: That’s when you should have suspected.

GRISELDA: But of course a wife must obey her husband. /And of course I must obey the Marquis. I’d rather obey the Marquis than a boy from the village. (Act I 75)

Traditionally, in a relationship at that time, man has the power, whereas women have the duties to carry out as unpaid domestic slaves or an object. The acceptance of a marriage means a total obedience for Griselda. In that era, man and woman were not considered as equals. The general perception is that a good woman should obey the rules of her husband and once they got married to a woman who is killed in the eyes of law in public sphere (Donovan 31). Thus, Griselda does not see being obedient to her husband expose her to subordination. It seems as natural or traditional, because it is imposed upon the minds of women from the very beginning of their early childhood. In

order to maintain the traditions, she gives no response to her husband's domination. It may be considered as the "learned helplessness" (Seligman 407-411), which is a pessimistic response towards the uselessness of struggling for her rights, because the traits of the system is too strong for her and the traditions requires this kind of manner from a woman. In the dialogues given in the text, she expresses the patriarchal superiority very clearly.

She proves her total obedience with charming proofs. Once, when her husband Walter takes her six-week-old daughter and two-year old son away from her, she says "it was Walter's child to do what he liked with. . . I had promised. . . He wanted to see if I loved him enough" (Act I 77). Eventhough a child is considered to be the most precious thing for a mother, she consents her fate and stays silent. She proves her obedience by obeying her husband's rules and never criticize or protest the unfair decisions. At the end, she passes all the tests. Eventually, she was rewarded by her husband for being obedient and for being patient through all his psychological violence. Griselda was very happy. She tells her happiness with the words below:

GRISELDA: And he stayed behind and put his arms round me and kissed me. / I felt half asleep with shock.

MARLENE: And he said, 'This is your daughter and your son.'

GRISELDA: Yes. . . Well I fainted. Then I cried and kissed the children... Of course, I loved them. . . (Act I 79)

Traditions legalize the male domination and appreciate their power of making females submissive. Staying without showing any reaction to maintain her marriage makes Griselda's virtues on behalf of the society. Being treated like an oobject and testing one in this way mean ignoring her personal feelings and identity. Some of the scholars believe that she was strong enough to get what is precious for her. The patriarchal system tried to break her down, but she endures the psychological oppression and personal deprivation, even paying the price by sacrificing her children.

Lady Nijo's story is just like Griselda's story. She is a Japanese courtesan of the thirteenth century. Strict religious rules and patriarchal structure is dominant in the society, where Nijo lives. Her father, without asking her permission, decides her to be trained as the mistress of the Emperor, when she was fourteen. She was subjected to class-based male oppression in the Church. Believing there is no future outside of the court and not to lose her status among the other courtesans, she takes all abuses for granted in order to gain the Emperor's favor. She says "there was nothing in my life, nothing, without the Emperor's favour" (Act I 66). When she says once the Emperor tore her dress, Marlene refers it with a current word "rape", but Lady Nijo rejects it as raping and accepts the oppression natural. She accepts the rules of patriarchy. Being exposed to the abuses of the Emperor does not disturb her. She still supports the Emperor, and answers Marlene's question with the words below:

MARLENE. Are you saying he raped you?

NIJO... No, of course not, Marlene, I belonged to him, it was what I was brought for from a baby. I soon found I was sad if he stayed away. It was depressing day after day not knowing when he would come. I never enjoyed taking other women to him . . . my father was a very religious man. Just before he died he said to me, 'Serve His Majesty, be respectful, if you lose his favour enter holy orders' (Act I 57).

Whereas, unlike Griselda, who chooses to remain submissive, Nijo chooses to take revenge by having secret affairs with other men. In this way, she cheats and protests the Emperor as shown in the following quotation from the play:

NIJO. . . My first child was His Majesty's, which unfortunately died, but my second was Akebono's...Now His Majesty hadn't been near me for two months so he thought I was four months pregnant when I was really six, so when I reached the ninth month / I announced I was seriously ill. . . It was only a girl but I was sorry to lose it. Then I told the emperor that the baby had miscarried because of my illness, and there you are. The danger was past. (Act I 70)

She gives birth for four times. Her first was the Emperor's child, and the rest three were from her lovers. As an illegitimate child may be an end for her luxurious life in the Church. With an attempt for surviving and going on as the courtesan of the Emperor, she leaves her three children from her lovers. She felt regret later, because her attitudes were opposed to the concept of motherhood. She sacrificed female nature for the sake of her luxurious life. Regretfully, she asks Griselda about her feelings for her children as given below:

NIJO. But did you feel anything for them?

GRISELDA. What?

NIJO. Did you feel anything for the children? . . . Nobody gave me back my children. (Act I,79)

These questions symbolise her grief. She was rebel through the orders of males. She wants to be free without any submission. At the *Full Moon Ceremony*, which is a traditional ceremony that is held for men to beat their wives with a stick across their loins so that they would give birth to sons instead of girls. This kind of mistreatment against women makes her mad and she attacks to beat the Emperor before he beats her. Upon this, the Emperor orders all the men to beat her and her supporters. Her dare is quiet courageous in Kamakuran times in Japan and can be a real feministic act. (Westermann 6-7). As a result of her subversive act, she was punished not to be close to the Emperor. She was deprived of her three children and she couldn't see them any more. She was isolated and obliged to spend rest of her life as a Buddhist nun alone. Here the most important difference between those two women: Griselda is rewarded because of her obedience, Lady Niho is punished because she dared to rebel against the authority. The message is very clear and it is suggested that if you obey the rules, you are rewarded otherwise you are punished very severely.

Pope Joan is a mythological character lived between 854 and 856 (Westermann 2). She wants to get educated, but the girls at that time were considered as inferior citizens by the church, which represents the patriarchal system. In order to get a proper

education, she disguises as a man and works for the Church. She rose to the top of the religious hierarchy and becomes a Cardinal and then the Pope. As a pope, Joan successfully defeats the discrimination towards the women. She uses her power to control the males, but sometimes she was in a dilemma as shown in the passage below:

JOAN: I had thought the Pope would know everything. I thought God would speak to me directly. But of course he knew I was a woman. . . . And I realised I did know the truth. Because whatever the Pope says, that's true. . . . Yes, I enjoyed being Pope. I consecrated bishops and let people kiss my feet. I received the King of England when he came to submit to the church. Unfortunately there were earthquakes, and some village reported it had drained blood, and in France there was a plague of giant grasshoppers, but I don't think that can have been my fault, do you? . . . The grasshoppers fell on the English Channel and were washed up on shore and their bodies rotted and poisoned the air and everyone in those parts died. (Act I 68-69)

It is believed that Churches are sensible towards the human equivalence, but at the same time, they contribute the preservation of the male dominance. The Pope, is a divine person, who is the embodiment of the Christ on earth. Now, she is the Pope, but the truth is not ordered by God. She does not have any divine power such as speaking with the God or she has never had the experience of spiritual power. Joan also begins to think that the cause of the natural disasters is her trick herself. She supposes that even nature protests her trick as it is believed that a woman cannot become a Pope. She wonders if the reason is because God knows her real gender or it is just a coincidence. That is the question, even Joan cannot answer. It is believed that churches are sensible towards human equivalence but at the same time they conserve the male domination. Her success turns into danger with her pregnancy. She has a very minimal knowledge about her body and capacity as a woman. Due to the fact that she was disguised as a man and she has been living in an environment full of men since she was twelve. So she ignores her pregnancy thinking of just getting fat because of her luxurious lifestyle as a Pope. The passage below is very remarkable to reveal her situation in a male-dominated, religious hierarchy:

MARLENE. Didn't you think of getting rid of it?

JOAN. Wouldn't that be a worse sin than having it? But a Pope with a child was about as bad as possible... But I wouldn't know how to get rid of it.

MARLENE. Other Popes had children surely.

JOAN. They didn't give birth to them.

NIJO. Well you were a woman.

JOAN. Exactly and I shouldn't have been a woman. Women, children and lunatics can't be Pope. . . And the baby just slid out onto the road... They took me by the feet and dragged me out of town and stoned me to death. (Act I 69-71)

In fact Popes can have children as long as they do not give birth to themselves. Here the real problem is woman fertility. As a result, she was stoned to death. Male superiority and gender discrimination is clearly recognized in her story. Similar to Marlene in *Top Girls*, being female becomes a hinderance for her career and leads to her isolation in the society. The regrets of Joan shows her protest against the gender injustice.

Isabella Bird is another symbolic character representing modern woman of the nineteenth century. She was a Scottish traveller and a writer lived between 1831 and 1904 in Scotland, in Victorian times. As opposed to the traditional woman role, she had an adventurous spirit. Her surname "Bird" has a symbolic meaning that she is as free as a bird. As an explorer, she travelled all over the world. She gives a message to the people that a woman can be "mobile" (McCloskey 17). She had no economic worries. During her childhood, she had many illnesses and had a really high level of depression. The doctors advised her to travel. Her father financially supported her. She was an active religious woman. Although, she defended personal freedom, she never recommend sexual independence for others. As a Victorian woman, she also got married, but had no children. When her husband died, she was free from the domestic pressure and began to travel again. Thus, Isabella's decision to get marry shows that she approves the traditional values of her society. For this reason, she accuses herself of being selfish that she traveled the world without committing herself to domestic duties. Travelling prevents her from having close relationships with the people in her family. She also feels regret about neglecting her family (Westermann 7-11). She pays the

price with the feeling of guilt and self-denial from the enjoyment of traveling by using her health and her grief for her dead husband. In order to get rid of the regrets of leaving domesticity for the sake of travelling, she dedicates herself to some charity works and help people. She nurses people during an epidemic influenza. At the diner table, Isabella is the only character whose works were appreciated by others. She had many tragedies and physical struggle in her life, but never forced to be controlled or abused by a man (Reinterpreting History and Restructuring Female Identities in Caryl Churchill's "Top Girls" and Timberlake Wertenbaker's "Our Country's Good". 158).

Dull Gret is a character inspired from the painting "Dulle Griet" by Pieter Breughel. She was created as an alternative character for "New Woman". She symbolizes the leader and brave side of woman. A murderous invading army kills her ten children. Therefore, she calls all her neighbors to Hell and fight with the devils. Calling her neighbors to a fight means the support of all other women, who are deprived of their rights and suppressed. It shows the importance of being together. And also it means one could be stronger, when groups of people become unique. The devils in hell symbolize all the problems that women face. They never give up and let anything distract them from fighting for their rights. Although the victory is not guaranteed at the end of the fight, they fought without hesitation to take the revenge of her children's death. In the end, she manages to take revenge of her children. In this respect, her act of fighting can be regarded as an effort against the patriarchal system.

Towards the end of the first scene, it is understood that all women characters share the same fate, which connect them to each other. Nearly all, except the blind obedient Griselda, react to the patriarchal oppression. Their effort was to beat the patriarchy by adopting the general behaviors of male or be totally obedient to males. Despite their effort, they are victimized by the patriarchal system, their own female fertility features or trapped in the social construction of feminine traits or betrayed to their own bodies. Socialist feminists and most of the characters consider patriarchy as the biggest and common factor in woman oppression (Aston 9-10). Therefore, the solution always found out assuming the masculine standpoints. For example, most of them usurp the roles related to men and are the victims, who directly pay the cost of their fathers' oppression. The experience of those six women exemplifies how male domination in the patriarchal system rule for centuries. Individual fights of these women

will never come to any achievement, because the system is too well rooted to change. In this play, the winners and the losers are all women fought against the social taboos. Without any hesitation of losing their own feminine identity, they attain male roles that never satisfy any of them. For this reason, nobody is happy. Women should rethink and reshape their way of struggling against the patriarchal system.

The human being instincts cannot be isolated from the gender roles. That means maternal instincts cannot be separated from woman. In *Top Girls*, women have some problematic motherhood experiences. There are connections between economic and social factors with maternal experiences. Most of them appear to be in a dilemma. They try hard to get rid of their gender roles imposed to them by patriarchy; however, they either attempt to adopt masculine attitudes or take all responsibilities of their children as expected by the patriarchy. That means they remain captured in a trap of patriarchal capitalist world. As Erkan claims that the results of adopting masculinity oblige women to abandon femininity (Reinterpreting History and Restructuring Female Identities in Caryl Churchill's "Top Girls" and Timberlake Wertenbaker's "Our Country's Good". 725). They cannot behave as a woman expected from the stereotype of their own gender. For example, Marlene sacrifices her own female identity and gives up the most peculiar instinctive feature; the motherhood. The problems at work and the economic worries cause Marlene to ignore her female instincts. In Act Two, it is revealed that she has an illegitimate daughter, Angie. When she learns her pregnancy, she is afraid of becoming dependent on domestic life. The best thing for her is to make a choice between her career and motherhood. (Westermann 11-12) She gives her baby to Joyce and escapes from the trap of motherhood. Her choice can be considered as masculine because leaving her baby is contrary to the nature of motherhood. Her success does not bring positive achievements. She loses her potential of female identity, values, feminine roles and adopts what males appreciate (Reinterpreting History and Restructuring Female Identities in Caryl Churchill's "Top Girls" and Timberlake Wertenbaker's "Our Country's Good". 722). The struggle of beating the well-established patriarchal system needs more than imitating male's roles and forgetting women's own nature and identity. In the play, pregnancy affects all women except Dull Gret and Isabella Bird. Lady Nijo, Patient Griselda and Marlene share a similar maternal experience: the loss of children to patriarchy. For most women children become the most important thing in their lives. Children are at the center of the

women's lives. If one gives importance to something, it becomes weakness for him/her. Thus, for most women being mother means having weaknesses but at the same time women learn to be strong for the sake of their child(ren).

Abortion is another symbol in the play. Generally, it is an important problem for women. After a sexual relationship, the risk of pregnancy, the feeling guilty and regret of an abortion operation are basic consequences for a woman to deal with. In case of any illegitimate pregnancy, many social sanctions may occur. Another important problem especially for a business woman is the break given during this process. In a capitalist system, competition and ambition are vitally important for workers, therefore leaving the arena is not an easy move for a rival. For many women, sometimes, abortion seems an urgent solution. As far as it is understood from the extract that she had a few experiences of abortion.

MARLENE: I've had two abortions, are you interested? Shall I tell you about them? Well I won't, it's boring, it wasn't a problem. I don't like messy talk about blood/and what a bad . . . time we all had. I don't want a baby. I don't want to talk about gynaecology. (Act III, 135)

Marlene's impression above reveals her hatred for pregnancy. Refusing the baby is not only a reaction to give a birth, but also it is a reaction to the creation of woman. She criticizes the creation of woman and thinks that it is injustice for woman to feel guilty and regretful. These are the basic consequences for a woman to cope with after a sexual relationship and they isolate her from society. Whereas men are free from these feelings. Marlene denies her own capacity as a woman and thinks fertility is a weakness for women. As she is a career-oriented person, she thinks a baby is a barrier in front of her career.

Marriage is also a symbol of patriarchy. As emancipation is important for Marlene, marriage is a handicap for her career in her life. It requires responsibilities at home, which mean family, children and domestic routines. For this reason, she gives her daughter to Joyce. The relationship between Marlene and Joyce can be considered as a married couple. Marlene has a role of father, while Joyce is a mother for Angie. Unlike Marlene, Joyce is so "famine, motherly, sacrificing and suitable for the traditional female traits" (Slavkin & Stright, 23-37). While Marlene becomes top in her career by

isolating herself from the womanish responsibilities, her sister sacrifices herself for the sake of her family, raising the child. Marlene clearly thinks that marriage is a great handicap for business life and her career. In the first scene, Marlena talks to Jeanine, who is an applicant and wants to be installed to a better position. When Marlene learns her desire to get married, she criticizes her in order not to tell her marriage plans at a job appointment. She says this would have a negative effect on the employer. Success requires sacrifices from her personal life. Eventhough, Marlene has a job that help people in finding jobs, her attitude towards Jeanine lacks any sense of empathy and solidarity as well. She talks to Jeanine more like a boss talking to her employee and criticizes her preferences.

Clothes and costumes are have important symbols that show the different life style of women sitting around the table. Joan's disguise has a symbolic meaning, which refers to conceale the female features from the male suppression. Sözalan claims that "[...] her disguise stands as a metaphor for the price, women have to pay for full entry into the symbolic: a complete denial of the feminine for the sake of identification with man" (qtd. in Westermann 9). Dull Gret also wears both an apron and an army uniform. She attacks the patriachy with her apron in spite of the general belief that women cannot fight. Her apron symbolizes her domesticity that she has not lost yet. Her warrior costume symboliyses male strength that resists the male oppression. As a modern businesswoman Marlene, she prefers to wear dress at work, "I don't wear trousers in the office/I could but I don't" (Act I 62). The reason may be the desire to feel herself as a woman and be respected in the business arena. For Griselda wears a special wedding dress, but when her husband forces her to go back to her father's house, she was only wearing a slip. It was her husband's loyalty test. Finally, as a reward, she was dressed in "cloth of gold" (Act I 79) the clothes are symbolic items used to reflect the patriarchal suppression of her husband. The layers of Nijo's gowns indicate her social status at Empeoror's court, but when things went wrong, she was only allowed to wear thin silk dress instead of multilayered gowns (Westermann 9-10).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to determine the feminist elements in the three plays *Hedda Gabler*, *Trifles* and *Top Girls* inscribed by Ibsen, Susan Glaspell and Carly Churchill respectively, concerning the bird symbol. Though the use of bird symbol is a well-known literary tool, it is unique to find the same symbol occurring in similar thematic motifs within three works of different authors. Within the context of the present thesis, as an ultimate notion, which could readily be applicable to all three plays, women characters appear to be surrounded by the captors throughout each play. The main captor, pointed out by all the playwrights in this sense, is the patriarchal system. Patriarchy is the biggest problem, and it is the main cause of the characters' sufferings. In order to get rid of the chains of patriarchal captor, the female characters of the three plays struggle in different ways. While most of the secondary characters either adopt the male behaviors and disguise as a man or show consent to the demands of the patriarchy and become obedient, the protagonists all try to overcome the sanctions of subordination of patriarchy and destruct the pressure of male hegemony. To exemplify this recent portrait of the characters, it would be most appropriate to reflect each of their specific situation; Hedda gives up the struggle and suicide, Minnie murders her violent captor, and Marlene imitates the masculine behaviors in a capitalist system and sacrifices her female instincts. Although their stories are all different from each other, the common aim of the protagonists is to take revenge from the patriarchy.

The roots of the patriarchy are based on many traditional, cultural, economic and social dynamics which are very rigid and powerful. It manifests itself in many different ways such as capitalism, class distinctions, gender roles, all of which lead each character to some chaotic deeds like suicide, homicide, or isolation. Indeed, they reject to serve patriarchy. They are totally different from the domestic role of traditional woman. For instance; for all the female characters, marriage is a cage. They feel themselves captured, which means they are stuck with the responsibilities of their gender roles. Marriage refers to the patriarchal captor which restricts women from freedom and obliges her to the domestic duties. Obedience to the patriarchy is not a suitable feature for the characters in the plays. They all want to be free. They think that disobedience is the key for their freedom. For this reason, each of them looks for a

solution to get rid of the captured situation they are in. Hence, they either escape from home like Marlene or murder the oppressor like Minnie or commit suicide like Hedda.

In Ibsen's play, Hedda Gabler lives in Norway. Suicide is a very important social and governmental problem here. Because of the geographical reasons, there is no sun shine for several months. A current study reports that:

“both economic and climatic variables are strongly correlated with suicide rates...the climatic effect is stronger than the economic one concerning both sexes, but the relative effect of climate in comparison to economic variables was higher for females (ratio climate to economy effect: 2.44 in females vs. 1.39 in males)” (doi.org).

The dark period sometimes drives people mad and causes them to lose their self-control. They show some traumatic stress reactions, have sleeping problems, mental disorders, prolong their grief and anxiety. For this reason, people tend to attend suicidal attempts. As Ibsen once mentioned;

"Anyone who wishes to understand me fully must know Norway. The spectacular but severe landscape which people have around them in the north, and the lonely shut-off life- the houses often lie miles from each other- force them not to bother about other people, but only their own concerns, so that they become reflective and serious, they brood and doubt and often despair. In Norway every second man is a philosopher. And those dark winters, with the thick mists outside- ah, they long for the sun!" (mnc.net).

Hedda feels captured and thinks that she has no way to find a solution. Hence, the best way to escape from the desperate situation appears to be suicide. In fact, the real curiosity is Hedda's mother. Throughout the play her mother has never been mentioned but her dead father's presence can be felt in each scene. If it is not because of the death during the childbirth or any health problem, there is a disgraceful offense in her mother's death such as suicide. The Norwegian psychoanalysts Ingjald Nissem and Gail Finney claim that Hedda has problems in perceiving her own sex as a female. Her lonely growth isolates her from those traditional woman role models around her. Thus, when all the reasons are reviewed, Hedda's reluctance of being a mother is not a surprise (Tepmleton 207). Freud explains that pregnancy is not an easy situation for

women, especially when it is unexpected. Sometimes they feel poisoned or drowned or throw themselves from height (Freud 162). Hedda's life as a married woman traps her into a house just like a cage. Furthermore, her pregnancy reinforces her potential role as homemaker which will be a threat for her freedom. If she has Tesman's baby, her ties with her husband and her relatives, and moreover her house will get stronger. She ignores her pregnancy because she thinks that a baby is a hindrance for their freedom. Although she is pregnant, she does not tell it to anybody and keeps it as a secret just like Marlene.

In Carly Churchill's play *Top Girls*, the patriarchal capitalism is the biggest captor for Marlene. She is so self-centered that she does not want to get the responsibilities of a baby. Just as Hedda, she keeps her pregnancy as a secret until the birth. The capitalist sanction of working long hours separates her from womanish things such as motherhood, sisterhood, marriage and familial life. She loses her own identity and becomes a wild, rude and selfish person. She does not want to get married or have a routine familial life. Having children and sustaining the maintenance of a family while working within bad conditions is not suitable for her.

In Susan Glaspell's play *Trifles*, the situation is vice versa. Minnie longs for her own freedom, but the captor is her husband. She is isolated from the society and marginalized by her husband. She wants her life to be more meaningful with a baby. But her husband does not care about her needs. Minnie feels herself valueless, oppressed and abused. Mr. Wright is so dominant that he sets psychological and physical pressure over Minnie. For example; he does not want to have the telephone circuit in order not to lose control. She has a low self-confidence, feels lonely and isolated from the society. Mhayyal says it has considerable effect on people. "Psychological violence leaves its scars on the soul as the physical violence leaves its scars on the body" (Mhayyal 8). Killing the canary is an example of physical violence. Feeling a great suffer, she kills John without any hesitation.

At that point, as the aim of this thesis is to investigate the characteristic features of the three main female characters within the context of bird image, regarding a feminist perspective, the supportive details show that Minnie feels herself like a canary. A canary is a cage bird that sings all day long with a cheerful sense. Minnie loves her canary for two reasons. First, she feels it like her own soul. When she was young,

before marriage, she used to sing for a choir. She was cheerful and joyful for life. Second, she identifies the canary with her unborn children. She loves that little bird as a child. However, when John kills the canary, Mrs. Wright assumes it as something against her personality. She cannot stand or ignore her husband's violent behavior. She loses her control and sacrifices her freedom killing her husband at the expense of going into the jail. This way, finally she gets her revenge from her husband for his oppressive behaviors and violence. As a cruel, inconsiderate husband, Mr. Wright is the murderer of himself. All his bad behaviors induce Minnie to commit homicide. Now she is free but guilty. She transfers from one cage to another. She goes from her isolated farm into jail, which without any doubt, makes Minnie a canary in cage.

As for Hedda, the most appropriate bird symbol proper for her is a falcon since the name of the house is not a coincidence with her self-ordained, free spirit and rebellious feature. She feels herself like a falcon. Falcons are well known wild birds that have smart free spirits and their nature is not available for living in a cage. They live at the extremely high peaks of mountains and they prefer to be alone. Falcon is also a carnivore animal that hunts beautifully with nice hunting skills. Hedda's background and her father's job all support her characteristic feature. As her father brought up her as a soldier, she was taught to ride horse and use pistols. These skills symbolize military and masculinity. Instead of learning the domestic womanish responsibilities of wifehood or motherhood, she chooses to be different from the traditional woman portfolio. She is rude, selfish to others. She does not have any real friend. When somebody wants to be close to her, she tries to learn weaknesses of that person and uses these for her own aims. She does not care about the others and wants to manipulate them. She is wild enough as a falcon and avoids showing her helplessness to others. For this reason, she silently but beautifully commits her suicide.

Last but not least, Marlene is the wild one. The writer does not mention any specific bird name for her but at the office, other girls criticize her as "wild". The agency is a nest-like place for girls that, on the other hand, represents a cage. The effects of capitalism are so clear. Marlene's promotion success makes her feel proud of herself. She is self-centered and so much ambitious that she is just focused on her own success. Capitalism is a big handicap which does not let woman be sensible, kind or merciful. For this reason, Marlene gets used to living in man's wild nature and begins to

behave as one of them. She is not merciful for other girls or does not want to hear their marriage plans. The sisterhood bonding is not meaningful for her. Marlene kills her own female identity and loses those kind female features. She protects her career from every threat that she does not even want to grow her own daughter.

All in all, the female characters are not as free as a bird and they are victimized under the pressure of their oppressors' captivity. All try to find out a solution but unfortunately their sufferings never stop. They are transferred from one cage to another. It is a dream for them to get any relief for their free souls as they are caged. In this sense, from the feminist perspective, bird symbol can be acknowledged as suitable for the female characters because captivity and the pressure of patriarchal system with its sanctions are told in different stories but in similar ways. Although the source of the three of the female characters' sufferings are the same, the symbolic bird image and the stories are different from each other, which shows the patriarchal oppression has been a problem for woman so far and will continue to victimize woman in the future.

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