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**ELEMENTS OF FEMALE BILDUNGSROMAN IN TEZER
ÖZLÜ'S NOVELS *THE CHILLY NIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD*,
JOURNEY TO THE END OF LIFE, AND MARGARET
ATWOOD'S *THE BLIND ASSASSIN***

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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

**Danışman
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Elements of Female Bildungsroman in Tezer ÖZLÜ's Novels "The
Chilly Nights of Childhood", "Journey to the End of Life" and
Margaret Atwood's "The Blind Assassin"

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Yukarıda adı geçen öğrenci tarafından hazırlanan *Elements of Female Bildungsroman...* başlıklı bu çalışma 17/12/2014 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği/oyçokluğu ile başarılı bulunarak, jürimiz tarafından yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Tezin Adı Tezer ÖZLÜ'nün "Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri", "Yaşamın Uçuna Yolculuk" romanlarında ve Margaret Atwood'un "Kör Suikastçı" romanında Kadın Oluşum Romanı Ögeleri

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Tezer Özlü'nün romanları *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*, *Yaşamın Uçuna Yolculuk* ve Margaret Atwood'un *Kör Suikastçı* romanlarındaki erkek egemen toplumdaki kadın sorunlarını inceler. Bu üç roman, çocukluğun ilk dönemlerinden kendini gerçekleştirme kadar olan dönemle ilgilenen edebi tür "Kadın Oluşum Romanı" ile olan yakınlığı kapsamında incelenir. Bu romanlardaki olgunlaşma süreci roman karakterleri açısından oldukça problemlidir. Tezer Özlü romanlarında yoğun otobiyografik öğeler kullansa da, asla açık bir şekilde başkarakterini tamamen kendi yaşamına dayandırdığından bahsetmez. Tezer Özlü'nün ilk romanında kendini gerçekleştirme kadın başkarakter tarafından ulaşılmadığından dolayı, ikinci romanı da kadın oluşum romanı açısından incelenir. Özlü ve Atwood'un romanları arasında bazı yakın benzerlikler vardır. İkisi de tüm hayatları boyunca çöküşler yaşayan bir kadın karakteri tanımlar. Margaret Atwood, romanında erkekler tarafından kurban edilen Iris'in hikâyesini anlatır. Iris'in etrafındaki olaylara olan körlüğü, diğer kadın karakterlerin acı çekmelerine sebep olur.



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Tezin İngilizce Adı Elements of female Bildungsroman in Tezer ÖZLÜ's Novels "The Chilly Nights of Childhood", "Journey to the End of Life" and Margaret Atwood's "The Blind Assassin"

SUMMARY

This study analyses the problems of women in a male dominated society in Tezer Özlü's novels *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *The Journey to the End of Life* and Margaret Atwood's novel *The Blind Assassin*. These three novels are examined in terms of their connection to the literary genre *Female Bildungsroman* which deals with the maturation period of a woman from her early childhood to her self-actualization. This process of maturation appears in these novels as highly problematic for the characters. Tezer Özlü uses intense autobiographical elements in her novels; however, she never explicitly says that her central character is entirely based on her life. For the reason that self-realization in Tezer Özlü's first novel is not achieved by the female protagonist, her second novel is also studied to refer her works as female Bildungsroman. There are some close similarities between Özlü's and Atwood's novels. They both portray a female character who experiences downfalls during their entire lives. Margaret Atwood narrates the story of Iris who gets victimized by men in the novel. Iris's blindness toward the events cause pains which other women characters suffer from.

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INTRODUCTION

Bildungsroman portrays the development of the central character in a novel. Women writers and their central characters with them have abandoned traditional characteristics of Bildungsroman. They are determined to remove the idea that Bildungsroman tells the story of a male hero and his development in a world ruled by men. However the more women enter the business world and the more women start having a place in the society apart from their family lives, the more they want to read their stories in literature. They want to abolish the features of a male dominated genre. The development of the protagonist does not necessarily follow the same pattern in male and female Bildungsroman. The society may condemn the actions of a female protagonist if she attempts to reach her self-realization with the same way a male protagonist does. For this reason, critics try to find different definitions for novels of development.

The first chapter titled *The Characteristics of Bildungsroman and Female Development Novel* presents different definitions of Bildungsroman which focus on one particular aspect of the genre and a common plot which is mostly used by authors creating works in this genre. It also shows the problem of reckoning a work of art as Bildungsroman as a result of sometimes highly inclusive and sometimes highly exclusive side of the genre. While some critics require a novel to include all the features brought by *Wilhelm Meister*, other critics exclude even *Wilhelm Meister* which is considered by many as the prototype of Bildungsroman. In such an intricate genre, another problem comes to surface on the issue of defining female development novel. The second section of the first chapter presents differences between male Bildungsroman and female development novel. I will try to support the idea of female development novel as a new and dissimilar genre compared to male Bildungsroman.

The second chapter analyzes Tezer Özlü's novels *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life* as female Bildungsroman. I have concluded that these two novels should both be studied at once to demonstrate the elements of female

Bildungsroman clearly. Although Özlü's first novel illustrates an unambiguous conflict between the narrator's expectations and the realities of the society, it seems to lack a clear solution for this problem at the end of the novel. However, the second novel, in which the narrator makes an inner journey toward her real self, comes up with a self-realization which is fundamental for a work to be regarded as Bildungsroman. While the first novel enlightens the period from her childhood to her late thirties, the second novel picks up where the first novel leaves off. The first section of the second chapter presents the literary style of Tezer Özlü with quotations of critics some of whom are Özlü's close friends such as Leyla Erbil. Erbil's analyses are important because of the intense autobiographical elements in Özlü's novels. As a close friend of Özlü who knows the narrator well in real life, Erbil draws parallels between the narrator and Tezer Özlü.

The second section presents Tezer Özlü's thoughts about women in Turkey and her approach to feminism. Özlü rebels any kinds of limitations placed on individuals. As this is the case, in a country where women are hindered and kept out of social and financial life, Özlü has a few things to say about this situation. I consider it important to attract attention on Özlü's feminist perspective. Even if she says that feminism is out of question in a country like Turkey, her thoughts reflect that she supports the increasing role of women in Turkey.

The third section examines Özlü's first novel *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*. Her familial background is studied in terms of her relationships with the members of the family. As the characters like the father and the grandmother are emphasized in Özlü's novels, I have examined and given more importance to these characters than the narrator's mother or her siblings. These characters are not portrayed in detail and it can be inferred that the narrator is not affected as greatly by them as she is affected by her father and her grandmother.

In the second chapter, the plot of the movie *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* is also given as Özlü seems to be highly affected while watching this movie. When it is studied, it is clearly seen that there are many similarities in features between Tezer

Özlü and the leading character. They were both locked up in a psychiatric clinic because of their incompatibilities with the social order. Özlü's empathy with this character is highlighted and their similar sides are emphasized.

The third chapter examines Tezer Özlü's second novel *Journey to the End of Life* which can be seen as a sequence of her first novel since with this novel, the elements of Bildungsroman are completed. This chapter is divided into several parts to attract attention on different themes she uses to form this novel. The narrator makes a journey to recognize and understand herself better. She finds out unknown parts of her personality of which she has not been aware since her childhood. The narrator does not inform us about her family life as much as she did in her first novel.

The fourth chapter called *The Blind Assassin* which is the novel of a mixture by Margaret Atwood examines the oppression women suffer from. The male society uses every possible tradition and establishment against women. The novel narrates the journey of Iris to her self-actualization. Iris's blindness toward the sufferings around her is pointed out by Atwood. Even though autobiographical elements in this novel is less intense than those of Tezer Özlü, the similarities between Özlü and Atwood become apparent. The main argument in this thesis will be to show how much and how "equally" women suffer even though their birth of places and cultures are entirely dissimilar.

CHAPTER ONE- THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BILDUNGSROMAN AND FEMALE DEVELOPMENT NOVEL

1.1 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO *BILDUNGSROMAN*

In the eighteenth century a new genre which primarily focused on the protagonist's spiritual and psychological development emerged in Germany. The prototype of the genre is regarded to be *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, published in 1795–96. This genre is called *Bildungsroman* a German word that is used in English, as well. It is a common opinion that Bildungsroman was introduced into the language of literary scholarship and popularized by Wilhelm Dilthey. It has been the topic of further discussions among critics since then as there is not a definite consensus on its definition. There are even greater disagreements between the traditional Bildungsroman and the female Bildungsroman which has emerged as a new genre with its distinct differences. For instance, The Oxford Companion to English Literature, 7th ed., defines Bildungsroman as:

The German term for an 'education novel' (education being understood in a broad sense that includes self-formation or personal development); thus a significant sub-genre of novel which relates the experiences of a youthful protagonist in meeting the challenges of adolescence and early adulthood. Such works, sometimes referred to in English as "coming-of-age-" novels, typically develop themes of innocence, self-knowledge, sexual awakening, and vocation (Birch, 2009: 127).

Edwin J. Barton and Glenda A. Hudson also give a definition of the term as:

The German word *Bildungsroman* literally means 'development novel.' Literary critics tend to use the term interchangeably with apprenticeship or coming-of-age novel, a work of fiction presenting the development of

a protagonist from childhood or adolescence to maturity (Barton and Glenda, 1997: 22).

In these definitions, it should be noted that education is not merely provided by official schools of a government. Any kind of getting more knowledgeable than the previous self is considered to be an improvement for the character. The protagonist needs to gain experiences in various fields and obtain more information about the world. It will be discussed later in this study that Bildungsroman is regarded as a process that ends in “early adulthood”. However, it will be argued later that this is not the case for the female Bildungsroman considering that such a limited time period is not enough for a female character to structure her personality.

One of the characteristics of Bildungsroman, on which many critics put emphasis, is its autobiographical aspect. To give an example, Golban’s definition of Bildungsroman includes autobiographical elements and emphasizes the education of the protagonist. Golban also determines the requirements of the character’s education. What he means by “learning” is to gain a philosophical and spiritual perspective on “the art of living”. Golban maintains that the general definition of Bildungsroman includes autobiographical elements and tells the life of an immature character who tries to find out the real meaning of life and the earth, also tries to determine a philosophical aspect about life in a process typically from teenage years to adulthood (2003: 9). Franco Moretti, in *The Way of the World: the Bildungsroman in European Culture*, points out that the traditional Bildungsroman hero should be a youngster: “Youth is both a necessary and sufficient definition of these heroes... Youth or rather the European novel's numerous versions of youth, becomes for our modern culture the age which holds the ‘meaning of life’: it is the first gift Mephisto offers Faust” (2000: 4). Moretti highlights that Bildungsroman puts youth in its center and revolves around it. There is no need to say that a mature man or woman cannot become the protagonist of a novel written in Bildungsroman since the most characteristic feature that it possesses is the maturation period of an inexperienced youngster. Golban and Moretti both highlight the importance of the “meaning of life”

being found out by the protagonist. That is only when the character is able to obtain a sense of maturity.

According to LeSeur, the form of Bildungsroman is intensely autobiographical, and the main character who is generally a male happens to be talented and very insightful (1995: 18). He points out:

The autobiographical component of the bildungsroman cannot be overlooked. Because of a seemingly vast amount of autobiographical experience in these novels, the question must be asked as to whether they are a type of autobiography. The answer is that they are novels of initiation, childhood, youth, education, and the various other definitions used for the bildungsroman, with autobiographical components (LeSeur, 1995: 26).

It should be noted that LeSeur does not classify Bildungsroman as a mere autobiographical genre. Stanley agrees: “the autobiographical archetype is the Bildungsroman” (1992: 11). Buckley writes: “Both the strength and the weakness of the Bildungsroman, insofar as it is subjective at all (and very few examples of the genre are not) lie in its autobiographical component. It gains in immediacy and intensity from the author's intimate knowledge of his materials” (1974: 26). Dilthey highlights the difference between Bildungsroman and any other biographical work of art. He states: “...the Bildungsroman is distinguished from all previous biographical compositions in that it intentionally and artistically depicts that which is universally human in such a life-course” (1997: 335). All these critics reach a consensus that autobiographical traits are present in the genre and therefore it can be concluded that taking a closer look at the lives of the authors of our concern can be useful to make relevant inferences about their works. LeSeur explains the reason behind it as: “Heroes or heroines, whatever their accomplishments, share something of the imaginative energy of their authors. Authors turn to the Bildungsroman to assess their own development and growth. As the hero or heroine reaches maturity, each

will typically feel bondage, the multiple constraints of living, often represented by the pressures of the cruel city” (1995: 20).

There are some boundaries in the plot that writers avoid crossing while creating works of art in this particular genre. The themes that a novel should follow to be counted as a work belonging to Bildungsroman are almost the same. Buckley gives a pattern to show the list of elements a few of which should be in the Bildungsroman. He notes:

...no single novel, of course, precisely follows this pattern. But none that ignores more than two or three of its principal elements - childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for a vocation and a working philosophy - answers the requirements of the Bildungsroman (1974: 18).

LeSeur makes a very similar list:

...and the conventional bildungsroman appears in their fictions thusly: The hero alienated from his parents, dissatisfied with middle-class education, declares his independence, achieves his sexual initiation, serves a vocational apprenticeship, grubs for money, faces up to the burdens of self-interest and problems of success, and in the end wonders, Is it worth it? (1995: 20).

LeSeur not only summarizes the plot of Bildungsroman, but also asks a question whether the outcome reached at the end of the novel is rewarding or not. In the light of these interpretations, a general plot appears in such a pattern: the young hero, who is not contented with the family life at home and education in the school, is in need of searching new ways to gain a purpose in life. The character described by these critics tends to live in a small town and is entirely unaware of what is going on in the real world. The protagonist moves to city to find a place in the society and his/her real self. Moving from a small town to a big city is fundamental for the protagonist to

realize the realities of the world. Buckley points out: "...the city, which seems to promise infinite variety and newness, all too often brings a disenchantment more alarming and decisive than any dissatisfaction with the narrowness of provincial life" (1974: 20). In this city, he has a few love affairs at the end of which he feels sorry. However, the end is satisfactory for the hero as he finally succeeds in being acknowledged by the society. Bildungsroman thus tells the story of one central character. Other characters are present to give you an idea about the shortcomings and strong points of the central character. According to Hirsch: "The novel of formation is a novel that focuses on one central character [...]. It is the story of a representative individual's *growth and development* within the context of a defined social order. Although he learns and grows, the protagonist is an essentially *passive character*, a plaything of circumstance" (1979: 296–297). "...other characters are placed beside its central character to produce a sense of contrast and completeness, just as in Wilhelm Meister" (Dilthey, 1997: 269).

There have been many debates among the critics whether an exact English word can be found to replace the original German word *Bildungsroman* without disregarding the details and the wealth of the term. Mostly used phrases such as "the novel of development", "the coming-of-age novel" or "the novel of formation" are not considered to be precise equivalents of the genre." Without a direct equivalent in any Romance or any other Germanic language, the term Bildung defined a new concept of personality and a new social ideal" (Sax, 1987: 40). Aside from the name it is called, Bildungsroman is considered to belong to the nineteenth-century Germany. In *The Bildungsroman for Nonspecialists: An Attempt at a Clarification*, Sammons highlights this point as:

Certainly the Bildungsroman can be treated as an ideal type that does not necessarily have to be in contact with the German novel tradition or the Humanitätsphilosophie of the age of Goethe and Humboldt. But I would suggest that, the farther away one gets from those roots, the more careful one should be about defining the term and justifying its utility (1991: 41-42).

Ellis states a similar point that it is a limited and futile effort to dismiss any novel that does not belong to Germany and the Romantic period or is not Wilhelm Meister (1999). Although the descriptions of Bildungsroman in numerous books and articles seem fully-adequate, it is still problematic to decide on exact characteristic features of this genre and decide which novels to include in this category. Redfield underlines this problem as:

Monographs on the Bildungsroman appear regularly; without exception they possess introductory chapters in which the genre is characterized as a problem, but as one that the critic, for one reason or another, plans either to solve or ignore; and despite the variety of solutions proffered, the definition of the Bildungsroman that emerges in study after study usually repeats the self-referential structure of the aesthetic synthesis...which returns one to the beginning of the cycle and necessitates, of course, another book or essay on the Bildungsroman (1993: 380).

In *Reflection and Action Essays on the Bildungsroman*, James N. Hardin (1991) states the difficulty of defining the genre as there is not a general agreement on the meaning of the term and as it is highly employed fallaciously. He criticizes the abundant use of the term for practically every novel which merely describes a protagonist's maturation. In *Speech and Genres and Other Late Essays*, Bakhtin states that different perspectives on the genre let critics exclude or include some novels in the genre. As a result the genre is sometimes too restrictive and sometimes too comprehensive. He points out:

Some scholars guided by purely compositional principles (the concentration of the whole plot on the process of the hero's education), significantly limit this list (Rabelais, for example, is excluded). Others, conversely, requiring only the presence of the hero's development and emergence in the novel, considerably expand this list, including such

works, for example, as Fielding's Tom Jones or Thackeray's Vanity Fair. [...] Some of the novels are essentially biographical or autobiographical, while others are not; in some of them the organizing basis is the purely pedagogical notion of man's education, while this is not even mentioned in others; some of them are constructed on the strictly chronological plane of the main hero's educational development and have almost no plot at all, while others, conversely, have complex adventurous plots (2004: 20).

A problem arises about classifying a novel as Bildungsroman since there is not an agreement on its boundaries. Some critics even exclude Wilhelm Meister from the list. The problem stems from the disagreement over the meaning of maturation. Some critics accept the existence of maturation in novels if the central character's experiences and knowledge about the world increase while others necessitate the change in psychology and spirit of the central character. Referring to a similar point, Sammons emphasizes that:

Bildung is not merely the accumulation of experience, not merely maturation in the form of fictional biography. There must be a sense of evolutionary change within the self, a teleology of individuality, even if the novel, as many do, comes to doubt or deny the possibility of achieving a gratifying result (1991: 41).

As it is pointed out, growing up and becoming an adult does not make a work of art counted as a Bildungsroman. The protagonist needs to be a grown-up physically, psychologically, and "spiritually". It is acknowledged that:

...Bildung, the formation of the self, is not a term that limits formation as something rational or physical. Spirituality is, in fact, an aspect of development that needs to be acknowledged. The combination of physiological and theological meaning of the world 'bilden' and of the

individual maturation is fundamental. (Summerfield and Downward 2010: 173)

Sammons also adds: "...the Bildungsroman should have something to do with Bildung, that is, with the early bourgeois, humanistic concept of the shaping of the individual self from its innate potentialities through acculturation and social experience to the threshold of maturity" (1991: 41). The difference between biological and cultural maturation needs to be realized as growing up physically does not necessarily provide the qualifications of a self-identity. Transformation of the protagonist is the key factor that differentiates the genre. This transformation is mainly maintained by education. In *Ten Is the Age of Darkness: The Black Bildungsroman*, LeSeur suggests that the Bildungsroman always has an educative effect on the protagonist. The education does not have to be academic. Any sentimental outcome of an event may act like an educator. LeSeur gives the example of Dickens's *Great Expectations* which does not give importance to academic learning of the protagonist, Pip. Agonizing incidents he goes through seem to teach him more than any academic education (LeSeur: 1995, 22). He also states:

The European bildungsroman in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries concerned itself with the development of a single male protagonist whose growth to maturity was the result of both formal and informal education, the latter acquired largely through his relationship with various women, for example, Pip's with Miss Havisham and Estella in *Great Expectations* (LeSeur: 1995, 30).

During his lectures at the University of Dorpat in 1819, the critic Karl Morgenstern describes that a work can be regarded as a Bildungsroman provided that it depicts the formation of the hero from the beginning to the end with its plot. It should also elevate the Bildung of its reader. Morgenstern emphasizes the importance of the content in the works of Bildungsroman. In his *Poetry and Experience*, Dilthey defines the male protagonist as:

...they all portray a young man of their time: how he enters life in a happy state of naiveté seeking kindred souls, finds friendship and love, how he comes into conflict with the hard realities of the world, how he grows to maturity through diverse life experiences, finds himself, and attains certainty about his purpose in the world. (1997: 335)

However, Todd Kontje, in *Private Lives in the Public Sphere: The German Bildungsroman as Metafiction* comments on Dilthey's interpretation as:

The hero of the classical Bildungsroman, as Dilthey defines it, engages in the double task of self-integration and integration into society. Under ideal conditions, the first implies the second: the mature hero becomes a useful and satisfied citizen. Viewed in this way, the Bildungsroman is a fundamentally affirmative, conservative genre, confident in the validity of the society it depicts, and anxious to lead both hero and reader toward a productive place in that world (1992: 12).

Kontje also comments on the lack of satisfactory end in Bildungsroman. Despite the fact that the protagonist is recognized by the society, he still seems to be insecure because of the oppressive side of the society. Because "Although the protagonist in a Bildungsroman usually acquires a new awareness of the ways of the world, he or she often decides to take up a position somewhat outside the societal norm" (Barton and Hudson, 1997: 23). Kontje continues to say:

In novel after novel, protagonists fail to mature into self-confident, autonomous individuals; the expected integration into an affirmative society yields to alienation from an unacceptable reality. A number of critics have questioned whether even Wilhelm Meister really fits Dilthey's definition of the Bildungsroman, emphasizing both the degree of resignation involved in Wilhelm's maturation and the oppressive nature of the Tower Society (1992: 12).

Although Dilthey's definition of this genre is widely accepted and cited by many, it is not comprehensive due to not including female characters. It would not be unfair to say that the genre in the beginning was thought to be predominantly male genre. From the earlier definitions of Bildungsroman, it is obvious that women do not have an opportunity to go through the transformation period at the end of which the protagonist realizes her role in the society. They are not able to make a formative journey to prove their existences in the world. LeSeur explains the formative journey of the main character of Bildungsroman by comparing black and white Bildungsroman. He expresses that protagonists in both may feel lonely and solitary, move to the city, change and discover a self-identity, experience conflicts with parents then reach adulthood which is regarded as the second stage of their formation (LeSeur, 1995: 19).

In *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács gives an analysis of the protagonist in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. He states:

This is why Goethe in *Wilhelm Meister* steers a middle course between abstract idealism, which concentrates on pure action, and Romanticism, which interiorises action and reduces it to contemplation. Humanism, the fundamental attitude of this type of work, demands a balance between activity and contemplation, between wanting to mould the world and being purely receptive towards it. This form has been called the 'novel of education'-rightly, because its action has to be a conscious, controlled process aimed at a certain goal: the development of qualities in men which would never blossom without the active intervention of other men and circumstances; whilst the goal thus attained is in itself formative and encouraging to others- is itself a means of education (1971: 135).

The former list of requirements of Bildungsroman of Buckley turns into a meticulous outline of the plot in Bildungsroman as:

A child of some sensibility grows up in the country or in a provincial town, where he finds constraints, social and intellectual, placed upon the free imagination. His family, especially his father, proves doggedly hostile to his creative instincts or flights of fancy... His first schooling, even if not totally inadequate, may be frustrating insofar as it may suggest options not available to him in his present setting. He...leaves the repressive atmosphere of home (and also the relative innocence), to make his way independently in the city... There his real 'education' begins, not only his preparation for a career but also - and often more importantly - his direct experience of urban life. The latter involves at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, one debasing, one exalting... His initiation complete, he may then visit his old home, to demonstrate by his presence the degree of his success or the wisdom of his choice (1974: 17-8).

Buckley's plot excludes women altogether from the genre as in a patriarchal society it is hardly possible for a woman "to leave the repressive atmosphere" or "to involve at least two love affairs or sexual encounters, one debasing, one exalting...". For female characters, it is not practicable to enjoy the opportunity of being able to attain a formation given to male characters blindfold and rightly. A number of possibilities are present for men. For instance, "...the male hero has the possibility to leave his home in quest for an independent life in the city, an option usually not available to the female heroine. However, if she does have the chance to leave home, her aim is still not to explore or to learn how to be independent, like her male counterpart" (Brändström, 2009: 13). The plot given by Buckley is highly plausible and achievable for a male character and any society of any type would count it the same as would be expected. A woman who lives in such a situation is most likely to be threatened with expulsion from society. In Margaret Atwood's novel *The Blind Assassin*, Iris leaves her small town and gets her "real education" in the city but it is bitterly against her will to leave her home. Her departure can be regarded as a sacrifice by marrying a wealthy and older man to help his father who goes through an economic crisis. In these definitions, the time when the male character reaches

maturity should not be overlooked. At very young ages, the male characters finish their developments and move on with a new perspective in life. However, for female characters, formation generally occurs after marriage ends. Female characters do not enjoy the opportunities offered to male characters in adolescence. Hence a new definition of female Bildungsroman is needed to analyze the novels of such kind.

1.2 FEMALE DEVELOPMENT NOVEL

The male dominance in the Bildungsroman genre motivated feminist critics to come up with a different definition of the genre in accordance with the realities of women as the definitions of the genre tend to narrate the stories of men which are not likely to be experienced by women. Feminist critics do not accept the traditional line of development and have the idea that the female Bildungsroman differs greatly from the traditional male dominated Bildungsroman. As LeSeur suggests: “European White female writers did not for the most part use the form, as one finds only a few novels by women in the genre. Clearly, then, male writers, regardless of color or nationality, dominated the tradition early” (1995: 21).

McWilliams summarizes the emergence of female Bildungsroman. She notes that the Bildungsroman has its origins from the eighteenth-century Germany and was accepted by women authors in the second half of the twentieth century. Although some writers were busy with putting classic definitions of Bildungsroman, which disqualified women from the genre, into practice, others reexamined the genre in order to alter previously agreed definitions. According to her, Margaret Atwood is the paragon of this genre (2009: 1). Goodman states that although critics have showed much interest in Bildungsroman, they have just started to focus on differences between novels written by men and women. She criticizes the genre as it is defined by simply male experience as critics ignore novels written about a female protagonist (1983: 28). She also points out: “In a patriarchal culture where the ‘education’ of males and the ‘education’ of females is so vastly different, surely the Bildungsromane which male and female novelists respectively write would be very

different” (29) Brändström lays stress on the similar themes in the male and female Bildungsroman, however she also points out that gender difference creates a different personal growth. Brändström states:

Although there are common themes in the male and female Bildungsroman, such as relationships to family and friends, formal/informal education, sexuality/love and the overall goal of self-development, there is a marked gender difference between the aims of the spiritual and psychological quest of the male hero and female heroine respectively, which needs to be recognized and realized in a proper (re)definition of the Bildungsroman genre (2009: 14).

It is clearly stated that although the common grounds should not be overlooked, the major differences between two genres are worth reconsidering in view of gender difference. Reflecting the problems encountered by men and women in a similar way is unjust and arbitrary by reason of women’s struggles not to be recognized by the society. Braendlin suggests:

Contemporary fiction written by women... necessitates... an examination of the crisis situation in which a woman balances precariously between an outmoded past and an uncertain future, and an affirmation of new selfhood...These concerns have precipitated the revival of the bildungsroman, traditional genre for the depiction of man's struggle for identity, by twentieth-century women authors (1980: 160).

In her article *Rewriting the Social Text: The Female Bildungsroman in 18th Century England*, Eve Taylor Bannet notes: “The eighteenth-century female Bildungsroman was not always designed to give a minute account of the Bildung of its heroine; but it was designed to effect the Bildung of its readers and thus to effect changes in the manners and morals of the times” (1991: 196). The female Bildungsroman also changed over time in the direction of needs of the century. Apart from the changes within the genre, all these critics agree that the traditional Bildungsroman could not

meet the requirements of women whose needs to speak their thoughts were not met by the genre.

Labovitz gives a list of elements of the genre, these are “Self-realization (including identity questions, self-discovery, and self-knowledge); sex roles (including male/female roles and role models); education, dramatizing how the heroine reads; inner and outer directedness (psychological, sexual, ideological, societal); religious crisis, where applicable; career; attitude toward marriage; philosophical questions (thoughts on life and death); and autobiographical elements...” (1986: 8). It can be noticed that Labovitz’s list is similar to those of Buckley’s and LeSeur’s that were mentioned before. No matter how similar the themes are, there is a big difference that cannot be ignored: sex roles. The behaviors that can be regarded appropriate for men can never be perceived for women. Even the theme of youth needs to be evaluated in different perspectives because “If adolescence for boys represents a rite of passage (much celebrated in the Western literature in the form of the *bildungsroman*), and an ascension to some version (however attenuated) of social power, for girls, adolescence is a lesson in restraint, punishment, and repression.” (Halberstam, 2004: 938)

According to Holman, the novel of awakening "recounts the youth and young adulthood of a sensitive protagonist who is attempting to learn the nature of the world, discover its meaning and pattern, and acquire a philosophy of life and 'the art of living'" (1980: 33). In his essay *Cultivating Gender. Sexual Difference, Bildung, and the Bildungsroman*, John Smith points out that: “I propose one reason why ‘novels of awakening’ are much more common for women and why the awakening often leads to deaths, since women have not been granted access-i.e. Bildung- to the existing patriarchal structures of representation” (1987: 221).

Women were required to stay at home, to look after their children and to take care of household chores. They did not have confidence or place in real world. Their lives were composed of an environment which excluded them from social, economical and business life. As Abel et als suggest: “even the broadest definitions of the

Bildungsroman presuppose a range of social options available only to men” (1983: 7). They were not expected to go through a self-exploration journey to actualize their dreams and complete their personalities' shortcomings. Because “...the male hero has the possibility to leave his home in quest for an independent life in the city, an option usually not available to the female heroine. However, if she does have the chance to leave home, her aim is still not to explore or to learn how to be independent, like her male counterpart” (Brändström, 2009: 13). In such a situation, it is understandable that the female bildungsroman was unable to come to the surface in literature until 1970s. Society's views on women working and joining the real world needed to be changed to produce novels in this genre. LeSeur makes a comparison between White women and Black women. It is understood that regardless of their races, women suffer from very similar expectations and oppression of the society.

Many Black female characters share some of the same situations faced by their White sisters and are often seen as victims, sex objects, mother haters, little mammies, and rebellious outsiders. Often they are seeking a new, viable existence distinct from their historically and culturally predetermined roles, and thus seek transformations that are often unachievable or disrupted (LeSeur, 1995: 102).

Society does not give any chance to female characters to grow and that is why they end up in failure and have to adapt to society's norms. Their search to reach the desired self-identity often fails. “Heroines who did attempt an identity of self were generally halted before they could complete the journey to selfhood, thus militating against their designation as *Bildungsroman* heroines” (Labovitz, 1986: 5).

Since female Bildungsroman does not fit into the traditional description and the detailed plot written by many critics, most of the female Bildungsromans of nineteenth and twentieth centuries were unfortunately excluded from the genre as a result of not being able to meet the requirements brought by *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Goethe. However, it is obvious that female Bildungsromans

cannot fit into a genre the rules of which were written by considering a male character's journey for a self-identity by going through challenges that the patriarchal society would not allow women to do so. Women characters and authors of such novels would immediately be condemned by the society. Feminist critics agree on the idea that the female Bildungsroman is considerably different from the male Bildungsroman. Abel points out that male and female characters do not have the same opportunity to reach their self-identities at the end of their journeys. It is stated: "While male protagonists struggle to find a hospitable context in which to realize their aspirations, female protagonists must frequently struggle to voice any aspirations whatsoever. For a woman, social options are often so narrow that they preclude explorations of her milieu" (Abel et. al., 1983: 7). Lokke emphasizes that Goethe's character reaches his formation after many actions which are forbidden and inaccessible for women. (2004: 137)

Marriage also appears as a hindrance for the female protagonist. "Compared to her male counterpart who leaves home in search for an independent life, the female heroine typically leaves her parents' house for the home of the man she marries. As she comes to identify with her husband, making his destiny her own, her self-development is thus haltered" (Brändström, 2009: 8). Hence the protagonist needs to set herself free from the entrapment caused by marriage because her husband is the obstacle on her way to reach self-discovery. The obstacles encountered in her family rise one more time in her marriage. The only way for her is to rebel against those establishments to reach her maturity. That is why the protagonist reaches her formation very late in her life in the female Bildungsroman. As an example of this interpretation, Tezer Özlü was unable to form herself only when she reached her forties. It is clear that the genre was considered to be entirely masculine and women had no place in it.

We can see the differences between male and female protagonists' access to Bildung. While Susanne Howe's *Wilhelm Meister and His English Kinsmen* describes the protagonist:

The adolescent hero of the typical 'apprentice' novel sets out on his way through the world, meets with reverses usually due to his own temperament, falls in with various guides and counsellors, makes many false starts in choosing his friends, his wife, and his life work, and finally adjusts himself in some way to the demands of his time and environment by finding a sphere of action in which he may work effectively...Needless to say, the variations of it are endless (1930: 4).

From Howe's description, we can infer that the male protagonist's "false starts" while choosing his wife means that he has many love affairs on the way to marriage. However, "Even one such affair, no matter how exalting, would assure a woman's expulsion from society" (Abel et al, 1983: 8). Self-development is reached by women after a series of painful experiences and sometimes isolation from social life. If we examine what Pratt and Barbara White notes about the female protagonist, the difference is very clear. They describe the female protagonist as a woman who:

...does not choose a life to one side of society after conscious deliberation on the subject; rather, she is ontologically or radically alienated by gender-role norms from the very outset. Thus, although the authors attempt to accommodate their heroes' bildung or development to the general pattern of the genre, the disjunctions we have noticed inevitably make of the woman's initiation less a self-determined progression toward maturity than a regression from full participation in adult life (Pratt, 1981: 36).

According to Hirsch the classic plot of the genre which is linear cannot be seen in the female Bildungsroman. Hirsch states: "The plot of inner development traces a discontinuous, circular path which, rather than moving forward, culminates in a return to origins, thereby distinguishing itself from the traditional plot outlines of the Bildungsroman. With this circularity, structures of repetition rather than structures of progression came to dominate the plot" (1983: 26). The female protagonist is unable to let go of her past which necessitates the use of flashbacks and inner dialogues.

Nonetheless, the plot moves straight in the male Bildungsroman which means that the central character is not as upset about his past as the female character is. Another noteworthy characteristic of female Bildungsroman is the protagonist's close relationship with nature. She feels better when she is alone with nature. As she is isolated from the society, her only supporter is nature.

In all of these novels, women find solace, companionship, and independence in nature... a male antagonist who disturbs their peace; calm returns when he leaves. Nature, then, becomes an ally of the woman hero, keeping her in touch with her selfhood, a kind of talisman that enables her to make her way through the alienations of male society (Pratt, 1981: 21).

Thus nature is the only place where the central character feels liberated and equal like other people. Since she is aware of the sense of liberation in nature, she desires to experience this sense in her real life, too.

Although most authors depict the green world of the woman hero as a place from which sets forth and a memory to which she returns for renewal, there are a significant number of novels in which nature is the protagonist's entire world. This primacy of nature characterizes both the Bildungsroman and novels dealing with the development of older heroes (Pratt, 1981: 17).

While examining a work of art as female Bildungsroman, all these features of female development novel need to be kept in mind, and literary works need to be divided into two as male or female development novel. Becoming an adult requires different paths and different features for men and women in an unequal society. Thus Özlü's and Atwood's novels will be treated in this way.

CHAPTER TWO- TEZER ÖZLÜ'S FIRST NOVEL: *THE CHILLY NIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD*

2.1 THEMES IN *THE CHILLY NIGHTS OF CHILDHOOD*

Tezer Özlü's first book *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* was published in 1980. It has four chapters named *Home*, *School* and *The Way to School*, *The Concert of Léo Ferré* and *The Mediterranean Once Again*. It does not have a chronological order as it follows the narrator's memories about her past. The narrator uses flashbacks and time skips to emphasize the highlights of her life. Pratt explains the reason why female novelists do not use the chronological time: "Since women are alienated from time and space, their plots take on cyclical, rather than linear, form and their houses and landscapes surreal properties" (1981: 11). Pratt also emphasizes: "Other critics besides myself have noted this alinear, cyclical, timeless consciousness... Women heroes turn away from a culture hostile to their development, entering a timeless achronological world appropriate to their rejection by history, a spaceless world appropriate to rebellion against placelessness in the patriarchy" (1981: 169). In her writings, Özlü thus rejects the chronological order to highlight her changeable mood and give a sense of her life which was scattered by the patriarchal norms.

Özlü lays stress on her feelings and social criticism rather than the events. She uses the events in her novels as tools to convey her thoughts about a specific event. She does not directly pass judgment on a social problem or points at it; she rather attracts our attention on a norm she considers problematic and inhumane implicitly by narrating her experiences and her pains she suffered. Özlü's way of passing her thought to the reader thus becomes a very strong tool to lay emphasis on a social norm and thinking she wishes to change. Hence she does not want to tell an event or describe the surrounding.

You will not tell a story while writing. The surrounding is full of stories. Every day of every person is full of stories. I do not want to describe the surrounding either. Even an empty, grey masonry wall is full of

descriptions. A wriggle of your brain is enough. It is possible to see everything on that wall (Özlü, 1984: 15).

In her letter dated the 27th of March 1982 to Leyla Erbil, Özlü writes about her views on literature: “It seems futile to me to create a novel, to draw people and characters. Nice work if you can tell your inner world. I also believe that the critics and some authors cannot keep up with the times and my thoughts” (2001: 25). In her novels, she emphasizes the realities and the inner world of her protagonist or sometimes herself as she actually reflects her feelings and ideas.

Her first novel *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* narrates the story of a child who comes to the city from a province at the age of eleven. She receives education in a foreign school for nine years. The contradictions between city and town life, cultural and religious differences in the Austrian school put too much pressure on a teenager who already does not have a peaceful life at home. She gets married to a man she barely knows just to get away from home and school life. She soon realizes her mistake. She fails to be in accord with the society in every subject. She attempts suicide to punish the society but fails and she gets locked up in a clinic. Özlü uses a direct, intimate language that gains the reader’s empathy. Leyla Erbil points out: “The Chilly Nights of Childhood is one of the pursuits of literature in which contemporary people find themselves. Another sign of the separation from previous literature; a book which refrains from replicating and coercing previous literature and which dedicates itself to self search” (1997a: 33). Doğan Hızlan emphasizes this side of Özlü: “Rebelling against any established moral would excite her” (1997a: 63). She does not hide her true self from her readers. She frankly narrates her feelings, thoughts and pains. She does not want the pity of others by telling the painful events of her life. Her one-word sentences, the clarity and simplicity of her thoughts are noticed instantly in the beginning of the book. She uses symbols such as Bunni (her grandmother) for the fear of getting old, her brother Demir for the desired independent life, the walls for the boundaries set in front of her. She uses inner dialogues and stream of consciousness technique to convey how she really feels about a specific event.

As a person who rebels against any kind of limitations, rules or social orders, she draws no boundaries to her narration. She even gives the private details about her sexual life. Köksal describes her as: "Tezer Özlü who gets bored of boundaries most, who cuts across all boundaries, who writes about the immensity of her silence and scream and who has made the most difficult journeys to the world of insanity" (1997a: 128). According to Erbil, "Tezer was unique in removing the distance and formality between her readers and herself and in displaying new authors ethics" (Cited in Özlü, 2001: 8). Sönmez states: "She wanted to reflect herself as she was; she wanted to be without a mask, they could not get it" (1997: 105). The shallowness of people is underlined in Sönmez's comment.

Loneliness, suicide, death, depression, freedom are the most distinct focuses in Tezer's book. Hızlan states: "Tezer Özlü Kırıl, who wrote on restlessness, depression and disconnection in personal relationships in her first works, made progress in her later ones" (1997b: 25).

In her book, Tezer Özlü writes how people violate human rights and how they inhibit the personal maturation and freedom of others by their establishments like home, school and psychiatric clinic. She does not accept their rules as they are. While she rebels against them, she does not act as a hypocrite. She criticizes people who do not show enough courage while standing up to the wrong doings. They lack the courage needed to shape a brave character to rebel against those powerful establishments. "They try to preserve their statuses while they stand up for 'rebellion'. They do not get married and divorce like getting on or off a bus" (Özlü, 2012a: 45). Nargileci emphasizes the disobedient side of Özlü: "...Tezer Özlü never yielded to the impositions at variance with the essence of hers" (1997: 139). Tezer Özlü tells her journey toward her personal growth (Bildung) as:

I tried to perceive the silence in the universe until the age of 10... I looked for the places where the mind ceases to exist and the boundaries of insanity. How I can transfer this jump with lightning speed between sanity and insanity into words. The world of reason should have been

something different. I made my deepest journey to the world of insanity... I completed my salvation from all the pains, all the bodies, all the suns, all the parents, all the children, all the trust and distrust through madness bravely (2012b: 45-47).

It can be inferred from the quotation that Özlü reached her development through numerous painful experiences at the end. She seems to be contented with her life now that she has solved her problems with life itself.

2.2 TEZER ÖZLÜ'S APPROACH TO FEMINISM

In her book *Yeryüzüne Dayanabilmek İçin*, Özlü puts emphasis on the dilemmas Turkish women suffer from. Women's dilemmas emerge from the fact that Turkey is a conflicting country in terms of combining the characteristics of the Western culture with its freedom offered to the public with the Eastern culture which is more conservative and patriarchal. In such a unique case like Turkey, women are torn between liberation and conservatism. Özlü points out:

As a woman of a country which has not reached the freedom of thought, it is very hard to comment on Turkish women's social class dilemmas. Today's Turkey is both a society divided into many classes and a society which has been living 15 centuries all in all from 5th to 20th century. ...It is militarily, politically and economically dependent on the West... However, it is an Islamic country. This situation makes people subject to a variety of contradictions.

Which woman are we going to talk about in such a complicated and problematic society? (2014: 43).

Hilmi Yavuz lays stress on the rebellious side of Özlü. He thinks that she advocated feminism and the rights of women in a country where women were labeled with sexuality. He writes:

Her sojourn on the Earth was like that of a butterfly. An airy, brown, exhausted butterfly...Tezer is the first activist I know. At the end of 1950s when feminism was not even spoken of in Turkey and a Victorian morality surrounded even the literate people, she was the one who rebelled against a society who defined the woman with her sexuality and she pressed the issue (1997: 24).

Özlü believes that feminism cannot come into the picture in Turkey where women are liable to injustices. They work under very hard conditions both at work and at home. There are also religious setbacks on their ways. In such a challenging environment, their problems should not be classified as the problem of feminism. Their obstacles and troubles should be considered as Turkey's. Özlü explains her thoughts:

There is not a generalization about Turkish women... Some work in the fields for 18 hours under the sun, not to mention their work at home... Some walk for hours to find a bucket of water, some are not allowed to open up to the world under religious pressure with the medieval understanding... Some are sold like merchandise for bride price. A woman, who is worker or civil servant in a town or city, also takes care of her home and her children. They are the ones who wear off most. ...That is why feminism 'woman problem' is out of question for Turkish people. The problems of Turkish women need to be evaluated within the all problems of Turkey (2014: 43-44).

She also criticizes the inequalities of the society which hinders people in their efforts to become conscious with its television programs and advertisements. They are made to emulate the misleading lifestyles. According to her, the struggle of working class will not have victory unless all the people get conscious and well-educated. She says that a person needs to become conscious for his/her social, business, and inner lives. She does not believe in personal salvation. She believes that humans are social living creatures that should struggle for their social classes to rise and should get better

living conditions. (Özlü, 2014) She states: “Since there are also women who keep the house, who raise their children, the most important duty of intellectual women should be to raise awareness among other women” (Özlü, 2014: 45). Özlü assigns an important task for the enlightened women of the country to educate other women to form “sisterhood” among them to initiate cooperative struggle.

Finally, she disapproves of the male dominance in terms of not giving the right to stay on her own. Society would condemn a person having indiscreet affairs so marriage seems to be compulsory. In her letter dated the 3rd of January 1985 to Erbil, Özlü comments on this as: “Maybe we are the women who need to live alone but we get married as the society does not grant us the permission to live alone” (Özlü, 2001).

2.3 THE OBSTACLES ON THE WAY TO SELF-REALIZATION

In this chapter, the characteristics of Bildungsroman will be analyzed in Özlü's novels *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life*. These two books need to be assumed as one to notice the personal growth at the end of two books. The obstacles that the female protagonist experiences such as marriage, the loveless relationship in the family, especially her relationship with her father, the pressures of the society upon the female character, and the oppression caused by the establishments of the society such as schools and mental clinics can be seen in the first novel: *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, however, the self-realization which is fundamental in Bildungsroman is not completed in this first novel. In the final chapter *Yeniden Akdeniz*, we come across the changes in her perspective of life and her feelings towards the society and people; nonetheless, this cannot be regarded as a whole completion of the self-realization. In her novel *Journey to the End of Life*, these changes are more distinct to make the inference that the narrator has reached the maturity which is necessary for a novel to be considered as Bildungsroman. That is the reason why these two books need to be analyzed as one to notice distinctive changes in her personality. It does not mean that in the first book of the writer, there are not any clues of the self-realization part. In the final chapter, the narrator

achieves to find peace in life. She has the enthusiasm to live her life happily now that she is out of the mental clinic.

Labovitz gives a list of the features of the female Bildungsroman such as: self-actualization, thoughts on marriage, education, career, gender roles, philosophical and identity questions, religious crisis and autobiographical elements” (1986: 8). Brändström states: “Women in fiction who violate the norms and refuse to follow this female pattern of development are perceived as rebels and they end up unhappy or insane” (2009: 6). In Tezer Özlü's novels, all of these characteristics are experienced as hindrances because while she struggles to reach her self-realization, she gets isolated from the society and gets labeled as an insane person. When the female protagonist is tired of the injustices of the society, she rebels against them as a result of which she gets punished severely with its institutions for not obeying the general rules or beliefs. In this thesis, we will analyze the obstacles on her way towards her formation.

2.3.1 THE FATHER

The first chapter of the book *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* begins with the depiction of the narrator's father. She tells her life as a little girl in a small town of Anatolia and later her encounter with the modern world through a foreign school in Istanbul. She spent her childhood in small towns like Simav, Ödemiş and Gerede. As the autobiographical elements are intense in Tezer Özlü's works, the book in which she narrates her childhood is essential to understand the psychology of the author. The protagonist is the narrator herself at the same time. There are a variety of autobiographical elements in her works. However, these examples of personal experiences would rather not be treated as mere autobiographical novels. Instead, the consideration of her autobiographical narrations, to some extent, pictures the actual stories of a generation that suffered a lot in a dark period of the country. For example, in order to show some of the stereotypes that are encountered considering the father figure in traditional families of that period, Özlü writes about her father:

My dad, who was once a physical education teacher, has kept his whistle. In the mornings without taking off his loose striped pajamas he blows his whistle:

- Why did you join the army seeing that you are so delicate? Get up! Get up! He blares.

I wake up and find myself in Süm's arms. I think about my father's reasoning in establishing some relation between this house and the army. Dad wants a military setup at home. If he was rich, he would probably have trumpets played in the entrance... How much the Turkish men of my dad's generation admire the army and the military service (2012a: 7).

The father is a school inspector and he clearly wants a military order at home. It is also clear that the father has a great love and patriotism for his country. On the contrary to her father, Özlü never had that patriotism and attachment. She says: "This is the country of those who want to kill us" (2001: 14). The two opposite views of the same blood on the same country, even in the same house, come to the surface. It can be interpreted that the father had few setbacks and the country and its citizens did not push his limits until he went mad unlike his daughter. Özlü criticizes "the Turkish men of her dad's generation" as it is her nature to rebel against any rules or social orders. She explains: "The former generations, who descended over us like a nightmare, will be unable to deprive us of our conscious years" (2012a: 59). She also says: "My father cannot die because he has not started to live yet" (2012a: 52). She points out that he cannot live and think liberally as he is suppressed by the political ideology of his time. With her descriptions of the general situations and characteristic aspects of the period, she underlines the irrational commitments and submissions of most of the citizens to the pressures and ideologies of the time. It is this very commitment and submission that Özlü criticizes most and rejects to be a part of it blindly. Instead, she proposes and advocates individualism, which emerged from the existentialist view point. We can encounter an example of individualism in *Yeryüzüne Dayanabilmek İçin* expressed in her own words as following: "I will adopt a very individualistic approach as usual. I cannot help it. I am an individualistic person who emphasizes the importance of individuals in the

establishment of the society” (Özlü, 2014: 9). She is opposed to the idea of “social good and social interest” which sometimes sacrifices single individuals for the sake of the social interests and social welfare. It is because the adoption of this notion hinders the development of sound personalities in individuals and prevents them from forming their own ideas or shaping their own perspectives let alone expressing them. The improvement of a whole community should not depend just on social welfare; it should also rely on individual development as a whole allowing the citizens to develop both physically and psychologically. Therefore, in order to reach the desired state of social development, each and every individual in the society should be provided with opportunities to develop and express themselves freely. It is only in this way that the voices of people can be heard. The father figure and the others in his generation in Tezer Özlü’s book are deprived of this opportunity to utter their own thoughts. The father follows a patriotic world-view and strict rules that the society imposes upon him. That is why he cannot reach the maturation that is required for the typical character of Bildungsroman. We can see the oppressive side of the father with this quotation:

My dear children:

1. The light must come from the left. 2. The book must be located 30-45 cm away from your eyes. 3. As soon as you finish studying, the lights must be turned off etc.....

I wish you success hoping you to become dutiful children to this land.
Your dear and devoted father. Name. Surname. Signature (Özlü, 2012a: 10).

The father’s choice of words attracts our attention as he uses the words “dear” and “devoted” to create the image of a father who devotes his entire life to raising her children. However, these passionate words are not enough for him to be an affectionate father model for his children and for his wife. The words he chooses to show respect and affection show some conflict with his actual behavior and attitude towards the family members.

There is also a gilt bust of Ataturk and flag of Turkey in their home. Their dad makes them sing the national anthem and stand at attention. They object to it (Özlü, 2012a: 12). The children need to be raised at his pleasure with a great responsibility. His only desire is to see his children to become law-abiding citizens. The father's desire to direct his children towards the path of being loyal citizens to their country can probably be inferred as, sometimes direct sometimes indirect, pressure of the society on its members. Being a passive member of the society leads the father to obey the rules without objecting to the notions imposed. Being a republican in a newly-founded republic is a duty of a citizen to accomplish. This republican ideology is mostly transmitted or sometimes imposed by teachers of the society as in the case of Özlü's father and mother. However, the father's repressive way to raise his children seems to alienate the narrator from the idea of attachment to the country. It seems that the more the father expects his children to follow the same path he goes on, the more negative effects his behaviors evoke on the children. That is why Özlü rejects this republican approach and being a passive part of this ideology.

2.3.2 THE MOTHER

Tezer Özlü's mother is not described in detail in the book so we know very little about her life. However, in such a loveless and oppressive environment, her chance to be happy is expected to be very slim. Considering the behaviors and attitudes of her father, Özlü says: "He wants the whole world to die with him. Grumpy. Ugly. He will make us, especially my mother who was sentenced to death because of having married him, pay heavily until he dies" (2012b: 35). Her childhood passed without his father's compassion, which is among the most essential feelings that a child needs in the process of maturation and forming a world-view. The father can be considered as one of the foremost obstacles in her way toward freedom. It may as well be concluded from her utterances that Özlü, somewhere deep inside, expects her father's death for the salvation of the other members of the family, especially her mother and herself. As she regards her mother's marriage with her own father as a big mistake, she may think that his death can save her mother from this pressured life and her painful experiences may eventually come to an end in the absence of her

husband. Moreover, the voice of the mother which is rarely heard in the family, like the women in the society of that period, may begin to be heard more with the new freedom of which she is deprived for long years in her marriage. To highlight this point, it can also be added that Özlü's mother is a teacher. Considering the social status of a female teacher in that period, it is expected that she can voice her ideas and thoughts and she can defend herself whenever necessary. However, it is not the case in Özlü's family. Therefore, it would be even more depressing to imagine the conditions in which unemployed females or mothers live without financial independency. If a teacher has to remain silent and cannot make her voice heard, it would not be unfair to expect the others to experience similar or worse cases. By rarely mentioning her mother, Özlü actually reflects the disheartening conditions that the females experience in the society of that period. In addition, she implicitly points at the other side of the medallion which pictures the repressiveness the females suffer from. These realities are reflected with silences, gaps and three dots in her narration. These tools in Özlü's works convey deeper meanings than full sentences. It is also possible that Özlü wanted her mother's silence to be heard by people through the father's irrational demands.

The father's distant relationship with the children is also reflected in his relationship with the mother. Özlü says: "It is like there is no warmth between mum and dad, no love. Mum makes it clear with each of her behavior that she does not love him as a man at all. ...Every morning and every night is so loveless" (2012a: 11). It can be inferred that she feels that they stay married just because of the permanency of marriage. Although the mother feels no love for her husband, she never thinks of getting divorced. The life of a divorced woman with three children will not be easier than a loveless marriage due to the realities of the society. The relationship between the mother and the father shapes the narrator's thoughts, as a child, about marriages as in the experiences of most children facing the real atmosphere in their houses. That is why, as a grown-up individual with personal beliefs mostly stemming from her childhood experiences, she naturally and inevitably does not believe in the permanency of marriages. Özlü got married three times in her life and had many relationships. These relationships show that she is badly in need of love. She says:

“Why can’t we resolve the crises? Why do we try to be man and woman, husband and wife without being friends?” (2012a: 44). As it can be seen, neither the marriage of her parents nor her own marriages was built upon the idea of friendship. Communication and friendship are what she wants to see and experience in marriages. Doğan Hızlan states: “One of the features of Özlü Kırıl’s stories defining the modern man is lack of communication. Nobody understands each other” (1997b: 26). He gives an example from Özlü’s work to prove his point: “There is a language we can both speak, but since she is hard of hearing, she does not hear me. She forgets the things she can hear instantly anyway. What a great joy” (Cited in Hızlan, 1997b: 26). These statements can be considered as the very examples of her criticism upon the badly-structured marriages; in other words, she criticizes the type of marriages that are based just upon the social requirements, or sometimes, the social pressures instead of being based upon mutual wishes and desires of both parties. In addition to the disapprovals concerning the traditional marriage forms, Özlü also reflects one of the cornerstones of the female Bildungsroman as the main character because she is in search of finding herself new paths to follow in her life that are not to do with the traditionally accepted or expected norms. Moreover, based on her childhood experiences, she also refrains from being in a futile effort to meet the demands of the society or to attempt to make her behaviors comply with the generally accepted behaviors and actions. For example, her numerous relationships or her rebellions can be among the reflections of her points of view about diverse aspects of social lives and relationships. Even if it would be really difficult to directly oppose to or criticize the on-going order in the society and the establishments in the society like marriages, Özlü adopts different ways of showing her disapproval of the existing system in the society, in an implicit and brave manner without hiding her internal true-self and ideas.

2.3.3 BUNNI

Another character that should be noted and treated as a symbol is the grandmother “Bunni”. She is an old lady whose entire life is comprised of household chores. She is a typical Turkish woman who raises her grandchildren and stays alone at the end.

She does not have any social life apart from shopping on Wednesdays. She does not have any hopes or expectations from life either. She is very curious about her own funeral. The narrator states: “Bunni performs prayers five times a day. She prays in Arabic. If we tease her when she prays, she raises her voice... She uses the word ‘Allah’ most in her life of ninety years or more” (Özlü, 2012a: 9). Bunni is the only female character that was described in detail in the book. It is highly possible that the narrator was affected very much by her grandmother. She gives a list of Bunni’s duties at home. She writes:

Bunni never gets tired. Her only occupations are to wash, to dump ash, to clear up the mess. She has done these chores in her entire life. She can even hold fire in her hand. Her world is laundry, dishes, praying, fasting and shopping on Wednesday. Nobody offers her more. She does not want more (Özlü, 2012a: 14).

The author, Sennur Sezer describes Bunni and attracts attention to her traditional features and her self-sacrifice for the sake of others. Sezer tells:

Bunni who does all the most difficult and unwanted household chores, Bunni who has to look after her sixty-year old son. The old woman who spares her single good dress, who has not thought of another man since her husband’s death and who wonders about her own funeral most. A grandmother. A woman who is able to live alone by bathing her grandchildren in a crowded house, by preparing them breakfast, by going to district bazaars when everyone else grows up and leaves. A Turkish woman who lives as if she were always destined to stay at home. A woman who uses death like a weapon as a way to see the people she misses... Do we know this woman from somewhere? Does Tezer wish to ‘leave’ in order not to become this woman? (1997: 51).

We know and see this woman in our daily lives every day. Sezer places the word “leave” in inverted commas to address to the book *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*. Özlü states:

On Sundays...Nowadays... While passing through streets... if family guys with pajamas attract my attention, in winter, if I catch a glimpse of smoking stove-pipes in rainy, grey days... if windows of houses fog up... if I see clothes hung up inside rooms... if clouds are close to wet bricks, if it is drizzling, if live soccer games are broadcasted on radios, if voices of quarreling people echo through streets, I always want to leave, leave, leave, leave, leave, leave..... (2012a: 16).

Leyla Erbil emphasizes the importance of Bunni in the world of Tezer Özlü. The narrator has a deep fear of the possibility to become a woman like her. Bunni is the symbol of all the voiceless women in our country. She has no thought of herself, no desire to chase and no word to speak. She just completes her daily routine and waits for her death. Leyla Erbil expresses her thought:

...I think that this world she was born in, this history, this Turkey; military and civil governments of wild capitalism (the whole system), the reserved and even loveless family environment she was born in and the old grandmother (Bunni) had an undeniable effect on Tezer. Especially the love she had for old Bunni whom we encounter nearly in all of her novels matches the hatred and the fear of death (1997b: 87).

As an old grandmother figure in Özlü’s life, Bunni represents death in the eyes of Özlü. Beginning from her early childhood, Özlü makes a connection between her grandmother and death based on her observations in life around her. It is highly possible that she encountered many cases in which old people die because of their age and; therefore, Özlü, in a way, expects her grandmother to die at some point in her life no matter how she loves her. She realizes that this is the nature and reality of

the world. She expresses the mental connection, or her imagination, of her grandmother and her death in the following words:

The grandmother whom I catch every time when she puts a knife on her stomach, motionless. She neither moves herself nor the knife.

-What are you doing here? asks the child.

- I am trying to kill myself (2012b: 43).

Whether this scene is real or it is an imagination, it helps us understand the narrator's perception of suicide with the grandmother figure. The setting is highly theatrical to be real so it gives us an opinion that the narrator just dreamed of seeing her grandmother during an unsuccessful suicide attempt. We should keep it in mind that although autobiographical elements are intense, Tezer Özlü's novels are works of fiction. She has not let this dark memory fade away since her childhood. In *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, Özlü cannot feel sad at the funeral of Bunni. Her strict attitude towards the death of her grandmother may be a consequence of what she thinks about the grandmother figure. Özlü mentions that the grandmother leads her life in a way in which she just breathes and does the housework nothing more than that. Therefore, there is not a clear distinction between her life and her death taking her life style into consideration. Bunni is not reflected as a mother figure or a real grandmother figure who receives the necessary and expected respect as an old lady. Instead, her role in life is that of a care-giver and, maybe rude but, a maiden. Bunni's looking after her grand-daughter and even her 60-year old son can be vivid examples of the desperate and hopeless role she maintains, either willingly or as a result of the opportunities the life brings to or offers her. Sırma Köksal writes: "...maybe the awareness of being very close to death resulted from growing up close by an old person..." (1997b: 90). That old person in Özlü's life is surely Bunni. Gültekin Emre agrees: "While she was growing up, her grandmother was embracing death slowly which affected her deeply" (1997: 95). As the authors point out, growing up very close to death seems to make the narrator become curious about death and she cannot escape from the idea of it. She writes:

The thought of death follows me. I am thinking of killing myself day and night. There is not a clear motive. There is no difference between life and death. Just an anxiety. An anxiety that makes me think of killing myself. I wake up at a late time of a dark night. Everybody is having their usual sleep. The house is chilly. I show ultimate attention to be quiet. I swallow handful of pills that I have been collecting for days. I eat bread with jam afterwards not to throw up. I am a young girl. I get prepared all day to make my dead body look pretty. It is as if there were people that I want to take vengeance upon. There are houses, couches, carpets, songs, teachers I want to rebel against. There are rules that I want to rebel against. A scream! Keep your little worlds to yourselves. A scream! (Özlü, 2012a: 12).

At such a young age, she attempts to kill herself. There is not a clear reason behind the thought of suicide. It can also be inferred from the writings of the narrator that she does not have a religious side. Seeing her grandmother's devotion to her religion may have made her be opposed to religion and religious education in schools. She says: "I used to think of God's existence. I used to pray to God for all of us restlessly until the day I believed God would not exist. I do not have to pray anymore. I can think whatever I want" (Özlü, 2012a: 9). The narrator does not give a specific reason why she chose not to believe in God that night. However, her word choices reveal a sense of relief. Years later in her daughter Deniz's questionnaire, Deniz asks her mother whether she believes in God or not and she says that she does. (Bir Usta, Bir Dünya: 1996). As the feature of the Bildungsroman, Özlü goes through changes in her personality, her feelings and her belief. She finally finds peace and she does not seem to feel angry with anybody. She shows great resolution in facing and solving her problems.

The narrator desires to stand up to the whole system and the rules that prevent her from living the way she wants. She cannot see any difference between life and death which means she is not alive. According to her, living means thinking freely and being distanced from any kind of oppression or limitations. Since the environment,

the society and the school did not let this happen, she chose death. She did not choose death as a result of her hatred of life. “On the contrary, I love life. I want to live hundreds of years” (Özlu, 2012a: 35). However, even if she loves life, she does not want to lead the life that she has had during her life span. With a high probability, this is the most fundamental reason why she committed suicide. She, in a way, wanted to express and reveal her desire of rejecting to the existing system in the society. However, there are limited opportunities for her to express what she thinks and how she feels. She sometimes screams, in other words, she reveals strong emotions such as fear and anger. She sometimes uses silence as a strong tool to refer to the profound feelings deep inside her; the feelings she actually wants to “scream”. Or, as a last solution, she gives up her life, i.e., she commits suicide in order to show how she is bored of the unchangeable stereotypes and the clichés in social and cultural life. The idea of one’s killing herself is probably the eventual way to show how unbearable and desperate the life is as in the case of Özlu. Moreover, one’s killing herself is, most of the time, the most difficult action she could ever undergo; therefore, if a person thinks of committing suicide let alone actualizing the action, this shows that there lies a deep and major social and psychological reason behind the thought and action, which leads the person to adopt the idea without taking the inevitable consequences into consideration.

2.3.4 THE SIBLINGS

Demir is the brother whom both Sezer Duru and Tezer Özlu envy. He is not mentioned in great detail in the book by Özlu. Demir Özlu is a well-known author who affected the narrator very much with his writings. Özlu gets along well with her brother and sister. They love and support each other. It can be inferred that the siblings are in solidarity against the oppressive regime of the father. The brother has his own world comprised of many books. He represents the enviable life, with his private room, books and educated friends, that Özlu wishes to possess enthusiastically. She compares his room with the other rooms of the house. It is noticeably the best room to live comfortably in the house. Özlu states: “My brother is comfortable. He has his own private room” (2012a: 11). Among the few sentences

mentioned about the brother, this quotation attracts the most attention as it reminds us of Virginia Woolf's statement: "a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf, 1929: 4). When women break themselves of the entrapment caused by the society and economy, they will be able to write. "Writing", here, can be regarded as representing production, production of any kind. If the women in the society are given the freedom they naturally deserve by birth, there is, most of the time, nothing they cannot do. Gaining the economic and social freedom provides women with limitless opportunities from which they can benefit and in which they can realize and actualize their internal senses and desires. Thinking of Özlü's mother again, however, she is a teacher who is economically-independent because she can earn her own money. On the other hand, she does not have a "room" for herself; in other words, she does not have any personal space in which she can go and relax. She does not have the chance even to listen to herself let alone other people listening to her. In such a strict and limited environment, she cannot realize herself and she cannot produce anything she wants or dreams of. When Özlü mentions his brother's room, she implicitly and indirectly refers to his freedom and having some personal space in which he can listen to his own voice and he can sense the freedom to create his own works of art, which is what Özlü envies and wanted to have during her childhood. The room here can be considered as a symbol of liberation and cutting loose from the obstacles that are on her way. Moreover, Özlü criticizes the way men dominate the women and the way men hinder their cross-gender counterparts from creating new things based on their abilities and capabilities. Özlü disapproves the bitter social fact that men take the right to "write" for granted even if they do not have to go through a maturation period to obtain this right. Unlike men, women sometimes cannot obtain this right despite the long years of being pressured and repressed by the patriarchal system in the society which has deep roots.

Tezer Özlü's big sister Sezer Duru is called "Süm" by the narrator. Their relationship is based upon love, friendship and solidarity. Their ideas are in harmony with each other. They both want to see the world together. Her sister Sezer Duru makes a comment on their adventure. She states:

Things we learned and read were tempting our desire to see the west. Turkey was already going through a very reserved period of time... In spring, we decided not to finish high school and that finishing school was not important at all. In May 1963, she came to Germany. After two quite adventurous months, we decided to head for Paris, we had listened very interesting things about Paris from Demir who had been there before (1997: 14).

The first military coup in the history of Turkey was carried out in 1960. Students made many protests which were ended by using violence during this period. Özlü wanted to go away from this atmosphere. Sezer Duru tells: "...one day, Tezer and I hit the road holding hands, walked outside the town. We were curious about the whereabouts of the end of the world and where those roads led" (1997: 12). She also quotes a part of Tezer Özlü's interview with a critic. Özlü writes: "I learned how to look at the world in an Anatolian town of 4000. I was six. I sensed the eternal vastness of the world and believed that I should go far far away" (Cited in Duru, 1997: 12). Sennur Sezer describes Süm as:

A young woman who has to behave in a balanced way. A young woman who has to repress her feelings, who has to adapt to every change, who has to live with a speedy reality, who has to tell and introduce the world and the conditions to a little sister (1997: 52).

She also states that Özlü draws the character of the sister objectively. Although Sezer Duru and Tezer Özlü live under the same conditions, their reactions to the events differ greatly. For example, they lived their childhood in the same house, they went to the same school, they had the same mother and father figure, they had similar friends. Even if they experienced similar things, the lenses or perspectives they adopted or adapted in time differ to a great extent. Their reactions to the existing realities can be considered as natural consequences of how they perceive the world and their experiences. These differences can stem from the personality traits of both

characters. In addition to their personal characteristics, it can also be inferred that the elder-sister figure, Sezer, holds the notion that she is older, even if not much, than Tezer and it is her social and emotional responsibility to embrace her younger sister who is more vulnerable against the dangers and oppressions in life surrounding them. Sezer may adopt the idea that the stronger she is, the better she can protect her sister. Likewise, if she looks through a positivist perspective in which she does try to adapt to the realities instead of complaining about them, she can be a role-model for her sister with whom she has intimate relations. However, it is obvious that the way the elder-sister follows does not much affect the way Özlü prefers in her personal life. Özlü neither wanted to adopt her mother's path, which seemed vulnerable and pitiful to her nor her elder-sister's way which was unnecessarily optimistic considering the cruel realities that their lives hold.

Regardless of the similarities of their experiences, Demir is seemingly the most advantageous sibling among the three. He is a male character that the sisters envy of in the family. It seems that the opportunities the society offers him are much more than it does for the girls. First of all, he is advantageous mainly because he is a male character in this life, which brings him numerous chances compared to those offered to the females. Even if they are the members of the same family, they were born to the same parents, Demir experiences the advantage of his being male in life and he shows superiority over his sisters. That is why, probably, Sezer and Tezer listen to their brother's stories about Europe when they are children and they look forward to experiencing the same things like their brother Demir. Özlü says: "I gaze at those people who travel and visit the large cities with my eyes full of longing." (2012a: 8). She dreams of one day visiting distant countries and breaking herself of all the attachments.

2.4 THE SCHOOL

The Chapter *School and the Way to School* begins with a depiction of the environment where the school is located. The narrator creates a dark, gloomy, pessimistic and gothic atmosphere to depict her school. Nostalgic and warmhearted

feelings are not encountered in this chapter. The sun does not brighten the street and shadows get darker. The colors of the buildings are either dark grey or black like the narrator's feelings for her Austrian school. The narrator senses a feeling of the Middle Age in this environment. It is possible that the narrator created this depiction to criticize the unprogressive medieval thought of this Christian school. The classes are dimly lighted and the students are not allowed to wear anything except in dark blue and white. The layout of the physical atmosphere is a way to emphasize the darkness of the educational environment as well as the darkness of the period which had significant influences on the thoughts, behaviors and attitudes of people of the time. Within this dark atmosphere, the children are not encouraged, and implicitly are not allowed, to think and to create or to think and to express themselves. They are not given the opportunity to make their voices heard by others. Furthermore, it is highly possible that they are prevented from hearing their own voices because their thinking and hearing their voice may result in some objection and standing up to the existing structure and system. The people of the period are blocked from using their minds and from evaluating what they are experiencing; instead, they are forced or directed to emulate others who are obedient to what is going on around them without assessing the possible consequences. They are, in a way, programmed to follow what is required and expected of them; they are like robots that obey the rules without showing any simple sign of being an individual who reflects the primary characteristic of being a human: thinking and talking.

Considering the teachers of the school system that Özlü attended, it is seen that the nuns do not have the intimate feeling of friendship either towards one another or towards their students. For instance, they are highly jealous of each other. Their attitudes can be signs that affect how their students can consider them as examples and role models. If the students see them behaving each other in a negative way, they are possibly to reflect this attitude in their own personal and social relationships. The teachers, or the nuns, adopts a strict approach towards their students. For example, the German teacher enters the classroom and salutes the students like a soldier. She even further creates a gloomy and pessimistic atmosphere and says: "May God be with you, dear children!" (Özlü, 2012a: 19). The nuns keep on reminding the

students of the existence of God and the inevitable end that every person is to experience: death. Death is more notable in this school than anywhere else, because death is considered, by the nuns, to be union with God and salvation from this earth. Friedrich Nietzsche is the author the nuns criticize most. He is believed to have been punished by God because of his disbelief. It is highly plausible that the movement of nihilism is adopted by Özlü in her writings.

Tezer Özlü spent nine years in this school from the age of 11 to 20. She sees this foreign school as a prison. She says: “This prison gave me a second language. It gave me a second language and a second world with it so that I would not belong to either of them” (Özlü, 2012b: 47). She is clearly divided into west and east, between liberation and imprisonment, between Turkish and German. Valérie Orlando writes about the dilemmas of heroines in female development novels:

Being in two, divided by two languages, two cultures, and/or two continents characterize the environments of the heroines [...] This space of duality, this space of disjunction – *étrangeté*- is so often experienced by women authors writing from the francophone Diaspora. As the authors, the heroines are exiled from their countries of origin and isolated because of their difference and their incessant search of liberty (2003: 33).

Tezer Özlü is alienated from her family, her native language and her country. She sometimes feels that she is able to express herself better in her second language. She says: “They taught me German very well. With the discipline of the nuns. Sometimes I test myself in my head if I can tell my thoughts in Turkish as fluently as in German” (2014: 10). The most comprehensive quotation about *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* is Tezer Özlü’s own remarks on the book:

I desired to tell about a shock in this book. The shock created by the western culture and the education in the Austrian school, one of the various foreign schools in the city of Istanbul where an eleven-year-old

child of a Turkish petit bourgeois family was sent for education until the age of 20.

Petit bourgeois parents are the patriotic individuals of the enthusiastic generation after the Turkish national independence war. What happens to a Turkish girl who has just come from the country to the city of Istanbul and experiences Austrian, especially German culture in a Catholic Church School? She wants to run away from home, because she experiences the shock that there is a discrepancy between what she has thought and the settled, loveless and intertwined life in these houses. She wants to abscond from school, because school is a dark church. A number of lies taught in school will not be needed at all in real life.

Left-wing literature was forbidden in Turkey in 1950s. The new generation deals only with existentialist philosophy (1997a: 145).

A teenage girl, who already experiences a cultural shock resulting from moving from the country to the city, has great difficulty in adapting herself to a completely unknown world and culture. The nuns' loveless approaches remind us of the narrator's loveless home and their strict rules remind us of the actions of the father. The narrator wants to escape from both of these environments to pursue her happiness in a new, free world. Things she learns does not seem important and useful to her. She says: "...our whole life is school. A center of learning" (Özlü, 2012a: 22) in a mocking way to point out the inessentiality of school life. Reich states:

Beginning with school, if not before, an individual is systematically stripped of his imagination, his creativity, his heritage, his dreams, and his personal uniqueness, in order to style him into a productive unit of a mass, technological society. Instinct, feeling, and spontaneity are depressed by overwhelming forces (1970: 9).

This quotation explains exactly what the narrator thinks about school life. Her "personal uniqueness" is taken away by the nuns the moment she enters the school or the "dark church". Wearing the same uniforms is also an indication of the attempt to

deprive them of their individuality. The society shapes individuals according to its own needs without considering the expectations, wishes and needs of them. A free spirit like Özlü's needs to cut loose from entrapment and needs to live in a free world. This free world is Europe.

Özlü does not cherish the memories of the time she spent in the foreign school. She does not get dewy-eyed and nostalgic about the past, especially about her school years. She thinks that those memories are gone and they will not be remembered with sentimental thoughts and feelings. She also believes that schools are not places where your consciousness and knowledge increase and you obtain a new perspective on life. She states:

(Years later, when I see little primary school children going to school at dawn in black clothes by memorizing patriotic poems, which I couldn't erase from my memory, on humid Istanbul mornings...)

-Nothing has changed, is what goes through my mind. I want to scatter the clouds, grasp the sun, run with the children on the hills, and taste the trees, the wind, the sun, the rain, and the people with them (2012a: 22).

She wishes the system to change entirely, however she is not optimistic about it. She just feels sorry for those children who will go through the same overwhelming system. She also gives a list of what she wants to do instead of memorizing poems that she does not believe in or feel. She wishes to unite with the nature and live her childhood, besides she believes that she will achieve happiness by getting together with the nature. The contrariness between the warm, childish depiction of the nature and the dark, gloomy, and repressive depiction of the school emerges one more time and we can see that she is aware of what she missed during her childhood. It can be inferred from this quotation that she does not possess warm and nostalgic feelings about the education system. She narrates:

...Have you ever given it a thought? Can you really see a dead person again? Can you go to a dead school? Can you sleep in a dead home?

Those years are dead. We are made to live those years in a way to kill them (Özlü, 2012a: 24).

It should be noted that these thoughts about the school are uttered neither during the narration of the environment nor during the depiction of the nuns. It can be said that these feelings and considerations did not emerge until her maturation completed.

While listing the subjects she learned at school, she uses fragments and phrases to show the redundancy of the subjects. According to her, none of them gives insight and experience about life. She lists:

German, English. Latin. Goethe. Schiller. Wars between Russia and Germany. The Treaty of Karlowitz and Passarowitz. Science. Bases of numbers. Square roots. All countries of the world. The wars of all countries. Things they import and export. The most incomprehensible examples of Turkish literature. How to become a fellow citizen. Military duties. Defense. The pillars of Islam. The essence of Faust. Formation of clouds. Memorized poems, words, formulas... I want to forget all these things that I have learned (Özlü, 2012a: 29).

She continues to tell:

I will forget all the things that I have learned. I will never pass the school once again. I don't want to go back to the dead end street and teacher parents. There is a friend of my brother who wants to marry me. He loves me. I will go to him so as not to return to home. I will have records and books. I read whatever I want, I sleep whenever I want, and I get out of home whenever I want. The lonely nights eventually come to an end. So do the chilly nights of childhood (2012a: 30).

She clearly wants to grow away from her family and friends. She considers marriage as a tool to escape from her reality which has been planned for her beforehand. However, she seems to be gullible to believe that a loveless marriage would make

things better in her life. The narrator lacks the maturity needed to give plausible decisions about her life.

2.5 THE MARRIAGE

Tezer Özlü, who got married three times in her life, tells about her first marriage in her first novel. Özlü plans to get married to a man for whom she does not feel any intimate feelings. There is an apparent contradiction between what she tells and what she actually lives. Although Özlü criticizes her mother for failing to have a happy married life built upon love, she is going to do the same mistake by marrying a man whom she clearly does not love just to make her life a little more bearable. However, this mistake will have more unbearable outcomes for the narrator to bear. She tells her marriage ceremony:

A weird marriage ceremony. There are just three or four friends. I am drunk. I don't know where I am. I don't know why I am getting married. I deeply sense that I am getting married without love. I am listening to the registrar's speech as if I were watching a comedy. I am laughing. My friends are laughing, too (Özlü, 2012a: 42).

The narrator's marriage should be judged in terms of her mental and physical state at the time of her decision of marriage. She is clearly torn between staying in a loveless, disciplined home and staying with a man with obsessions. The lack of harmony in their marriage is loud and clear. The narrator also admits that she got married without having enough knowledge about the man. She says: "The man I married shows his real personality at once. He has only one world. Paris! Paris! Paris! He wants to take vengeance upon me" (Özlü, 2012a: 42). Özlü does not belong to his world and this marriage is evidently doomed to end and it will have disturbing results upon her. In her letter to Ferit Edgü, she writes that she feels a sense of relief when her husband Güner is not with her. She tells that she will not be able to live his desperation anymore. She also writes that she has no hope or belief to give him (Özlü, 2011: 16). She writes: "He is in Paris. Everything is better without him. He will come... He had

better stay in Paris. Or if he comes, he had better live without me. This is neither friendship, nor marriage, nor love” (2012a: 36). As quoted before, “...calm returns when he leaves. Nature, then, becomes an ally of the woman hero, keeping her in touch with her selfhood, a kind of talisman that enables her to make her way through the alienations of male society” (Pratt, 1981: 21). The narrator feels that she will not be able to achieve a dramatic change in her life because of a mandatory marriage. Her self-realization is stopped by her husband. “... when the mentor is a husband and when apprenticeship reduces to a process of marital binding, it never leads the heroine to mastery but only to a lifetime as perennial novice” (Fraiman, 1993: 6). Labovitz maintains:

... the female Bildungsroman requires expansion beyond the point when the heroine is married, for up until this point of maturation the heroine has no sharp delineation of her self or her role, taking her identity from the man she marries, and wavering between self-narrowing and growth (Labovitz, 1986: 194).

Özlü’s thoughts about marriage are as following:

When she wants to make love, she has to get married; the social order of the country requires marriage. But how can this human being’s morality comply with those of men in her country? What will this bicultural person choose to make her own way? She has been taught a lot more than the general level of the society she lives in, later she has been asked to follow the rules of this country (1997a: 145).

She resents having to go through such a dark period in her life. It was a period which required her to live in harmony with the society while the school gave her an education which was formed with Christian belief and which had nothing in common with Turkish family customs and consequently she could neither commune with the traditional Turkish customs nor adapt to the German culture taught in the Austrian school. The result was a woman who faced the dilemma between Eastern and

Western culture, a woman who suffocated from the strict rules of the environment, a woman who was called insane by the sane people of the country, a woman who attempted suicide for a number of reasons none of which she explained to the reader and consequently she did not reminisce about anything in her past longingly. Why would she? Ahmet Oktay draws the attention to the fact that the society should be charged with suicide as well. He comments: “Suicide is surely an individual/personal problem, but also a social problem. Remember what Artaud said: ‘They committed suicide me.’ Tezer did not commit suicide, but I cannot help having this feeling that she died in such a way” (1997: 61).

2.6 POLITICAL ISSUES

Özlü avoids making comments on the political issues of a very critical time of Turkey. The first coup d'état took place on 27 May 1960 and the politicians were charged with treason. Leyla Erbil stresses: “The unappeased, secret violence of the bossy, repressive, patriarchal society covered all parts of human relations, sickened all the citizens, turned life into a living hell not only in the periods of martial law but also in the periods of civil governments” (Cited in Özlü, 2001: 13). The repressive regime at home, at school and in the country leaves no place to enjoy an individual’s freedom. Özlü wishes to escape from home and the school but there is not any place in the country to fulfill her dream.

Although Özlü tells that she has never taken part in any revolutionary struggle in the country, she is with the people who aim to demolish the established oppressive regime. Her natural wish can be seen with her utterance during a very painful electroshock treatment. Özlü says: “- I am dying, pursue the revolutionary struggle without me, I say” (2012a: 36). She desires people to gain consciousness to understand the political wrong-doings in the country and react to them. According to her, with the reactions of people in upper class, other people will start to form their own perspectives on the events happening in the country. She says: “Consciousness that emerged among the upper classes of the society has reached a level that can shape Turkish people’s thoughts in the last fifteen years. Liberation is not of the

individual; it depends on the liberation of everybody” (1997a: 146). Leyla Erbil tells about the events occurred on May 1, 1977. She says: “The day when the working class and the rise of left-wing were stopped with forty killed and hundreds wounded.” She continues to tell: “I am one of those who believe that to a great extent, Tezer Özlü’s problems result from this provoked societal violence and this fear. Now I remember what was told about Baudelaire, ‘What made Baudelaire mad was French imperialism...’ It made us all mad, too” (Cited in Özlü, 2001: 14). “Societal violence” never ceased to exist in the country throughout the entire life of Özlü. When she wanted to marry Hans Peter Marti, who a Swiss artist, the authorities did not let an older woman marry a younger foreigner by the help of the country’s bureaucracy. Leyla Erbil tells: “In such a country like Turkey, authorities do not allow a young woman writer (I have to use the ‘woman writer’ phrase now because nobody would say anything to a male writer if he wanted to marry a ten-year-old girl even in his nineties) to marry a younger foreign man in one way or another” (Cited in Özlü, 2001: 14). Erbil clearly accuses the authorities of sexism by using the bureaucracy against them. The writer shows her rage by giving a hyperbolic example. She wants to point out how women and men are treated differently in the society and that it has a very powerful tool called “bureaucracy” to disregard women’s wishes.

2.7 ELECTROSHOCK

The narrator attempts a suicide. She is eager to die. However, she wakes up and sees a dirty pillowcase with the letters P and C written upon. She understands that she has been saved and now she is in a psychiatric clinic. She is not even allowed to die by choice. She decides to wait for death like most people. She thinks: “The thought of suicide does not let me go. I will wait for death by natural causes like most people” (Özlü, 2012a: 13). Electroshock treatment, which was one of the most controversial psychiatric treatments of the 20th century, is used after the suicide attempt. In *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, the narrator describes her first experience of electroshock treatment. She conveys her feelings and thoughts during the so-called “treatment” to the reader. She does not use punctuations except slashes to separate

her thoughts. She uses stream of consciousness technique to draw attention to her state of mind. Barton and Hudson explain the term as: “In literary criticism, the terms *stream of consciousness* and *interior monologue* are both used to describe narrative techniques that present multi-leveled flows of rational and irrational thoughts and impressions uninhibited by grammar, syntax, and logical transitions” (1997: 186). Özlü does not follow a chronological order or a logical plot to convey her thoughts. She writes:

Electroshock has a beginning and ending. No middle. For a human, for a sick human. But I lived that moment of death in the middle. And here I am in the middle of shock. I am thinking and hearing when they give me electroshock:

'... And now the events have gone too far that they give me electroshock / maybe they are trying the electroshock method to make me talk / the doctor must have come home / and what's more the electroshock device in his hand is a strange one / like a wooden shoeshine box / who knows, maybe he was unable to regulate the electricity well / or it is the city power / it goes up and down / and it kills you / and now they have put me into a shock coma in my own house / do they want to make me talk / does my husband want to know whether he was really cheated or not / what difference does it make if he was or was not / are they making me talk / am I talking / they should not have done this to me / I do not have any secrets / I have always treated all of them well even when I was sick / I have never yelled at anybody / I have never attacked anybody / I have always suffered by myself / ... / and I feel the beat of the electricity on the metal fillings in my teeth / it is unbearable / I know there are people who die from these kind of shocks / they told me about it / ... / is Süm by my side / she cannot be / my mother my brother my husband / I understand in the shock they are with me / and I know who the doctor is / I will die the moment I shut my eyes / they will not have anybody left to mess around with / what is it that they want / as passionately as they end my life with electricity / I am not angry / they want the best for me / is this a natural

thing / is this an event to experience by living and thinking / maybe it is natural'

- I am dying, pursue the revolutionary struggle without me, I say (2012a: 52).

She cannot understand the reason why they treat her in such a torturous way. She explains that she has not taken part in any kind of revolutionary struggle in her life. However, she realizes that wishing the revolutionary struggle to continue is the essence of her thoughts. She cannot put her thoughts in a logical sequencing to show the continuous flow of ideas, thoughts, and feelings. She emphasizes: "What heals me is neither shock nor drugs. What heals me is the grand and deep fear of the possibility of getting locked up in those clinics once more" (2012a: 56). Sezer Duru tells us about her illness:

She dealt with Kafka for a long time in those years; she did not let him go at all till the end of her life... She was diagnosed with manic depression. This illness always recurred when she was betrayed by the people around her, when she had no longer the strength to bear the injustices committed against her, when the society was expecting major events, when the people were killed, tortured (1997: 16).

Manic depression which she was diagnosed with is defined in the following by Sommers:

...bipolar disorder is a condition that causes your mood to swing back and forth between two opposite emotional states.

This means that you experience periods of major depression in which you feel sad, lonely, weak, and helpless. Other times you have manic periods in which you feel energetic and confident. You can experience extreme sensations of anger, irritation, or happiness. (2003: 7)

An example of this definition is encountered in Özlü's novel. Özlü tells: "Mood swings are not so extreme in their worlds. Excitement does not reach the level of insanity in their worlds. Depression does not evolve into the fear of death or maybe into the wish of death" (Özlü, 2012a: 45). Goodwin and Jamison state: "Manic-depressive illness magnifies common human experiences to larger-than-life proportions. Among its symptoms are exaggerations of normal sadness and joy, profoundly altered thinking, irritability and rage, psychosis and violence, and deeply disrupted patterns of energy and sleep" (2007: Introduction xix). In her letters to Ferit Edgü, Özlü says that sometimes she feels extremely energetic and that she has a sound sleep of 10 hours in the evenings (2011: 27). However, she sometimes suffers from insomnia. Sezer Duru continues to tell about Özlü's personality:

Tezer had a self sacrificing personality which stood by the oppressed, had a humanistic approach to everyone she knew. She had a sarcastic point of view about people and events around her, but she would rebel when it came to the injustices committed against people. She was very smart and witty... (1997: 16)

We understand that injustice events in the society affected her so deeply that she could not find the power to stand up to them. She was depressed and treated in the wrong hands. Doctors in the clinics molested her and the janitors beat her so much that she spat blood. She says that there is nobody to stop them as they have full power. One of the doctors, who later received the title of Professor, tries to rape her in his office but she gets away. A fat nurse makes her take off her clothes in front of her lover. Although the narrator does not want to do this, she knows that if she does not, she will be treated worse by the nurse. While the "disturbed" nurse is regarded to be sane and granted the power to rule over the patients by the authorities, the patient, who can no longer conform to the incomprehensible demands and rules of other people, is regarded to be insane and locked up in a clinic under custody of inhumane hospital staff. The narrator says: "If I do not take off my clothes, she will complain about me to the doctors. She will tell that I am too sick and I need to be given electroshock" (Özlü, 2012a: 47). The narrator is in full submission to the requests of

the nurses, janitors and doctors. She is aware of the fact that the fastest way to get out of that place is to obey every rule uttered by them. Her world-view is scattered completely by those in power. She is ashamed of being treated in such a dehumanizing way. Clinics' dehumanizing and insulting treatments were obstacles on her way to freedom. She criticizes:

Everything she says can be counted as "insanity" in the light of the interpretations of the country. On what grounds will uneducated psychiatrists judge this person, on what grounds will they try to heal this person. Can people be healed in psychiatric clinics? Or are they made rather ill?

You have to be strong to step on the ground. A person, who returned to life from the electroshock coma, needs to know how to get out of those clinics (Özlü, 1997a: 146).

The narrator points out that people who will evaluate if she is crazy or not have no competency or right to judge her. She does not want to be treated according to the views of the society. The narrator and the others in her situation make "...efforts to gain control over their own minds, to win their freedom without hindrance, and to further their self-development" (Labovitz: 1986: 248).

Nargileci comments: "Unfortunately, the rule of this world was written beforehand; a person out of the line was crazy" (1997: 140). Although they tried to "fix" her thoughts and attitudes, she just pretended to change. Her rebellious inner world stayed the same. Even after such a disastrous misfortune, she did not become obedient and did not change her thoughts:

I was young when they electrified my head. My head. They used salt to conduct electricity better to my brain cells. Endure this, I thought. They will not be able to change and assimilate your thoughts to theirs. You will never become like the person they want you to be. Every pain is endurable as long as you do not recognize it (Özlü, 2012b: 46).

Leyla Erbil criticizes that the illusion of freedom is created by the system itself. People think that they have complete liberation to act on every subject in the society as they wish; however people's actions in conflict with the society's will be punished immediately by its establishments like prisons and hospitals.

In modern and civilized society (?) people can be as progressivist and free as the system wants them to be. Your demands pushing the limits will subvert the order; those not settling and adapting are in clinics of hospitals, if not in jails. In clinics, the new healing methods from Freud's findings will be applied. Many authors of our century treat this subject. Among them, American poet Sylvia Plath depicts her own life in her only novel *The Bell Jar*, too (1997a: 31).

Leyla Erbil draws a parallel between Sylvia Plath's protagonist Edaerda and Tezer Özlü in terms of getting treated in clinics with new methods for years, but Erbil is not pessimistic about Tezer Özlü as Plath's protagonist commits a suicide while Özlü survives the hardship.

2.8 ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST

While Özlü is watching a movie, she remembers her experiences that she never wants to recall again in the mental clinics. She writes: "We are watching the movie *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The doctors will give electroshock to a patient who rebels against the order of the hospital and argues that the patients will heal in the outside world. I get out of the theatre right away" (2012a: 38). Tezer Özlü, who once received electroshock treatment in a psychiatric clinic, identifies herself with the lead character Randle McMurphy in the movie *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. She is deeply affected by what McMurphy experienced in the mental hospital. She writes:

I watch the pains I experienced in five years in a just two-hour movie. I also tried to show the patients in hospitals the ways to get out of that

place, tried to tell them the temporariness of these periods. How many saved themselves? I do not know. I am free now. I use the word freedom to mean only not to be in a closed place, not to be locked up. I came face to face with death, but free I am (2012a: 39).

To understand the effect of the movie on Tezer Özlü, it will be helpful to give a general plot of the movie. *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* is the first novel of Ken Kesey. It was published in 1962 and adapted for a film in 1975. It was directed by Miloš Forman and starring Jack Nicholson, Louise Fletcher, and Will Sampson. The lead character Randle McMurphy is admitted to a psychiatric ward for his behaviors resulting from rage to be evaluated. He serves his time for the accusation of rape. In the beginning, he believes that serving his time in a mental hospital would be much easier than working in the prison farm. He is a con man and a gambler who takes advantage of gullibility of the patients. He does not have any empathy for them. Later when he becomes aware of the injustices made by the nurses and the janitors, he becomes an advocate for the rights of the patients. However, he still plays the game according to the rules of the hospital. W. D. Sherman states: "...although McMurphy has decided to risk indefinite confinement because of his commitment to the plight of the men, his commitment is not yet total" (1971: 189). He realizes that to liberate the patients from the oppressive and dehumanizing regime, he has to sacrifice himself. He encourages them to leave the hospital. However, the patients do not consider themselves ready. In the movie, McMurphy loses his temper and says: "What do you think you are, for Christ's sake? Crazy or something?" (Zaentz, Douglas & Forman, 1975). Özlü thinks about a man who does not read much or thinks outside the box. She thinks: "He won't be able to taste happiness of freedom which does not depend on objects or taste independence which prospers and grows daily and reaches all centuries" (2012a: 26). McMurphy thinks alike about the patients in the ward. He wants to set them free. The patients in the infirmary do not seem crazier than the average people in the outside world. They have problems to be solved, but McMurphy believes that they will get better outside. They are declared as insane since their behaviors do not fit into the traditionally accepted manners. They cannot adjust to the society and they try to fit in by staying willingly in this

contemptuous facility. All of them are afraid to speak their thoughts. McMurphy, who has a deep hatred of authority and social order, tries to make them rebel but fails. He thinks that as long as he fights the system and does not obey their rules, he is sane. When McMurphy finds out that the other patients in the infirmary stay there voluntarily, he pretends to retreat and tries to follow the rules to get out of the hospital sooner; however, it does not last very long.

Nurse Ratched is the antagonist of the movie. She is the representative of the authority that will not tolerate any confrontation. Nurse Ratched is called “the big nurse” like the big brother in George Orwell's *1984*. She is brutal, rigid and powerful. She has no respect for human rights of the patients. Their well-being is the last thing she would care. The only thing she is interested in seems to maintain the order and to make the patients follow her commands. She does not attempt to understand the patients' expectations, hopes and behaviors. They are just mentally ill people to be controlled.

After a night party in the ward organized by McMurphy for his final plan to get out of the clinic, a stuttering patient, Billy commits suicide when he can no longer put up with the pressure and threats made by the Big Nurse. McMurphy is held responsible for this tragic event and receives lobotomy. At the end, Chief Bromden kills McMurphy mercifully with a pillow as he is numbed by the ECT. Özlü tells us the end of the movie: “His life will be full of deep pains. His friend, who wants to prevent this, chokes him. He saves him” (2012a: 38). McMurphy’s death gives most of the patients enough self-confidence to face the world. Chief Bromden escapes from the clinic and unites with the natural world again.

McMurphy’s life has many parallels with Özlü’s experiences. The moment she watches the movie, the flow of memories of passing years in the clinic rushes into her mind. She asks her sister whether she feels a little bit of the pain she suffers. She agrees with McMurphy that patients will get better outside with their beloved ones and with people who do not consider them as patients. Özlü believes that mental illness is a contagious disease and that it may as well make a healthy person get sick

if you just sense the desperation and deep pain of an unhealthy person. She says that the bond between illness and health is so thin that by just looking at a schizophrenic patient and sensing his paleness of thirty years, his weakness and lack of appetite, his decayed teeth, and his loss of time or just by smelling schizophrenia you can get sick right away. After her memories fade away, her sister replies that it was appropriate that she was locked up with other patients. Özlü says: “I will not be able to tell. If those people can watch *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *Napoleon's Biography*, a white liner approaching the port and new Autumn clothing in shop window with the same eyes, what can I do?” (2012a: 40). She cannot sleep because of the effect of the movie on her. She looks down on other people because of their attitudes towards the movie. She believes that this movie should be evaluated from a different perspective. She empathizes with the protagonist McMurphy as she was punished severely in the same way by the society's establishment. That is why *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* is a primary source to understand Özlü's feelings.

2.9 MEDITERRANEAN ONCE AGAIN

The final chapter of the book is described in a calm mood with a colorful setting. The narrator is stripped of the dark, gloomy atmosphere of “home” and “school” environment. Nature appears as a friend of hers and she feels undisturbed and blissful in nature. “Nature, then, becomes an ally of the woman hero, keeping her in touch with her selfhood, a kind of talisman that enables her to make her way through the alienations of male society” (Pratt, 1981: 21).

She sits on the top step of the antique theatre in the Mediterranean region. She enjoys the sunrise that will paint the mountains with many colors. It can be inferred that the first time in her life she tastes peace and freedom. She is out of the mental clinic now and starts a new life. She remembers the man she once made love with. She says: “...He used to run to the florist, throw a bundle of wild flowers on the bed. ‘This hour of today is as beautiful as they were’, I say to myself” (Özlü, 2012a: 59). She also says: “I want to embrace the insatiable life” (2012a: 60). Her perception of life radically changed after her recovery. The descriptions of life were not created with

such warm-hearted feelings. In this chapter, it is clearly understood that her rage against other people seems to have been diminished. Her enthusiasm to live can be seen with this quotation:

Life is full of absolute passions. Getting used to death grows and develops with the love of life. It gains beauties. Life should be seen off as easily and beautifully as I see this love off. I need to give up my loves with satisfaction (2012a: 61).

The narrator expresses her thoughts about life and death clearly. She has an immense enthusiasm to live, however death is not regarded to be an isolated part of life. She believes there is a unity in life provided by death.

In final chapter, the narrator also complains about 12th March (1971) period. She says that pains caused by that period can never be forgotten as numerous young people were killed in that oppressive regime. She laments for the dead who rebelled against the system to make it better. In a way they sacrificed themselves. She writes:

Longing and expectation for better lives are buried along with them. There is not such a thing like a better life. Better lives are not very far. The better life is here. In Taksim square. In the black crowd of people selling pickles, rice, bagels, flowers, postcards and of people polishing shoes... The boundaries of the better life are just as much as our dead, buried friends had experienced (2012a: 61-62).

She gives up expecting more from life. She starts enjoying the tiny details about life and her pessimism seems to wear off as she realizes that life should be celebrated. Her self-realization has not been achieved yet; nevertheless she made a huge progress on her way towards her formation. She finally acts in concert with nature. Her unwanted childhood memories are far away and she gives up the thought of suicide.

CHAPTER THREE- ÖZLÜ'S MATURATION: *JOURNEY TO THE END OF LIFE*

3.1 A REVIEW OF *JOURNEY TO THE END OF LIFE*

Journey to the End of Life (Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk) was written in German in 1980 by Tezer Özlü who followed the deaths of her favorite authors: Cesare Pavese, Italo Svevo and Franz Kafka. Özlü translated her book later and published it in 1984. Ahmet Cemal highlights the symbolic associations of three authors as they rebelled against any kind of boundaries and injustices against humans (1997).

This novel can be considered as a sequence of her first novel *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*. She won the Marburg Literature Award in 1983. This award reveals the success of the novel since winning a well-regarded award in a foreign language requires competence in target language. Although it was originally written in German, it does not give the taste of a translated text. Despite the boredom and pressures of the education she had received in her childhood period for nine years in an Austrian Foreign School, as far as the general opinion is concerned, it can be commented that Özlü eventually experienced a positive and beneficial consequence of studying there. She became among the rare and valuable assets in world literature who was awarded. Tezer Özlü was able to create a book which was favored in both languages. However, the author herself does not consider this, i.e. knowing two separate languages like her mother tongue, as an advantage. It is something that poses some difficulties to Özlü as she, sometimes, finds it hard to think in and express what she thinks in two languages. It would be easier for her to just think in one language and convey her messages in the same language. Instead of spending additional effort to shift between different languages, she would concentrate on the things that occupy her head.

Özlü wrote the novel in just two weeks. She comments on that period: “And that fourteen-day journey has been the most intense, active and energetic time of my life. The two-week period when I did not know where to go, all alone, when I just looked for Kafka’s, Italo Svevo’s, and Cesare Pavese’s graves” (2001: 33). She tells about her trip: “I passed the seven thousand-kilometer-long road between Berlin-Prague-

Vienna-Zagreb-Belgrade-Nis-Berlin-Zagreb-Trieste-Torino-S. Stefano Belbo and wrote two third of the book on trains, stations and in hotels without stopping” (1997b: 149). Almost all of her attention and desire were concentrated on investigating her favorite authors and writing about her journey in which she discovers new things both about those writers and about herself. She visited the graves of these three writers, found and talked to the relatives of theirs and the characters in their novels. She not only visited their graves but also saw the environment they grew up, lived and died. She wanted to experience the same things they did. “To write this book, she travelled to many countries beforehand, traced Kafka, Pavese and Svevo. She was a relative of these authors as if they had been by her side all the time” (Duru, 1997: 18). By trying to make sense of the previous lives of the favorite authors, she, in a way, wanted to go through the same experiences despite the reality that the life span of these authors ended before hers and they were the people of different periods and, therefore, different tastes and experiences. Yet, despite these differences, Özlü still was able to find some connections and similarities between herself and the authors, which was the basic reason for her journey.

The original name of the book was *Bir İntiharın İzinde (On the Track of a Suicide)*. This name of the book, in fact, limits the scope to which the book wants to reach. It is not consisted of a mere story of following three writers. It goes beyond travel writing. A new, comprehensive name was needed to suggest these views. Ferit Edgü is the one who came up with the new name of the book. He says in his letter to Özlü that the name *Journey to the End of Life* would fit her book perfectly. Özlü agrees and allows Edgü to change the name of her book as he wants. He wrote in his letter to Özlü: “‘On the Track of a Suicide’ is a brilliant book. It is a very brilliant book. (I cannot find another word for it.) I have not read anything like it for years” (Özlü, 2011: 40). Edgü’s comments reveal that even before its publication, what Özlü had written received the attention and appreciation it desired by another successful writer.

Füsun Akatlı describes Özlü’s book as narration. According to her, the book is neither a story nor a novel although it has similarities with them. She states that what

really matters is the journey itself. However, she states that Özlü's novel is more than travel writing (1997: 44-45). Fethi Naci considers Tezer Özlü's novel *Journey to the End of Life* as a rebel against the rules of the society. According to him, she is even more courageous than any other male writer who can only defend his sexual problems or moral ideas by forming a woman character. (1997) Fatih Özgüven resembles Özlü's novel to a "floating mine" in terms of its lack of directions and its eventual explosion (1997: 41). According to Oktay Akbal: "It is the inner-outer world of a woman who openly says everything and does not hide any feelings" (1997: 68). He emphasizes the uniqueness of Özlü's works and does not want to put them in a pattern such as story, novel, memoir or essay. All these critics agree on the uniqueness of Özlü's work in terms of the literary style of her work which is not similar to any novel with its strong language, use of ellipses, flashbacks, and summarizations. The ways she makes use of the language and the things she narrates or the ideas she conveys come together and make Özlü's writings unique and valuable. In other words, what makes her different from the others and what promotes her being appreciated is herself; her language and her thoughts. Her objection is actually not only towards the society and its stereotypes, she also criticizes the stereotyped patterns in the existing literature which is influenced by the society. She objects to what is reflected in the literary works about the society and those who reflect what is going on in a fixed and narrow manner.

3.2 JOURNEY TO THE END OF SELF-REALIZATION

The novel starts on a beautiful spring day with the realization of the narrator that her favorite author Pavese and she were born on the same day. She expresses that she identifies herself with Pavese in his sentences and pictures. It is clearly seen that the narrator's world-view is identical to Pavese's; she has been influenced greatly by this writer. She states:

I need to go... till I reach S. Stefano Belbo this time. As if this writer, who committed suicide thirty two years ago, were waiting for me there. Seeing his hills, houses, streets, living the piece of nature that conditioned him will be just like living him (Özlü, 1984: 78).

She finds her real self in his writings and thoughts. We can see that she attaches great importance to Pavese's ideas from the fact that all the italic quotations in her work are Pavese's. As what Pavese thinks is important for Özlü, she gives place to what her favorite author says in her own writings.

In this novel, the narrator intends to make a journey towards her inner world. By following her favorite writers, she essentially tries to get the bottom of her feelings. Her desire and aim is to find the real "Tezer" in the deep parts of her mind and her heart. She travels and she travels non-stop so hurriedly that it is like she wants to run away from her childhood and her memories about her past. Özlü writes: "How independent I am at any moment of my journey towards the end of my boundaries...How happy I am" (1984: 83). Instead of considering journeys as a way of having fun, she regards them as a tool that provides abstract binoculars through which she can look at the inner-state of herself and reach some realizations considering who she actually is. She states her intention: "Every going, every journey is a landing towards unknown parts of my 'self'" (1984:105). She avoids giving details of her life in this novel. She aims to find her real self.

(But why don't 40 year-old I end my journey to myself). But don't end, don't end. A 20 year-old either gets in social order which doesn't accord with common sense or he exists. He doesn't want harmony, he wants to exist. He is going... So am I. I haven't met anything compatible yet (Özlü, 1984: 65).

She does not want a life directed with the rules of social order. She does not want just to exist. Instead, she wants to oppose to the limits and boundaries of the life the rules of which are established and maintained by those living in the society. The people shaping those rules may not actually want to lead their lives based on the stereotyped rules. However, no matter what they want, people living in any kind of social group have to obey to the rules and follow them in order to lead their lives in harmony with the social atmosphere. This is what Özlü sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly objects to. Instead of being a passive member of the society and complying with its regulations, she wants to voice her thoughts and try to change the

existing dynamics in the society that forces people to be “robots”. Instead of being ruled by the society and its unconscious members, she desires to be ruled by her own choices and wishes. Every limitation appears as a tough wall in front of the narrator hindering her from reaching her self-realization and her desired state of self-actualization. She resembles the boundaries to “walls” which put pressures on her and which follow her throughout most of the phases in her personal life, influencing her psychological state.

Every wall is narrow. Every wall is closed. Every wall is a pressure upon people. I am going to every part of the city together with my previous walls. With the narrow walls of my parents' house. With the suffocating walls of the marriages. With the cigarette-smelling walls of the bureaus. With the cruel walls of schools. House walls, prison walls, walls in front of which people were hung or shot. The walls of hospitals. The walls of institutions, the marble walls, the walls of poor houses, the walls of senior centers, the walls of cottage, the walls of shacks, the walls of cities, the walls of the systems (Özlü, 1984: 19).

The wall is the symbol of imprisonment in Özlü’s works. Every wall is considered to be a boundary against people’s freedom. She gives examples of boundaries from which she suffered most in her life. She feels these restrictions in every part of her life. There is not such a place where she can be herself without limitations placed on her. As mentioned before, family, marriages, schools and hospitals impose loads of restrictions on the narrator that she found leaving as a solution to this problem. For example, taking the period she had to spend nine years of her childhood into consideration, it can be commented that the real walls of the school turned out to be abstract walls and became psychological barriers in front of her. The strict rules of the school system imposed both physical and psychological obstacles for her to experience her childhood and achieve what she wanted as a child who had more future and mature notions in her mind than expected from her age. Another “wall” occurred in the phase in which she was imprisoned in a mental hospital for what she had in her mind. Maybe, it was her mistake to express what she had in her mind because if she had not made them public, she, probably, would not have had to go

through those painful experiences. Despite realizing that there were a number of those who had real problems and that they were out and not punished because they did not express their ideas, Özlü wanted to stand against the social system by putting her abstract thoughts into concrete words. The more she wanted to overcome the walls, the more she had to face with higher and stronger walls. It may be considered that she had to face with subsequent walls in her life not because she was the one who was to be restricted but because those in the society were actually the ones who were afraid of making changes in their lives and they were afraid of objecting to the existing system which did not give importance and value as individuals and which limited and sometimes violated the rights of people. As they were, themselves, restricted and undervalued, they wanted to treat Özlü in the same way. They put walls in her way whenever possible not to let her reach her self-actualization and accomplish what they cannot accomplish. Implicitly, they did not want someone else to do what they could not do themselves although they appreciated her in their minds.

The narrator continues to say: “Are the walls graves in our lives” (Özlü, 1984: 19). She resembles the walls to the graves as she cannot breathe and live freely enough. This quotation makes a connection between limitations and death. According to her, there is no point in living in a coffin. She states: “I have never been as bored with any limitations as boundaries and within my limitations I have built my own unlimited world” (1984: 67). She also quotes Pavese in her book to show how much they think alike. “There is no such a thing as fate, there are only boundaries. The worst destiny is to bear boundaries with patience. You need to resist” (Quoted by Özlü, 1984: 70). Pavese seems to have played a huge role in shaping her ideas and beliefs. Özlü exactly behaves in a way Pavese would approve of. She resisted boundaries throughout her life as Pavese had suggested. Rebellious against restrictions is not a choice or intention for her; it is a way of living. Opposing to the boundaries has become a life style for her; a life style she willingly and strictly wants to follow despite the stereotypes of the society. It is her courage to stand against the system and make her voice heard even if this brings her not good but disadvantageous and undesirable outcomes. The narrator is not on familiar terms

with living in another way. She writes her thoughts about boundaries in an inclusive way:

Nobody who accepts, internalizes, accords with boundaries will be able to achieve the individual independence at the end of standing up to them. A person who both rebels against and lives with boundaries will not be able to be freed from the dead-end throughout a lifetime. They will be ill at ease, and they will neither be content with life nor die peacefully. As they age, the fear of death will grow. Even if they attempt to make themselves look courageous when they are with other people, they will at least comprehend that they lie to themselves. It is also a step if they raise this consciousness. Many of them have already banished individual freedom as they perceive the lie as the reality, whereas a human being has to earn both the life which is the noblest fact presented to us, and reach the infinity at the end of it. Life is a phenomenon that opens doors for this development. Human existence is not something that slips by randomly. It is EVERYTHING that will be formed, changed, eternalized... I leave to abandon the stereotypes. I will not give up leaving... I perceive life as leaving (Özlu, 1984: 71).

The narrator criticizes people who cannot dare to abolish limitations that confine their lives to a pattern governed by social rules. Freedom of thinking is regarded to be the essence of human beings by the narrator. She writes:

I listen to every person fondly. I have concerns. About what they think, how they perceive life. No matter which country they are in, I rarely come across a person who has banished the medieval thought and who is independent. The most obstinate people on the earth are the Catholics. It is better to talk to a rock (1984: 37).

She excludes herself from these people and it can be inferred that she is comfortable with the idea of her alienation from people who are unable to appreciate the value of their freedoms. She says that as she gets older, she feels more distant from people. The most probable reason for her distance towards and alienation from people is that

they try just to live according to the boundaries of the society; they do not bother themselves to change the mal-formed order imposed on them. She finds the solution by travelling. (Özlü, 1984) Because “Journeys are new lives that open up to the world” (Özlü, 1984: 88). She gets a taste of freedom during her journeys. She writes: “I like rails. They remind me of independence, the optionality of staying, adapting. Rails are some kind of independence for me” (1984: 23-24). It can be inferred that she runs away from her memories for a brief period of time during her journeys. She feels liberated and all the boundaries placed either by the society or other people seem to fade away. As the walls are symbols of boundaries and limits, the rails are the symbols of freedom and independence for her. The rails allow her to have psychological journeys into her childhood and adulthood periods and offer her opportunities to go through her experiences. In addition, contrary to walls which prevent Özlü from thinking and from being free and autonomous, rails provide her the change to revise her thoughts and reflect on her personality. The rails allow her to self-actualize and to be free as she expects and desires.

The narrator remembers the years of her childhood when she has no option apart from obeying to survive in grown ups’ world. The fact that children and adults perceive the world with the same senses is disregarded by adult people and children are not considered to need freedom of their own. She is opposed to the notion that if both a child and an adult perceive their environment with the help of similar human senses, why the adult do not let the child to be an individual. She refers to the mercilessness of this situation and she considers being a child as being a submissive asset in the society in general and family in particular. Considering this general and stable case, the narrator writes:

The boundaries of childhood are appalling. Like the chilly nights of childhood. The boundaries, impossibility, images, immobility and confined boundaries of childhood are appalling. Grown-ups' thinking about seeing themselves as adults and children as kids is appalling. It is not allowed to cross the childhood boundaries during childhood. However, I understand that I saw the world with the same eyes and perceived the world with the same eyes, with the same thought and

intuitions. The passing years have just multiplied these intuitions, feelings, thoughts and the perceptions of the eyes looking at the world, piled them up, and amplified them like an irresistible avalanche. But I am not in the prison of childhood anymore. I am not in exile of childhood. Childhood is imprisonment, childhood is exile (Özlü, 1984: 165-166).

She supposes that, as a grown-up, she can make her decisions on her own and have control over her life. The memories of her childhood years are not welcomed and appreciated by the narrator. It is natural that she does not appreciate those memories because she is against the idea of being inactive and being forced to obey the so-called social and family rules. As mentioned in the previous chapter, her childhood years were agonizing in terms of her dilemmas and the cultural shock she experienced at the foreign school. The years when she was supposed to get to know herself were taken away from her and her fate was arranged on behalf of her. Even if she did not favor the established system, she, in a way, became its victim. That is why the narrator is fed up with all the boundaries that may arise. “I remember the years of my childhood when I used to watch my shadow which would never let me go during the daytime in the suffocating towns of Anatolian cities” (Özlü, 1984: 150). She says: “I can yell at all the systems” (1984: 50). Her courageous side can be clearly seen as she has no fear of being condemned by the reader or her friends in real life. Even though autobiographical elements are so clear in her texts and she clearly gives examples from her real life, she does not attempt to avoid telling any events that are not welcomed by the society. She is equipped with the courage to tell what she thinks and what she experiences without hiding them against the public viewpoint. She bravely admits that the way she considers the world and the human existence is almost totally different from the way the stereotyped members of the society do. She maintains that what is socially-approved is not what she considers as good or appropriate. She underlines that her reality is different from that of the society. That is the biggest challenge female characters suffer from in the concept of female Bildungsroman: having to face with the realities of the social life and trying to overcome the barriers imposed on the character. Özlü comments on this case as follows:

When they ask me what I do, if I am married or not, what my husband does, what my mother and father are, when they ask me under what kind of conditions I live, I understand from their faces that they approve of my answers contentedly. And I want to yell at all of them. The answers you approve of are just surfaces which are not in accordance with my reality. Neither a regular job nor a good house, neither stateless fact as you call it “marital status” nor being or being considered a successful individual is my reality. I have also reached these concepts just because you determined the social order in this way. Without even giving a try. Maybe without working at all as I wished. It is so easy to reach the order you wish... I have nothing in common with your order, your understanding of intelligence, and your purity or with your success. I wear clothes to wander among you. And what is more I wear well just because you give a good status to those wearing well. I work to wander among you because you did not let me work what I wanted... You preyed on my mind during my lifetime. With your houses. With your schools. With your offices. You preyed on my mind with your government and private corporations. I desired to die, you resuscitated me. I desired to write, you told me that I would starve. I tried to starve, you transfused me. I went crazy, you electrified my head. I united with a man that would never be a family, still we did. I am out of all these things. ...I sense that I am everything but a good, successful, settled person (1984: 76).

The narrator gives a summary of her experiences which she narrated in *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*. Her realities are not in compliance with the expectations of the society. She has been deprived of her liberation to guide her life. The narrator does not seem to be interested in being regarded as a successful person in terms of common understanding of success. She articulates her resentment and frustration at any kinds of institutions and establishments of the order boldly. It is undoubtedly understood that the miserable life she has had so far is the fault of the society. She lacks the right to choose to lead her life. Even the act of writing, which is a part of her and which helps soothe her anger, is attempted to be halted. In spite of her desire

to die, she was saved and, in this way, she was forced to continue living. However, she was forced to lead a life in which she was not given the opportunity, or even her natural right, to lead her life in the way she wanted. She was expected to obey to the pre-set rules of the society and, even if she thought otherwise, she was expected to value the traditional norms and notions of the civilization. Whenever possible, the members of the society wanted to question her and obtain further information about her considering her social and personal life. However, Özlü expressed her real ideas and thoughts about the social and personal life whenever possible without hesitating that the others would condemn her. The discrepancy between the personality of the character and the endless expectations of the society on the contrary is what is mostly underlined in the female development novel. By examining the characteristics of female development novel summarized by Pratt, we can see that Özlü's two novels studied fit the genre. Pratt and White suggest:

The novel of development portrays a world in which the young woman hero is destined for disappointment. The vitality and hopefulness characterizing the adolescent hero's attitude toward her future here meet and conflict with the expectations and dictates of the surrounding society. Every element of her desired world- freedom to come and go, allegiance to nature, meaningful work, exercise of the intellect, and use of her won erotic capabilities- inevitably clashes with patriarchal norms. Attempts to develop independence are met with limitation and immurement... (Pratt, 1981: 29)

These are exactly what Özlü went through in her life. Whatever, almost all the things, she wanted to do were tried to be blocked by the demands and questionable rules of the society. Whether it is actually wrong or right, she encountered many cases in which she was criticized because of her behaviors, attitudes and actions. "Exercise of the intellect" is prevented by aiming to persuade her to work in other jobs as writing is a futile effort that does not make any money to survive. The narrator finds these rules absurd and does not want to demonstrate sexually stereotyped behaviors. She wants to feel herself sexually free. She is immured in an order the rules of which were predetermined very long time ago. However, she does

not yield and obey them. In every opportunity, she rebels against them and shows her real personality. She wants to rebel against the rules and stereotypes of the society with her objections. The narrator writes:

I rebelled against them, and I will. If I seem to go along with your corporations, it is out of my belief that it is the only way to stand up to them because I need to be as successful as you are to stand up to the notions defined as success. I don't desire to exist beyond this perspective. I exist in order to alter human relationships. I do not know such terrible and desperate moments as the tiny moments in which I sink into despair that nothing will change (Özlu, 1984: 77).

Her existence depends on the continuity of her rebellious side. As the narrator emphasizes, a life in harmony with social rules is not worth living. According to her ideas, a life led based on the social values and norms is equal to a life spent in prison the end of which leads the person to grave. A life which does not offer freedom in terms of social living and individual thinking is not valuable and it is not necessary to spend the life in vain. The moment she realized this fact, she attempted suicide to end her life. However, the authorities did not let her die. As usual, she was not allowed to do what she wanted to do even if it was totally about her own life. Even in a situation which was entirely about herself, she had to obey to the rules again. Despite her disappointments, she preserves her hope that time will come when human relationships will change.

A change is to come. Human relations will change as well in the way the mountains, the seas, the oceans, the lakes, the lowlands, the steppes and deserts, the river beds, the glaciers, the cities and villages of the globe do. There will also be a period in which humans are not expected to perform the occupations that are not in accordance with their instincts. A life in line with rules is only and simply stillness. Nothing else (Özlu, 1984: 77-78).

The narrator perceives the whole world in motion. With her quotation, Özlü reminds us of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who interpreted the world as a constant change. It has been observed that the globe continuously changes and this constant change naturally leads to other changes. However, not all the entities in the world are exposed to this change or they do not change in the positive way. If the change is not in the positive and desired direction, then it can be assumed that the previous version is better compared to the new version. If the change is in the good direction then it is desirable and appreciated and it is expected to yield good results for all including people in the society. However, most probably, the state of constant change would not be what Özlü dreams of as long as the system stays the same without giving freedom to its residents. Unless the existing system changes to the good, it does not bring beneficial things to the society. This is most probably Özlü wants to highlight. If the change is good, it is acceptable. On the other hand, if it is not beneficial, it would be better to run away from it.

3.3 LONELINESS IN THE CROWD

As a person who feels more liberated in nature, Özlü thinks that every person is alone in the crowd. There seems to be a big contradiction considering the number of people living in a city and the number of people who feel alone. The narrator suggests that even in the most intimate moments with a person, we are all alone. It can be inferred that in the countryside where her family did not let her be on her own, she was unable to realize how lonely all the people were. However, now that she has visited many countries in the track of her three favorite writers' deaths, she is aware of people's feelings and their depressing situations stemming from loneliness.

But life is usually humans' being left all alone. In sleep. Upon searching for sleep. Even beyond deep sleeps, doesn't an individual sense the desperation of loneliness now and then. On the roads. While reading. While looking at the streets through windows. While dressing. While undressing. While randomly staring at people sitting at any cafe. While looking for nothing. While not recognizing people sitting at any cafe, thinking of other phenomena... [W]hile thinking of longing and solitude

at the same time, while missing those who leave, who show up, who are split, who die, who are born, who grow up, who want to live and who don't, while loving and being loved, while making love, aren't we all lonely (Özlü, 1984: 14).

Her thoughts are in harmony with the existentialist school of thought view of loneliness which considers loneliness as the essence of life. In such an environment, people do not pay much attention to what happens in the world. It has been observed and experienced by a number of people that they were born lonely, they lead their lives lonely and they will die lonely. Even if they are surrounded by many, still, they are isolated and they have to go through loneliness in almost all stages of their lives. It is, in a way, the destiny of human beings to be all alone in the world no matter what they experience and no matter where they live. Being with other people, being surrounded by them or sharing things with them does not actually mean that you are really sharing your life with people. Instead, they are with you just for some occasions. To be sure whether they are alone or not, people can consider the moments when they experience something bad or when they are in trouble. Most of the people would see that they are actually lonely; they may have so-called friends but only when they are having pleasure. This is the bitter reality of the life that everybody has to face with.

The narrator gives examples of it in different parts of her novel. For instance, when she is in Italy, she does not hear of the news telling an important event like the war between Israel and Palestine. She writes: "I have not received any news about Israel's declaration of war against Palestine and the disagreement on Falklands since I left Berlin" (1984: 103). In the modern world which is valued as a "global village", the instant movement of information from one continent to the other is so easily maintained that the fact that people are not bothered much by a war which is an affront to humanity in the world cannot be justified. Even though such breaking news is ignored, the fact that Italy won the World Cup is celebrated like a big event in the country. Even the president hosts the football players. Özlü says: "...as far as I understand, the president is going to welcome the football team today" (1984: 103). Her observations of what was going on in her visits reveal that people just pay

attention to what matters to them. As in the case of the Italian president, if something is important for a person, then the person gives value to the matter and finds it worth mentioning even if it does not have much significance for the well-being of the human race. However, if it is not vital, in other words, if it does not happen in the surroundings in which the person lives, then it is considered as natural and even futile even if it is about the death of thousands of people. Most probably, this is what Özlü criticizes as in the case of the world in constant change. It can be easily seen that even today, despite many advances and developments in many areas ranging from medicine to technology, the ideas and feelings that are fundamental to human beings have not showed much improvement. In the world today, there are still many who have to suffer from the pressures of those who are powerful but rather merciless. Even if the world can see what happens in those countries and they can know what the powerful do to them, the world is not willing to act and hinder this cruelty. Instead, it prefers to be in silence as if it did not see anything. Moreover, if some group wants to take action to prevent it, they get blocked. This is what Özlü went through in her personal life as an individual with her own desires and thoughts. The more she saw the reality, the more she was made blind. The more she wanted to do some things against the system, the more obstacles she had to face with in her way towards the good.

In Hamburg, a man says that German people killed six million people in a casual way as if they did not mean anything. Özlü writes: “And he says it so indifferently, as if he were ordering another bottle of beer” (1984: 38). The more she talks to other people, the more she apprehends the indifference and self-centered aspect of their personalities. People in cities seem to lack compassionate feelings. This dialogue affects the narrator so deeply that she loses sleep over it. “At that very moment, I am scared. I am both scared and ashamed of being human. I wake up at midnight and remember his casual attitude of saying the sentence. All of a sudden, I am so awake” (Özlü, 1984: 38). She denounces lack of sympathy and concern those people demonstrate.

In this journey which was originally intended to visit the graves of three authors, Özlü also recognizes questionable attitudes that city people exhibit. She also makes a

point in lack of communication people suffer from. “Everybody is speaking a different language. Or they try to understand. There are not even two people who speak the same language” (Özlü, 1984: 15). Inadequate communication in her parents’ house resurfaces in her relationships with other people. That is why she concludes the following remark: “You were lonelier than the entire city. Loneliness like the ocean” (Özlü, 1984: 9).

In S. Stefano Belbo, I also realize why I have had relationships with so many men. I was scared of being alone in my own limitlessness and I needed another man's limits. But now that I perceive life more deeply than usual in my own limitlessness, I am determined not to be scared at all from now on (Özlü, 1984: 136).

In her journey toward her inner self, she learns unknown things one of which appears to be her need to have a relationship with another man. In this book, she also explains why she got married several times. She has not rationalized her reason or apprehended so far why as a person who gave great importance to her liberation, she could not do without needing another man’s limitations. What she wanted was not actually to live under the sovereignty of another person, especially a man. What she wanted was, in fact, to share her life with someone else and get away from her loneliness. However, she accepts the fact that being away from other people and being distant from loveless relationships give the opportunity to recognize herself and improve her shortcomings. The journey, in a sense, becomes more than just a visit to the graves of three authors and turns into a useful tool for her to become a stronger woman. The narrator’s journey should be studied as an abstract realization period at the end of which the narrator comes out as a fully self-sufficient individual who is aware of her own personality which is the most valuable quality of one’s life.

3.4 SUICIDE AND INSANITY

In female development novels, the protagonist cannot endure the pain and at one point, she attempts to kill herself. The development of the protagonist may “culminate not in integration but in withdrawal, rebellion or even suicide” (Abel et al. 1983: 6). Rebellion and suicide can both be observed in Özlü’s case. The narrator

does not narrate her suicide attempt or gives an explanation about her reason behind this action. However, she describes a girl who has recently tried to kill herself. Özlü describes her: “She is sitting on her bed. She is holding a can of beer in her hand and smoking... The floor is full of countless empty cans” (1984: 40). The woman described is clearly in despair and has abandoned her hope on life. The difference between the narrator and the woman is worth noticing since the woman has already given up on life. On the other hand, the narrator cherishes the hope that better things are ahead waiting for her. She has never given up trying and struggling in her life. She tries to be bounded up with life despite its difficulties. Özlü continues to describe the woman: “She is so thin that her skins on the legs sag. Her eyes fade away in the depth of great fear, desperation, and reluctance for a real life. She yells now and then” (1984: 41). The narrator says that although she is just past the age of 30, she looks like a 70 year-old woman or a deadly ill person (1984: 41). Özlü is aware of the reality that no matter how much she wants the woman to get better, nothing can be done for her. “You are thinking of the long, tough way between insanity and independence. How strong you must be. The time and the pains suffered” (Özlü, 1984: 42). As a woman who went through terrible events in her life, her endurance and strength are worth mentioning. The girl reminds her of insanity. However, the contrast between the woman described and Özlü is vivid in terms of preserving the hope and love to live. Özlü summarizes the events that led her to insanity:

You made the end of life your beginning, I say... Speaking of trying death, you committed suicide at the age of eighteen, you desired to die with your pretty body, scare the people who would find your corpse, say that take it, you can have your cruel life. They healed me. They wished to make you live their cruelty. Now you are cruel, too.

Later you pushed the limits of the mind, I say. Because the limits of the mind were dull, would not last a lifetime. It was necessary to acquire another dimension, I mean, a dimension to which everybody cannot reach. It had to be a dimension that should go beyond logic and should reach deeper down than logic.

... I am familiar with the deep dimensions of insanity, I say. The thin line between mind and insanity... Like the unclear horizon line where the sea ends and the sky begins. Do not come and tell me that I am selfish. Every “self” is selfish like every “country” is countryside (1984: 96).

Compared to the woman, the narrator is seen as a more mature woman than her previous self. Her interpretation of her experiences gives us the clue that she has turned into a fully self-actualized heroine. She has nothing to be afraid of anymore now that she has even gone through the deep sufferings caused by mental illness and she has got so close to death. She appreciated death as it is a big part of life. Nothing has a meaning without it. Özlü states: “The end of life never seemed too far to me. I have seen the end of life in every face, in every breath, in every growing person, in every aging person, in every hug, in every morning” (1984: 48). She can sense death in every moment of her daily life. However, it does not spoil her pleasure from life. She does not want to lose her life anymore. She also says: “I have always avoided feelings focused on one person. I have always tried to distribute my desire for eternal love to all humans and every person. I sometimes hated everyone. Except for myself” (1984: 58). Her philanthropist side emerges as she cannot give her love to a specific person. No matter what she experiences, her love never ceases to exist.

3.5 PAVESE, SVEVO AND KAFKA

Pavese, Svevo and Kafka play an important role in Tezer Özlü’s inner journey. They reflect her ideas, thoughts and feelings. She seems to be greatly affected by these three authors in whose works she can find the things she wants to tell and wants people to learn and realize. Tezer Özlü identifies herself with Pavese as his sentences and his life fill the gaps in the narrator’s life. She also wants to know the reason why she reads Pavese so much. One of the reasons of this journey may be to find out why she identifies herself so much with Pavese in every matter. She expresses her love for him: “The greatest loner of this damned world. How much I love him” (Özlü, 1984: 167). We can see that her love for him in her quotation, as well: “I am reading Cesare Pavese’s diary (in German) again. My favorite writer is Pavese. I take great pleasure in each of his sentences” (2001: 28). As Pavese committed suicide at a young age,

the narrator tries to understand why he chose death instead of life. Özlü justifies his reason and right to kill himself. As a person who attempted suicide, she agrees with him in that it must be a person's own choice whether to live or not. Özlü does not blame Pavese: "Why would a person put up with this life more. Why would he put up with this unbearable life more... Why would he carry the longing for suicide which was born with him" (1984: 168). She says: "You are thinking of how much these people are overwhelmed by religion and the institution of marriage. You understand that one of the events that drove him suicide is the sacred institution of marriage of Catholicism" (1984: 163). She infers that Pavese's reasons for committing suicide must be similar to hers for the reason that she presumes to find countless examples of similarities in their way of thinking. Among the foremost similarities between the author and Pavese is their marriage because marriage "marks the end of all tension between the individual and the world: all desire for further metamorphosis is extinguished" (Moretti, 2000: 23). The narrator's personal growth is halted every time she marries. Despite her desire to share her life with a male friend, she experiences the negative side of the marriage in which she is hindered from being herself and improving herself. Marriage thus appears to be one of the biggest challenges that the narrator herself needs to get over.

Özlü seems to think that Pavese and she have a harmonizing flow. She states: "As I approach to Torino, I am thinking more of Cesare Pavese who was found dead with his clothes on in a room, in a hotel room. 11 years, 11 months and 15 days ago." She continues to say: "My feelings tell me that maybe my greatest love, my intimate friend is this dead body. My love for that dead body comes to life" (1984: 125). As Pavese's marriage based upon unhappiness, Özlü's marriage is founded not on firm and sturdy but frail grounds. She got married to a man whom she actually did not have enough inclination or love, she performed a marriage just for the purpose of getting rid of an unhappy home. However, this did not change her state of happiness, she was happy neither in her mother's house nor in her own house with her husband whom she considered as a way of salvation. What she thought to be a way of escaping from the boundaries of family home turned out to be a failure. Moreover, she had to be exposed to another life style that was similar to the former one.

Although she wanted some fundamental changes in her life, nothing actually changed.

Another author with whom she finds similarities with herself is Svevo. Özlü attracts attention to the autobiographical elements in Svevo's works. She finds many similarities with him and talking to his relatives and seeing the place where he lived makes her become more close to Svevo. While Tezer Özlü is talking to Svevo's daughter, Letizia, she is connecting the dots between Svevo's real life and his novels. Every detail from his daughter's story reveals another connection with Svevo's real life. It is clear that Svevo formed his plots with autobiographical elements. Based on their life experiences, his daughter tells: "My mother was thirteen years younger than my father. He used to tell continuously that such a young girl possibly would not love him." Özlü's inner dialogue and her comments emerge and she thinks: "(Zeno's troubling suspicions)" (Özlü, 1984: 111). The parenthetical statement attracts our attention as she clearly establishes similar characteristics between the author and his protagonist. Zeno is a character in the novel *Zeno's Conscience* published in 1923 by Svevo. The novel is a diary written by Zeno at the request of his psychiatrist to help him in his psychoanalysis. Zeno's "troubling suspicions", in fact, reflect Svevo's own doubts in his youth whether his wife really loved him or not. Svevo did not wish to write his suspicions in a non-fiction text. Rather he wanted to narrate his experiences covertly with the help of a character he created and his real life experiences were revealed through the character's expressions and things he went through.

Zeno's cigarette addiction resembles to Svevo as he used to smoke sixty cigarettes per day. Özlü notes: "...the author who is probably the most passionate smoker in the world literature, the author who smokes at least sixty cigarettes every day" (1984: 105). Letizia continues: "My father would not express his pain. He was sick before the accident which caused him to die. He used to smoke so much" (Özlü, 1984: 112). After Özlü conveys Letizia's talking about her father, we can often read the narrator's inner thoughts in parenthetical statements. She listens to every detail eagerly and it is possible to suppose that she is glad to learn these details as they help her be close to her beloved writer. Letizia's speech reminds Özlü of Svevo's character Zeno, she states: "(Zeno who smokes day and night)" (Özlü, 1984: 112).

Additionally, Tezer Özlü deduces that Svevo also reflected his own private life in his novel. The realities which are not accepted by Svevo's daughter have been observed impartially by Özlü. Özlü quotes Letizia: “- That he fell in love with my aunts is a fantasy” (Özlü, 1984: 113), and on the same page, she says: “Such a love was impossible. My elder aunt was married to a Bulgarian at that time, she left Trieste. The third one got married later, at first she lived in Siberia, Görz, later in Riga.” Özlü's inner dialogue comes out one more time. She thinks: “(She must be his big love. It means that the person who was described as America in Zeno Cosini was Riga)” (Özlü, 1984: 114). It can be assumed that Özlü does not agree with Svevo's daughter on Svevo's great love. Özlü has a more detached point of view than Letizia. Later, when Özlü asks if she has any photos of her aunts, she gets uneasy. Özlü writes: “- Do you have any photos of your aunts, you know the one who went to Riga, I say.” Letizia replies: “- No, I have none of them, she says. Uneasily. Discontentedly” (1984: 120). Özlü gives emphasis on the words “Uneasily” and “Discontentedly”. She may have sensed that Letizia actually knows the love of her father. Tezer Özlü analyzes Svevo's novels by the help of autobiographical elements and although she listens to the most reliable person from whom every secret or detail on Svevo's life can be taken, Özlü has her own rigid judgment that in the novels there must be some real life reflections of the author. The same inference can be made for Özlü as well. The details of her life are in her narrations and there are intense autobiographical elements that cannot be ignored. While Özlü thinks that Svevo made minor changes with the plot and the characters, that the same comment can be made about her would not be totally unfair.

Özlü seems to be an avid reader of Svevo. She must have read his works several times; otherwise she would not have made these inferences. She describes Svevo as: “The deep life of literature full of love, contradictions, pain and tear. My most trustworthy, my most loyal world” (1984: 87). She apparently feels herself very close to him. She sometimes envies the characters in his novels. She states: “How much you wanted to be like those characters wandering in the avenues of Trieste while you were reading Svevo in the unbearable chaos of Istanbul” (1984: 90). The narrator describes a chaotic time of Istanbul where she was unable to walk on the streets

because bombs and gunshots could be heard every night. In such a dangerous environment, her freedom was taken away one more time and the only place to escape from the realities was a book. Özlü highlights this point: “Did I have to know so many countries, people, and characters in novels. Were my intimate friends supposed to be the writers behind fictional characters. Was I supposed to get on planes, trains buses so many times” (1984: 55). Questions marks are not used by Özlü as she seems she does not to want any answers for her questions. It is possible that she wishes them to be regarded rhetorical questions as she already knows the answers. By forming questions without question marks, she, indeed, wants to raise people’s awareness about those issues she mentions and sometimes underlines in her narrations.

She finds a common ground with each of these three authors. While she is sitting beside Kafka’s grave, she thinks of the repressive approach of Kafka’s father to his son. She feels that they both suffered from the restrictive practices of their fathers, which was another similarity between the two authors.

Are you at peace beside his grave because Kafka suffered the deepest pain of the same world... Now you are thinking of Kafka's letter to his father in Wien and his father's, whose pressure lasted on him throughout his life, lying also on the grave of his son (Özlü, 1984: 48).

In such an environment, she finds herself unable to communicate with a close friend. As mentioned before, her close friends happen to become the characters and the authors. As she cannot find the opportunity to be with and to share with real and alive people, she chooses to be friends with imaginary narration characters and their dead narrators. It seems to be the only way to deal with the world she lives in with the help of books and their authors. She would not have endured the pains without them. Her courage and desire to live is supported by her favorite authors and their works, which she expresses in the following way:

I receive my courage to live from the dead. From the dead whose narrations I live in. From the dead who have succeeded in transforming

this goddamn world into a livable world. From the dead who have given, told and written every notion the world needs (Özlü, 1984: 108).

Those authors give her enough strength to keep on living. Her thoughts are in harmony with theirs. Özlü also attracts attention to authors' marriages: "I have always thought that wives of authors can never fill them in completely. These writers lived in nonexistent phenomena. Their limitlessness opened up at a point where their wives' limits began" (Özlü, 1984: 114). Özlü gives the impression of establishing a similar point with authors. She must have suffered from the same inadequacies as her marriages went short of giving her a life which covered her expectations.

3.6 SELF-REALIZATION

After we have examined Tezer Özlü's both novels *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life*, we can see that the narrator reached maturity and self-realization required by Bildungsroman in her late forties. Her journey to various countries to follow the deaths of her favorite writers completed in recognizing herself in a better and detailed way.

Europe should be read as a symbol of limitlessness in her novel. For a female writer who is fed up with all of the boundaries, Europe where there are no border lines should be the exact place to narrate her thoughts. The narrator should not be evaluated as a prisoner of the system who is stuck in her family, job and gender roles. The young woman in the first novel, who had limited freedom to decide her fate, has now the control of her life in the second novel. She does not have to deal with an oppressive father in her life and she is clearly far from being a passive member of the society. It should be mentioned that in the second novel the narrator also has the responsibility of being a mother of a daughter named Deniz (Tezer Özlü named her daughter after Deniz Gezmiş). In such a situation, she does not want to adopt the role of being a submissive wife and dedicated mother the society lies on. Özlü does not wish to end up like her mother. She writes: "I am thinking of my mother for the first time. The woman who maintains her life in her own way of silence who is like no one else" (1984: 68). In a period when it was "dismantling the continuity between generations" (Moretti, 2000: 4), Tezer Özlü felt the absence of a

female role model in her life. She sensed that she was profoundly different from her mother and grandmother. It resulted in a struggle to find out her role in the society by herself. The gap between generations was distinctive in her time which led her to discover her place in the society with her own efforts. She could have used her mother's experiences to invent her role in the patriarchal system. However, this was not the case for Özlü. Her mother endured her life by the help of silence she preserved throughout her life. Otherwise, she would have gone through far worse experiences most likely caused by her husband. It can be argued that as an educated woman who had the financial freedom to survive, she could have get divorced and built her own life. However, the institution of marriage is considered to be a lifetime duty which is compelled by the society not legally but traditionally. Özlü proved that she would not live in silence as she needs her words to live. "I need to return to my words which are always with me, carried and lived by me. How can I bear that sky without my words" (Özlü, 1984: 26). She would rather die than live with a voiceless personality.

The narrator comes out of her inner journey as a more courageous individual. The mistakes she made in her youth gave her enough wisdom not to repeat them again. As it was noted before, she got her first marriage due to a possible opportunity of escaping from her family. She needed another man to supply her enough freedom to lead her life. She has realized that freedom is not something given by another person; it is a right from birth that cannot be utilized by the permission of another person or the state. The woman she turned into at the end of the novel is an individual who is not afraid of voicing her thoughts or afraid of being unable to use her freedom in any matter. She is a very strong female with her mind intact. Neither her father nor her husband can attempt to put pressure on her or take her independence away from her:

I don't have that young girl's desperate search anymore. I am in search of neither experiences nor human intimacy. I carry both love and human intimacy inside of me now. In other words, I am stony-hearted. And distant... All my experiences turned into universal philanthropy... I admire my independence. It is the only fact left after numerous images,

numerous restless nights, numerous sunbeams, and numerous train, bus, plane and ship journeys, walks (Özlü, 1984: 32).

Her independence is what she appreciates most in her life since it has been reached after a long and painful strive. She is proud of not belonging to anywhere or anyone. When a waiter asks her where she is from, she says that she is from nowhere (Özlü, 1984: 84). As a matter of fact, she has no roots and a place which she can call “home”. She feels liberated during her journeys. She wants to experience her life in motion as motionless bores her. According to the narrator, life is something that should be celebrated. We can see her thought on life from the quotation she made from Pavese:

There is a life to live.

Bikes to ride.

Pavements to walk on and sunsets to enjoy (Quoted by Özlü, 1984: 37).

Life which she wanted to lose at some point in her youth appeared to be worth trying when she got rid of the limitations she suffered from. Özlü is finally away from the judgmental and moralistic attitudes of people in her country. Her reason to spend her final years in Zurich was a legal problem encountered when she wanted to marry a foreigner, and a younger man, Hans Peter Marti. She had no room for a pressure anymore in her life and that is why she decided to leave the country to have a life governed by her choices. The courage and strength she possesses is notable because she would not have carried out this decision in her youth. Apart from having gained a strong personality, she was able to acquire a new perspective on life. Her pessimistic view seems to have diminished toward the end of the second book. She says: “...in those years when I saw the world with pessimistic eyes...” (Özlü, 1984: 82). It is clear that she has a more optimistic world view from now on. Suicide is out of question for the transformed woman.

Journey to the End of Life thus articulates the journey of a female writer to adulthood and her self-discovery. It depicts how the world of a marginal female writer differs from the morals and norms of the male dominated society. Tezer Özlü chooses to tell

her story during a journey of which many authors make use in the genre of Bildungsroman. The attitudes and the judgmental perspective of the society upon women make living in her own country impossible and cause her to attain a transformative identity. She now has an understanding of who she is in the society and in the world.

CHAPTER FOUR- THE PATRIARCHY'S DOMINATION: MARGARET ATWOOD'S *THE BLIND ASSASSIN*

4.1 THE PATRIARCHY VERSUS FEMALE FREEDOM

Margaret Atwood's award-winning novel *The Blind Assassin* narrates the female protagonist, Iris's journey to her self-discovery. Margaret Atwood mixes the genres in her novel and creates a new form of novel within a novel. Rao states: "The way in which different genres and traditions are present in the texts illustrates the author's ability to work within a set of generic conventions in order to subvert them" (1993: 2). The novel's genre cannot be classified as solely female Bildungsroman. According to Howells: "Her novels present Canadian women's ambivalent relation to the literary and cultural traditions they have inherited through a variety of genres, all of which combine her sense of connections between a power politics of nationality and gender with her sense of the imaginative possibilities of fictional language" (1987: 8). Howells also discusses that women writers struggle to break all the boundaries which were built by the traditional literary genres. So as to achieve this goal, they make a mixture from different literary genres to create a new, unheard literary genre. She also gives an example of it: "...the mixing of history and legend, filmic images, extracts from private letters and novels in Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners*. Such interweaving of genres suggests a different aesthetic principle from the traditional one of 'wholeness, harmony and radiance', for here the emphasis is on multiple perspectives, drawing attention to the process of fiction making itself" (Howells, 1987: 5-6). Howells points out that Canada has problems to create a distinguishing culture because of the fact that the country feels the lack of strong origins. Howells states: "... for Canadians the problems are further complicated by having two mother cultures and two national languages, English and French. How to find a distinctive voice for such a mixed society or to have that voice listened to abroad has always been a crucial difficulty" (1987: 20). Atwood attempts to find this "distinctive voice" by experimenting on her works and by melting several genres into a single work. There are also additional stories about dystopia narrated by third person narrator, Alex. As a result of these extra stories, the narrator shifts continuously from first-person narrator, Iris to the third person narrator, Alex.

Iris writes a comprehensive memoir of the time range from her early childhood to her eighties. Her memoir is full of numerous sincere confessions. Furthermore, she tells the lives of her grandparents: Benjamin and Adelia Chase based on the stories told by Reenie, the loyal housekeeper of the Chase family. Atwood thus achieves to present the lives of all the Chase women by drawing a family tree from Iris's grandmother to Sabrina who is Iris's granddaughter. As a reader, we obtain the chance of assessing the living conditions of women in the society and the author does not only write a very specific time period in which women suffer from the inequality between men and women most, but Atwood's time period also covers more than a hundred years between the late 1800s and the late 1990s. Nothing seems to change in a better way for women in more than a hundred years which is a shocking fact to consider and criticize. The same oppressive and judgmental side of the male-dominated society continues its existence. This shows the unyielding, inflexible, determined, and fossilized moral values of the society which stay strong against time and no technology to change it remains to be discovered. Atwood succeeded in offering an insight to being a woman in a world the whole aim of which is to take advantage of them. When Reenie talks about Iris's grandmother, Adelia's marriage, the truth can clearly be seen. She says:

(She wasn't married, she was married off, said Reenie, rolling out the gingersnaps. The family arranged it. That's what was done in such families, and who's to say it was any worse or better than choosing for yourself? In any case, Adelia Montfort did her duty, and lucky to have the chance, as she was getting long in the tooth by then—she must have been twenty-three, which was counted over the hill in those days.)
(Atwood, 2001: 38).

Adelia got married to a man for whom she clearly did not feel any affection. She completed "her duty" as a woman by marrying as it was the appropriate action to be done. Adelia was not given the chance to pursue her dreams. Even though she was interested in fine arts and science, she was required to do less important household chores. They were things expected from a housewife. Iris comments on Adelia:

Adelia's task would have been to design and order these dinners, then to avoid being seen to devour them. Custom would have dictated that she only pick at her food while in company: chewing and swallowing were such blatantly carnal activities. I expect she had a tray sent up to her room, afterwards. Ate with ten fingers (Atwood, 2001: 60).

Since Iris herself went through such a trouble before, she now understands how her grandmother was suppressed during her lifetime. "Custom" is a toy that male adult people occasionally play with when they desire to shape their wives. History repeated itself several times for the next generations after Adelia. It is tragic to think that Adelia would have been disappointed to see that her granddaughter got married involuntarily to a wealthy man in order to help her father ease his debts. The narrator also attracts attention to the name of the Chase family's house. The name "Avilion" bears the meaning of exile for Adelia. Iris tells:

Avilion was where King Arthur went to die. Surely Adelia's choice of name signifies how hopelessly in exile she considered herself to be: she might be able to call into being by sheer force of will some shoddy facsimile of a happy isle, but it would never be the real thing. She wanted a salon; she wanted artistic people, poets and composers and scientific thinkers and the like, as she had seen while visiting her English third cousins, when her family still had money. A golden life, with wide lawns (Atwood, 2001: 61).

Benjamin Chase, who earned his living from a button factory, wrecked the great expectations of her wife by not letting her have a life outside the factory walls. Their marriage was a disappointment for her. The fact that Benjamin Chase got married after making a fortune in his forties should be stated in order to conclude that he was not looking for a life partner with whom he could build a life together. He wanted to add a new taste to his home. Iris asks a vital question about their marriage. She says: "Did Grandfather Benjamin breathe a sigh of relief when Adelia was gone? He may have grown tired of knowing he could never measure up to her exacting standards, though it's clear he admired her to the point of awe" (Atwood, 2001: 62). Although

he admired her wife's taste in every respect, he must have been exhausted not to satisfy her expectations and dreams.

As Iris's life will be analyzed later, a brief summary is sufficient to see the similarities between Adelia and her great-granddaughter, and to conclude that the women in the Chase family do not lead a joyful life. Iris's 38 year-old daughter Aimee died suddenly after falling and breaking her neck. She must have been affected unpleasantly by the deaths of Laura and her father, Richard when she was just a child. The newspaper gives the details of her death and says that Aimee was suffering from alcohol and drug addiction and she was admitted to a rehabilitation facility several times in her life. Aimee had a four year-old daughter, Sabrina when she died. Even though the narrator does not give wide coverage to Aimee, she apparently had a life with failures and died at a very early age leaving her daughter alone. In the novel, there is not a woman character who is contented with her life. Every woman, in one way or another, has suffered from the deeds of a male character and spent a miserable life.

The novel starts with the tragic death of Iris's sister, Laura who was killed in a terrible traffic accident which seems to be a deliberate action. We are instantly given the clue that Laura committed a suicide and Iris is very uncomfortable and devastated by what Laura did. The novel arouses curiosity instantly with the mysterious death of Laura. Iris acts as if she knows the reason behind her suicide.

I was informed of the accident by a policeman: the car was mine, and they'd traced the licence. His tone was respectful: no doubt he recognized Richard's name (Atwood, 2001: 1).

The policeman's respect is rooted in his acquaintance with the wealthy manufacturer, Richard Griffen. Iris is aware of the fact that the policeman's kindness has nothing to do with her personality but rather stems from a powerful male figure in the patriarchal society. His behaviors and explanations would be very different in a situation without Richard's name. Iris continues to tell:

...but he also felt bound to inform me that two witnesses—a retired lawyer and a bank teller, dependable people—had claimed to have seen the whole thing. They'd said Laura had turned the car sharply and deliberately, and had plunged off the bridge with no more fuss than stepping off a curb. They'd noticed her hands on the wheel because of the white gloves she'd been wearing. (Atwood, 2001: 1).

In the first pages, even though Laura's death is made obvious with the claims of two "dependable" people, the narrator avoids giving all the answers and keeps the readers in suspense till the end of the novel. The reason why Laura committed suicide and the reason why she was driving Iris's car still awaits to be answered.

Iris has complicated feelings regarding her only sister's death. She is not sure how to feel and what to think. She says: "I noticed that my teeth were chattering, and that I was cold all over. I must be in shock, I decided" (Atwood, 2001: 2). She thinks that she is the one to blame for Laura's suicide since she is supposed to have the maternal role as the elder sister in the absence of their mother. She is also angry at her sister. "I was furious with Laura for what she'd done, but also with the policeman for implying that she'd done it" (Atwood, 2001: 1). Trapped among these varied emotions, Iris remembers Reenie who is the only person close to a mother figure.

What I remembered then was Reenie, from when we were little. It was Reenie who'd done the bandaging, of scrapes and cuts and minor injuries: Mother might be resting, or doing good deeds elsewhere, but Reenie was always there. She'd scoop us up and sit us on the white enamel kitchen table, alongside the pie dough she was rolling out or the chicken she was cutting up or the fish she was gutting, and give us a lump of brown sugar to get us to close our mouths. *Tell me where it hurts*, she'd say. *Stop howling. Just calm down and show me where* (Atwood, 2001: 2).

In such an immense tragedy, Iris remembers not her mother but Reenie who was always there for her and Laura. In her family, Reenie is the mother figure to rely on and Iris learnt everything on life from Reenie. Iris writes: "I always hear such things

in Reenie's voice. She was our town interpreter, mine and Laura's. Who else did we have to fall back on?" (Atwood, 2001: 46). The lack of communication in the family makes Iris grow fonder of Reenie. When she finds out her sister's death, she happens to need a strong character like Reenie to count on. She does not feel secure and confident enough to face this brutal truth. She still needs a mother figure in her life even if she is a grown-up. Iris's identity crisis thus appears to continue even after she is married. As what Iris is writing is purely a bold confession of her whole life, we can deduce that her words are accurate and trustworthy. So Reenie is the most important person in her entire life.

The story is constructed with several other stories which are combined to serve one single purpose. The realities of Iris's life come to surface by the help of all these stories and news on newspapers. As a result, Atwood's novel is difficult to be classified into a single genre. As mentioned before, we read the story from the first person narrator, Iris who is in her late eighties. Her writing includes her confessions which she has no desire to hide anymore. Throughout her writing, Iris cannot find a solid reason why she chooses to write all the events at such a point in her life. In the final parts of the novel, we understand that Iris has written her life story in order to pass it to her grand-daughter, Sabrina. She wants Sabrina to learn her real ancestors. To achieve her aim, Iris uses flashbacks to narrate her story as a little girl in a provincial town. She not only writes about her childhood years, but she also writes about her current situation as an old lady with several health and sleeping problems. She writes in her memoir: "Every night I yearn for sleep, I strive for it; yet it flutters on ahead of me like a sooty curtain. There are sleeping pills, of course, but the doctor has warned me against them" (Atwood, 2001: 56). It may be concluded that Atwood wants to emphasize her bad conscious by mentioning her sleep disorder. Her actions in the past may be troubling her inner world. As a reader, we would not be wrong to reason that she made many mistakes in her youth that cannot be still forgiven. She no longer can take care of herself without the help of Myra, who is the daughter of Reenie.

In the novel, there is also a novella called *The Blind Assassin* which is a book thought to have been written by Laura Chase and published in New York, 1947. The

prologue of the novel *The Blind Assassin* begins with an old woman's memories of the past reminded by a black and white photograph taken by a flash camera. The photograph has been kept in such a good shape that it gives us the impression that the old woman attaches much importance to the young man in the photograph. The past is remembered with nostalgia and she wants to live that exact moment once again in her life. She looks at every little detail from the clothes they were wearing to the tiny things in nature that you would never pay attention unless you are yearning those days to come. In this novella, we read the story of a secret love affair between a woman who is afraid of a possible revelation of their affair and a man who is clearly a fugitive from justice. They meet clandestinely and avoid seeing each other in public places. Even in this love story, we can see that the female character is in need of affection and while she dreams of their potential future away from her family, the man's attitude toward the woman is degrading and if not without love, it is not demonstrated by his behaviors. The woman wants to see things through rose-colored glasses despite great difficulties faced by her. The woman is well aware of this fact, and she says: "I could be in trouble, though I guess for you it's not trouble at all, that kind: it doesn't count. You don't care—all you want is a quick, a quick—" (Atwood, 2001: 30). The man seems to be interested in only sexual side of the relationship. While she is looking for comfort, warmth, and sharing in their relationship, his self-interest hurts the woman more than anything every time they meet. The man accuses the woman implicitly of her "feminine" feelings. He does not wish to talk about "feelings" in general; as a result their dissimilar expectations put the woman in victimized position. She is the one who will suffer most from a possible revelation of the forbidden affair; whereas she is still the one to be demeaned and ridiculed. The fact that the man clearly has the authority over the woman and the sad reality that he takes the woman for granted oppress the woman in an affair which may result in being condemned by the society. The woman is obviously a probable victim if their affair is found out. The author narrates: "She looks up at the sky, then at her watch. I'm cold, she says. I'm also late. Could you dispose of the evidence?" (Atwood, 2001: 12). The man does not share her hesitations and doubts; what is more his rudeness toward the woman with whom he claims to be in love is not enough for the woman to leave him. This gives us the impression of the horrible conditions she must

be in. Because not being able to leave a man under her standards is a proof that she experiences worse episodes in her daily life with her family.

The characters in the inner story are anonymous people; however the readers conclude that the female character in the novella must be Laura. She is said to have used autobiographical elements to write her work. Everyone wants to know the identity of the anonymous man in the book:

Above all they wanted to know: *who was the man?* In bed with the young woman, the lovely, dead young woman; in bed with Laura. Some of them thought they knew, of course. There had been gossip. For those who could put two and two together, it all added up. *Acted like she was pure as the driven* (Atwood, 2001: 40).

The usage of autobiographical features in the novella is not false; the author is, nonetheless, entirely incorrect. We are given several clues throughout the novel that the main character cannot be Laura. For instance, the title of the book Iris usually reads is the name of the prologue of the novella Laura supposedly wrote. Iris says: “I contented myself with books—*Perennials for the Rock Garden, Desert Succulents for Northern Climes*, and the like. I went through such books...” (Atwood, 2001: 442). Iris confesses at the end of the novel that she is the one who wrote the book.

As for the book, Laura didn’t write a word of it. But you must have known that for some time. I wrote it myself, during my long evenings alone, when I was waiting for Alex to come back, and then afterwards, once I knew he wouldn’t. I didn’t think of what I was doing as writing—just writing down. What I remembered, and also what I imagined, which is also the truth. I thought of myself as recording. A bodiless hand, scrawling across a wall (Atwood, 2001: 512).

Everything is enlightened by this final confession of Iris, and some brutal secrets are revealed by Iris. At this point, we can realize how much the female characters in the novel have suffered from the male patriarchy throughout all their lives. The cruelty of the male society is unmistakably displayed to the reader.

Apart from the story of an affair, Iris's book, *The Blind Assassin* tells another story which is narrated by Alex. This inner story is formed by him as a leisure time activity. He tells the story of Zycron which is an imaginary planet with peculiar and brutal customs. The brutality of the system in Zycron planet also shows the cruelty of Alex himself. He exactly narrates a story which can be expected from him. Atwood uses irritating images to convey her thoughts on the customs of people in Sakiel-Norn. For instance, in Sakiel-Norn, nine virgin girls would be sacrificed each year to the Gods.

It was the law that the noblest Snilfard families must sacrifice at least one of their daughters. It was an insult to the Goddess to offer any who were blemished or flawed, and as time passed, the Snilfards began to mutilate their girls so they would be spared: they would lop off a finger or an earlobe, or some other small part (Atwood, 2001: 28).

The patriarchal system sacrifices the noble families' girls without hesitation. The actions taken by the families to save their girls should be noted here, as well. They resort to violence as a reply. Those "flawless" girls are subject to violence just because of their gender which is a shame on every establishment in the society. The acceptance of violence on women begins in the smallest foundation of the society: family.

Then the noble families grew even lazier. They no longer wanted the bother of raising the girls in their own households, so they simply handed them over to the Temple of the Goddess, paying well for their upkeep. As the girl bore the family's name, they'd get credit for the sacrifice. It was like owning a racehorse. This practice was a debased version of the high-minded original, but by that time, in Sakiel-Norn, everything was for sale (Atwood, 2001: 28).

This disturbing tradition makes us feel ill at ease with this nonsensical way of thinking. While Atwood criticizes the traditions of Sakiel-Norn people, she also attracts attention to the practices in our modern world. In a sense, there is no difference in treating women as a property to be "handed over". Atwood resembles

the noble girl to a racehorse in terms of credit they get after winning a race. The act of sacrifice is not a choice of the young girls for a higher cause which makes them feel proud of and contented with themselves. Their deaths make their male relatives feel high and mighty. However inhumane the sacrifice seems for us, it should be remarked that another kind of sacrifice, not necessarily physical violence, was practiced in our past, and it is still being practiced upon women in our day.

Even in the process of a ritual slaughter for the sake of a religious cause, the main purpose for your sacrifice to be counted as a holy act is not to do any harm to the sacrifice. In the Atwoodian dystopia, however, after several attempts of the girls to scream and run away during the sacrifice ceremony, cutting girls' tongues off became a ritual before the sacrifice ceremony. Cutting the tongues may be treated as a symbol of how the society struggles to keep women silence with its every establishment.

Thus, tongueless, and swollen with words she could never again pronounce, each girl would be led in procession to the sound of solemn music, wrapped in veils and garlanded with flowers, up the inding steps to the city's ninth door. Nowadays you might say she looked like a pampered society bride (Atwood, 2001: 29).

In the modern world, cutting women's tongues off is carried out by the society not physically, but consciously. Silence is the key element that is anticipated from them. The patriarchy has many tools to achieve this aim; however, women fight for their voices to be heard and they want to be unrestricted and free from all the judgements and empowerment.

The colonial mentality and Canada's recent emergence from it have close affinities with women's gendered perceptions of themselves, for the revivification of the feminist movement since the 1960s has created the conditions for a change in women's consciousness as they struggle to find their own voices through which to challenge traditions which have marginalized and excluded them from power (Howells, 1987: 3).

The male society is unwilling to share the communal power with women. As a natural consequence, they adopt a variety of techniques to discredit women and deprive them of power to exist as an individual. For instance, motherhood is a useful and affective way to keep women away from the modern world. Iris is aware of this fact. She says: “After Laura’s birth my mother was more tired than usual. She lost altitude; she lost resilience. Her will faltered; her days took on a quality of trudging” (Atwood, 2001: 84). Liliana needs to play her maternal role in the society which hinders her capacity to achieve greater deeds in her life.

The limits they challenge are cultural and psychological and their discoveries may be of no importance to anybody but the characters themselves. Many of these novels have women writers engaged in a struggle with language and inherited literary conventions to find more adequate ways of telling about women’s experiences, fighting their way out of silence to project more authentic images of how women feel and what they do (Howells, 1987: 5).

Norval must be aware of the fact that having given birth to Laura made her wife weaker and she lost her spirit. Even if he knows how much Laura’s birth directly influenced her, he cannot abandon the thought of the necessity to have a boy in the male society. His intention and wish can be clearly deduced from the name of his company which is “Chase and Sons”. The future of the company depends on a male child. Having two girls must be so disappointing for Norval that he keeps forcing his wife to give birth to a male child. Norval’s insistence results in the death of his wife at the end. Liliana dies shortly after she has a miscarriage. Her self-sacrifice can easily be observed with this sad experience. According to Iris, the maternal role rejects a woman’s individuality and women are shaped in accordance with the needs of their children. Iris narrates: “(What fabrications they are, mothers. Scarecrows, wax dolls for us to stick pins into, crude diagrams. We deny them an existence of their own, we make them up to suit ourselves—our own hungers, our own wishes, our own deficiencies. Now that I’ve been one myself, I know.)” (Atwood, 2001: 94). Iris’s ignorance in her youth becomes evident; in addition, the new perspective she acquired during the past years is also noticeable. Her maturation helps her understand

the difficult situation her mother was in. The existence of women is effortlessly denied by men and by their children. They are treated as stereotype characters whose roles cannot go further than planned. Howells remarks:

Women are deeply implicated in the existing structures of the social world as mothers, daughters, lovers and wives, so that it is a paradox of most women's position that any search for new ways of restructuring their lives and stories has to acknowledge their genuine need for affective relations and responsibilities at the same time as they register resistance to such constraints (Howells, 1987:28).

As it is pointed out by Howells, women are confused because of their positions in the society as care-givers. In the event that they try to internalize another way of survival, they have to go through a more puzzling path to construct their identities.

As for Laura, she appears in the novel as the rebellious character who cannot stand any pressures or any kind of rules compelled either by the society or religion. Her disobedient side is uninterruptedly attempted to be repressed by the whole world around her. Even since her childhood years, she has had this overwhelming personality that is unlikely to be suppressed by any means. Laura is a woman with firm and inflexible thoughts, which can sometimes be regarded as obsessive, on nearly everything from marriage to religion. Iris comments on her sister: "As for Laura, she was not selfless, not at all. Instead she was skinless, which is a different thing" (Atwood, 2001: 73). She is also a victim of male characters in the novel. She is raped by Richard E. Griffen, gets pregnant and later admitted to a mental hospital to be treated since Richard and his sister, Wilfred claim that she has some mental disorders. The main point in her admittance to the mental hospital is to cover her pregnancy with the claim that she is jealous of Iris's life and wishes to be like her who is pregnant at that time. The truth is that Laura is always way ahead of Iris in analyzing the events and grasping the reality.

Iris's blindness toward the events around, the lack of perception and unwillingness to find out the essence of the reasons behind the actions make female characters suffer. Compared to the other female characters, she is the least affective and the most naïve

one in the novel. The Chase family's world would be much more different in a positive sense if it were not for Iris's blindness. She is "the blind assassin" that murders people not physically but surely internally and she is the one to be blamed for Laura's sufferings. As Iris narrates the lives of slave children who get blind at the age of eight or nine after weaving valuable carpets with their tiny fingers in her fiction, she tells that those children can still be used after their blindness. Even if they fail in weaving expensive carpets for their owners, the blindness does not prevent them from taking advantage of the children in many fields. Iris mentions:

Once they were blind, the children would be sold off to brothel-keepers, the girls and the boys alike. The services of children blinded in this way fetched high sums; their touch was so suave and deft, it was said, that under their fingers you could feel the flowers blossoming and the water flowing out of your own skin.

They were also skilled at picking locks. Those of them who escaped took up the profession of cutting throats in the dark, and were greatly in demand as hired assassins. Their sense of hearing was acute; they could walk without sound, and squeeze through the smallest of openings; they could smell the difference between a deep sleeper and one who was restlessly dreaming. They killed as softly as a moth brushing against your neck. They were considered to be without pity. They were much feared... (Atwood, 2001: 22).

The novel gets its title from this gloomy story. Iris is the person who should be "much feared". Laura's life is destroyed because of the fact that Iris is unable to open her eyes to the obvious facts around her. When she talks about Laura, she says: "She was washing her hands of me. Of all of us" (Atwood, 2001: 2). Iris admits her mistakes years later; however, in her immature years, she has no idea how much she damaged her own sister with her weak assessments. Iris is still the one who complains about taking care of Laura since their childhood. She says:

I soon found that if I could keep quiet, without clamouring for attention, and above all if I could be helpful—especially with the baby, with Laura,

watching beside her and rocking her cradle so she would sleep, not a thing she did easily or for long—I would be permitted to remain in the same room with my mother. If not, I would be sent away. So that was the accommodation I made: silence, helpfulness (Atwood, 2001: 85).

Silence thus appears as a tool to “communicate” with the mother and a key to spend more time with her. Iris acquired this passive skill to survive in her loveless family environment. Consequently, she accepted this submissive role when she was just a little girl. No matter how useful Iris Chase’s passiveness was in her juvenile years, this way of survival affected herself and her relatives unfavorably. Iris’s desperate need for her mother, Liliana causes her to search for new ways to attract attention. After her mother’s death, Iris begins to consider Reenie as her mother. She wants Reenie to be by her side in her distressed moments. Iris tells:

Oh Reenie. How I wish you were here. Come back and take care of me!

She won’t, though. I will have to take care of myself. Myself and Laura, as I solemnly promised to do (Atwood, 2001: 368).

Laura restates a sentence that Reenie usually repeats. Laura thinks that it is ridiculous and impossible to believe this false reality when she is just eleven or twelve. Iris narrates: “She wrote it out as an equation. *No place = home. Therefore, home = no place. Therefore home does not exist*” (Atwood, 2001: 447). Home does not evoke secure, cozy, and intimate feelings for Laura as it should. Her home is not safe as houses for her and Iris. They are waiting to be rescued in their unhappy setting. As it was mentioned before, the name “Avilion” bears meaning of exile for Adelia. The female members of the Chase family, in this respect, can be regarded as refugees living in exile. The irony is crucial to be mentioned here. As for Adelia, Avilion was supposed to be a place where she came in the hope of finding salvation and comfort which she was unable to find in her family’s home. Laura and Iris clearly could not find a better place than their place of birth. While Iris mentions her home, she uses harsh phrases like “thorn-encircled island”. She says:

Laura borrowed this pen—without asking, as she borrowed everything—then broke it, effortlessly. I forgave her, of course. I always did; I had to, because there were only the two of us. The two of us on our thorn-encircled island, waiting for rescue; and, on the mainland, everyone else (Atwood, 2001: 42-43).

Where is home exactly for the female characters? Laura is right after all when she says “there is no place like home” half-mockingly. Where are women supposed to find security, relief, and comfort to spend their lives? Some sayings about home thus do not go further than meaningless sentences for women. They have always waited to be “rescued” on their “thorn-encircled island”.

Iris sees herself as a vulnerable, powerless woman who is stuck in the maternal role that the society gives. She is expected to be guiding and protective whereas she lacks in autonomous decision making. That leads Iris to envy her sister’s relative freedom. Iris want to be free of maternal responsibility placed upon her.

I felt I was the victim of an injustice: why was it always me who was supposed to be a good sister to Laura, instead of the other way around? Surely my mother loved Laura more than she loved me (Atwood, 2001: 93).

Her anger against Laura mounts over the inequality between them. It becomes apparent that being the elder sister in the family is considered as a duty of mothering which curtails the individual’s freedom. As a result of bearing this tremendous responsibility of mothering, sisterly love between Iris and Laura diminishes and the duty of an elder sister is used as a tool for restraining freedom by the family, especially by the father. It results in, for Iris, being able to understand her role as neither a sister nor a daughter. She experiences the difficulty of being a girl who needs mothering and who needs to mother her sister at the same time. Iris’s anger causes her to act enviously: “I pushed her off the ledge. Not into the pond though—I did have some sense. I pushed her onto the grass” (Atwood, 2001: 97). She wants to show how much she suffers from taking care of her sister by hurting Laura. While Iris is actually the person who needs mothering and treating with tenderness and

affection, she has to step forward and act like a mother figure. This anticipation crushes her childhood dreams. She thinks: “(I have to admit I was gratified by this. I’d wanted her to suffer too—as much as me. I was tired of her getting away with being so young.)” (Atwood, 2001: 97). This shows that growing age comes into the picture as a drawback for the girl. Iris suffers most from this difficulty during her childhood. Her right to have liberty in her life is confiscated by the masculine society. The male society means the father, Norval in *Avilion* and her husband, Richard in her loveless marriage. She talks about the “invisible” obstacles that hinder her independence. Her autonomy is taken away by these undetectable “barriers”. She says:

In theory I could go wherever I liked, in practice, there were invisible barriers. I kept to the main streets, the more prosperous areas: even within those confines, there were not really very many places where I felt unconstrained. I watched other people—not the men so much, the women (Atwood, 2001: 320).

Her patronizing husband tries to limit Iris’s actions as well as her thoughts. Even by herself, Iris cannot go anywhere she likes. The “invisible” impediments gain meaning with her depiction of an ordinary walk. In the streets, women do not have the courage or permission to walk freely.

Iris needs a role model who can guide and show her the best way of survival in the patriarchal system. Her mother has no affective role to shape her daughter’s life. Liliana completes the requirements of a housewife in her daily life and shares the maternal duty with Reenie. She cannot keep up with raising her daughters caringly. She is another victimized female character who is under constant pressures. Norval goes to fight for his country and to complete his military duty which is required by the society. He never thinks to question the meaning and the purpose of the war. According to him, it is just a job that needs to be done by men. Iris narrates this period: “The war began in the August of 1914, shortly after my parents’ marriage. All three brothers enlisted at once, no question about it. Amazing to consider now, this lack of question” (Atwood, 2001: 70). Iris cannot understand the reason behind

risking someone's life for no obvious reason. Just like Norval's conditioning to think that the war is his job, his wife is conditioned to consider the domestic responsibilities and taking care of her children as her duties by self-sacrificing. During the wartime when her husband is at war with patriotic feelings for Canada, Liliana does her best to serve her country. She does not go through a journey of self-actualization and expects little from life. Iris describes Avilion during time of war, especially her mother's determination to do something useful for the soldiers at war:

At Avilion, my mother set her will in motion. She believed in public service; she felt she had to roll up her sleeves and do something useful for the war effort. She organized a Comfort Circle, which collected money through rummage sales (Atwood, 2001: 72).

The father turned into an atheist after witnessing horrible scenes at war. How could God let it happen and let all those people die? He is now both physically and spiritual a "wreck" to be fixed and this difficult job belongs to the mother figure. Women are expected to mend the broken parts in the family which requires them to be highly sturdy. The meaninglessness of wars is pointed out by the father who was once eager to serve his country without a blink. He changed so drastically that all his views on his country and the necessity to serve were destroyed as wars always do. According to Iris, the war changed her father completely: "However, my father wasn't so healthy as all that. In fact he was a shattered wreck, as witness the shouts in the dark, the nightmares, the sudden fits of rage, the bowl or glass thrown against the wall or floor, though never at her. He was broken, and needed mending..." (Atwood, 2001: 77). With the sudden change of Norval, Liliana gets sentimentally broken, as well.

Reenie and Liliana fall short of the expectations Iris and Laura have. Iris admits: "I was in awe of Callista because she was an artist, and was consulted like a man..." (Atwood, 2001: 147). A woman like Callista would be of great help for Iris's maturation period and would be a proper guide in Iris's self-discovery journey. When she describes Callista who is an "intimate" friend of her father, she talks with great admiration that she has never had for any person until that point. Callista's difference

from Reenie and Liliana is apparent in terms of voicing her thought freely among men. She has a self-governing personality that can voice her thoughts.

After the war, the marriage of Liliana and Norval is adversely affected. Norval gets distant and alienated from other people. His desire for loneliness pushes his wife away. Iris narrates their marriage:

Thus my mother and my father. How could either of them atone to the other for having changed so much? For failing to be what was expected. How could there not be grudges? Grudges held silently and unjustly, because there was nobody to blame, or nobody you could put your finger on. The war was not a person. Why blame a hurricane? (Atwood, 2001: 76).

The war's wreckful outcomes should be admitted here; however, Norval does not mean to choose a peaceful way that can be accomplished by the help of her wife. He undermines the significance of communication in marriage, and another problem ascends for women in general in their marriages which is lack of communication with their husbands. Iris suffers from the same challenge that her mother suffered from years ago. That Iris follows the same pattern like her ancestors becomes evident one more time in the novel. It becomes a reality that time does not heal the problems of women. Adelia, Liliana and Iris show the reader that nothing much has changed throughout a time period of more than a hundred years. The blame is not only on the male patriarchy, of course. Women who cannot dare to complete their journey of self-discovery and women who are content with what they have are to be blamed, as well. Iris narrates her own honeymoon with Richard.

Honeymoons were said to allow the new couple the time to get to know each other better, but as the days went by I felt I knew Richard less and less. He was effacing himself, or was it concealment? Withdrawal to a vantage point. I myself however was taking shape—the shape intended for me, by him. Each time I looked in the mirror a little more of me had been coloured in (Atwood, 2001: 303).

Marriage which is considered by young, naive women as an escape route from the oppression in their families results in even worse conditions for them. They fail to find affection they were looking for before marriage, and this results against them. However, Iris was not enthusiastic to marry a much older man than herself. She says: “As far as I was concerned Richard was a grown-up man. He was thirty-five, I was eighteen” (Atwood, 2001: 226). The fact that the age difference between them would arise a big problem was disregarded by Iris’s father whose single intention was to wed her daughter with any man to raise money for his company, Chase and Sons. Iris goes on to tell her marriage, she says:

She was necessary to Richard, I on the other hand could always be replaced. My job was to open my legs and shut my mouth.

If that sounds brutal, it was. But it wasn’t out of the ordinary (Atwood, 2001: 331-332).

The necessary person for Richard is his sister, Wilfred who is a resilient character with strong ideas. She does not take the part of Iris. In addition, her role is to shape Iris according to her own point of view. Iris is, for her, a piece of rough wood that needs cutting and perfecting. The “brutal” point, as it is apparent, the attempt to objectify the wife and use her only for the sexual desires. Fraser attracts attention to this point: “The woman as consumer is also consumed, as a packaged product, like a cake prepared and edible for male consumption” (1991: 120). As is the case, men consider to have authority over women’s bodies, as well. They regard themselves fully capable of behaving anyway they like over female bodies. Iris writes: “Sometimes—increasingly, as time went by—there were bruises, purple, then blue, then yellow. It was remarkable how easily I bruised, said Richard, smiling. A mere touch would do it. He had never known a woman to bruise so easily. It came from being so young and delicate” (Atwood, 2001: 371). As Richard thinks that he is the owner of both Iris’s body and her soul, he has the right to damage her body. Except as provided above, women are not respected and considered to possess appreciated opinions that can be beneficial for the male society. This contemptuous approach and narrow-minded mentality that domestic responsibilities are more than enough for

women are doomed to fade away. Margaret Atwood criticizes women's need to make a loveless marriage to reach salvation. Howells lists the elements of Margaret Atwood's writing which are easily detectable in her novel *The Blind Assassin*. Howells writes:

She certainly writes about feminist issues like marginality, alienation and self-division; she takes up the traditional subjects of women's fiction which are love and marriage and domestic experience through which women have looked for their meaning and salvation; she explores romantic fantasy narratives where women see themselves as helpless victims in need of male protection and rescue. She is very aware of the stereotype images that women have of men as well as of themselves and of the kind of fictions through which such images are internalized (1987: 56).

Nearly all the female characters in the novel are "helpless victims" because of their own poor judgements and also because of the male society's fixed perception of women's roles in the community. Now that Iris is in her eighties, she is now able to assess in her right mind the events she experienced in the course of her marriage.

Pearson and Pope state that "work is symbolic of a woman's freedom to exist in direct relation to the world and to unleash her full vitality. It replaces the passive, dependent female role defined by the myths of virginity, romantic love, and maternal self-sacrifice" (1981: 148). Economically self-sufficient women have a better chance to avoid the submissive and passive role in the society. As Pearson and Pope indicate, gender based persecution is removed ideally by economic freedom which Iris does not possess. She maintains her life dependently on other people for money. She does not have to work to earn her life. This leads the male characters in the novel to suppress and take advantage of her. She is overpowered by the male society who has the control of their lives as they do not lead a life based on the need of other people to survive. It can be assumed that economic freedom gives birth to social freedom which women would enjoy. Iris expresses her way of living without money: "I never actually had it, of course. Father had it, and then Richard. But money was

imputed to me, the same way crimes are imputed to those who've simply been present at them" (Atwood, 2001: 144).

When she thinks about her past and her childhood, she says:

(I say 'her,' because I don't recall having been present, not in any meaningful sense of the word. I and the girl in the picture have ceased to be the same person. I am her outcome, the result of the life she once lived headlong; whereas she, if she can be said to exist at all, is composed only of what I remember. I have the better view—I can see her clearly, most of the time. But even if she knew enough to look, she can't see me at all.) (Atwood, 2001: 239).

As evident in the quotation, reaching puberty means the beginning of a series of oppression and domination. The young girl goes through even more demanding event in her life none of which she understands. The young female has no clue why she is being treated in this way just because of the fact that she has reached puberty. When it is examined from the male viewpoint, that puberty equals sexuality can be clearly understood. Iris who is already going through a process which is full of physical changes is forced to bear the difficulties made by other people in her family. She is not in a position to discover her womanhood and sexuality. She is obligated to regard sexuality as a feeling to be suppressed. She gives the details of this period:

I became thirteen. I'd been growing, in ways that were not my fault, although they seemed to annoy Father as much as if they had been. He began to take an interest in my posture, in my speech, in my deportment generally. My clothing should be simple and plain, with white blouses and dark pleated skirts, and dark velvet dresses for church. Clothes that looked like uniforms—that looked like sailor suits, but were not. My shoulders should be straight, with no slouching. I should not sprawl, chew gum, fidget, or chatter. The values he required were those of the army: neatness, obedience, silence, and no evident sexuality. Sexuality, although it was never spoken of, was to be nipped in the bud. He had let

me run wild for too long. It was time for me to be taken in hand (Atwood, 2001: 158-159).

The father's demands remind us of Tezer Özlü's childhood. These demands are very similar to those of Özlü's father who wanted the military order at home. Home thus becomes the first place where young girls' freedom is stolen from them. The reason why home and family are regarded as imprisonment by female characters can be observed with the strict rules of the father who is the symbol of power in the family. He wants her daughter to be a model of the traditional woman. Singh makes a definition of the traditional woman:

A traditional woman then was self-effacing, unselfish, sympathetic, attentive, unseeking and chaste. She was all this not merely as a wife but as a daughter as well. Her well-earned price was that she was promptly put on a pedestal and called an Angel. The credit, of course, goes to the men for giving birth to such an agreeable woman (1994:5).

Tezer Özlü and Margaret Atwood's characters, Laura and Iris thus go through very similar experiences at the end of which they are more mature than before; however, this maturation falls short of the reader's expectations. The male-dominated society does not allow them to reach the self-actualization that male characters reach more easily and effortlessly.

CONCLUSION

This thesis points out that women are ruthlessly oppressed and slowed down while trying to find a place in the male-controlled society. Regardless of the differences in social, economic or educational lives, Atwood's character, Iris and Özlü's character, whom she created based on her own life, reflect many uncomfortable parallels.

The aim of this study was to demonstrate the differences between Bildungsroman and female Bildungsroman and to indicate how two women writers with distinct cultural differences treat this genre which narrates the story of a woman from her early childhood to her late forties. Tezer Özlü's novels *The Chilly Nights of Childhood* and *Journey to the End of Life* are both studied because of the fact that these two novels fit into the genre only when they are analyzed together. While the first novel informs us the period from her childhood to her late thirties, the second novel enlightens a more mature period. Since the self-realization is not reached at the end of *The Chilly Nights of Childhood*, Özlü's sufferings and problems stemming from the lack of harmony with the foundations of the society are drawn in detail. The second novel *Journey to the End of Life*, however, is a journey to Özlü's inner world. She happens to find herself in a constant journey during which she finds out her shortcomings and strengths. This inner journey makes her sturdier and more conscious.

Margaret Atwood's novel *The Blind Assassin* narrates the story of an old woman, Iris who retrieves the past. Iris tells the process of her maturation by writing a memoir of her experiences. Iris and her sister, Laura appears in the novel as the victims of the society. Laura, who is abused by Iris's husband, Richard E. Griffen, gets admitted to a facility where she is treated with electroshock treatment. This treatment is very much similar to Tezer Özlü's treatment. The society pushes the limits of an individual with its every possible foundations. Any person rebelling against the nonsense rules is condemned. Iris appears in the novel as both the victim and the victimizer on the basis of shutting her eyes to the sufferings of Laura. As time passes, she realizes her limitations and her eyes gradually opens. As it can be inferred from the

novel, the family tree of Iris gives us pessimistic thoughts regarding women's statuses in the society. All women ancestors of Iris reflect maternal and passive roles by being silenced by others; however, with Iris's reached self-realization, this situation seems to get better and Atwood seems, at the end of the novel, to be optimistic concerning women's roles in the patriarchal system. She gives us the impression that the next generation after Iris will not go through the same sufferings caused by men.

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