

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**ANALYSING AND COMPARING SYLVIA PLATH'S *THE BELL*
JAR AND SUSAN SONTAG'S *ALICE IN BED* WITHIN THE FRAME
OF FEMINISIM AND PANOPTICON**

M.A. Thesis

Sıla Selçuk Kurtuluş

Department of English Language and Literature
English Language and Literature Program

Istanbul, 2016

**T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**



**ANALYSING AND COMPARING SYLVIA PLATH'S *THE BELL
JAR* AND SUSAN SONTAG'S *ALICE IN BED* WITHIN THE FRAME
OF FEMINISIM AND PANOPTICON**

M.A. Thesis

Sıla Selçuk Kurtuluş

(Y1312.020018)

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature Program

Thesis Supervisor: ASSIST. PROF. DR. Gillian Mary Elizabeth Alban

June 2016



T.C.
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

Yüksek Lisans Tez Onay Belgesi

Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı **Y1312.020018** numaralı öğrencisi **Sıla SELÇUK KURTULUŞ'un** «**ANALYZING AND COMPARING SLYVIA PLATH'S THE BELL JAR AND SUSAN SONTAG'S ALICE IN BED WITHIN THE FRAME OF FEMINISM AND PANOPTICON**» adlı tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 16.06.2016 tarih ve 2016/12 sayılı kararıyla oluşturulan jüri tarafından ile Tezli Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak **X Ü h\A...** edilmiştir.

Öğretim Üyesi Adı Soyadı

İmzası

Tez Savunma Tarihi: 30/06/2016

1) Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Gillian Mary Elizabeth ALBAN

2) Jüri Üyesi : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Öz ÖKTEM

3) Jüri Üyesi : Yrd. Doç. Dr. Vassil Hristov ANASTASSOV

Not: Öğrencinin Tez savunmasında **Başarılı** olması halinde bu form **imzalanacaktır**. Aksi halde geçersizdir.

FOREWORD

This thesis study prepared as İstanbul Aydın University Social Sciences Institute English Language and Literature Department graduate thesis study aims at contributing to the field by examining the themes of Feminism and Panopticism in the chosen literary works. I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my dear supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Gillian Alban who has always encouraged me with her enlightening suggestions during my thesis study.

Also, I deeply thank to my dear spouse Murat Kurtuluş who has always encouraged me to write and listened to me with his tolerance during my graduate study. Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude for my dear mother Gülseren Selçuk, and my dear mother-in-law Sibel Kurtuluş who have always helped me in many ways and supported me to complete my thesis study.

June, 2016

Sıla Selçuk Kurtuluş

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

FOREWORD.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENT.....	iv
ÖZET.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. FEMINISM IN THE BELL JAR AND ALICE IN BED.....	11
2.1 Repressive Sexuality.....	11
2.2. Deconstruction of Ideologies.....	18
2.3. Metaphorical Usages.....	25
3. MADNESS AND SUICIDIALITY CAUSED BY THE NOTION OF PANOPTICON IN THE BELL JAR AND ALICE IN BED.....	34
3.1 Panopticon and Madness.....	34
3.2 Suicidality.....	47
3.3 Finding the True Self.....	54
4. CONCLUSION.....	62
REFERENCES.....	67
RESUME.....	71

**SYLVIA PLAT'IN *THE BELL JAR* VE SUSAN SONTAG'IN *ALICE IN BED*
ADLI ESERLERİNİN FEMİNİZİM VE PANOPTICON KURAMLARINA
GÖRE İNCELENMESİ VE KARŞILAŞTIRILMASI**

ÖZET

Tarih boyunca, erkek ve kadının konumu arasında önemli bir fark vardır. Erkeklerin dış dünyayla uğraşması beklenirken, kadınlar ideal anne, ev hanımı gibi bazı sosyal rollerle meşgul olması beklenen kişiler olmaktadır. Özellikle, yazmak için entelektüel güce sahip olan kadınlar kendi yaratıcı akılları ile toplum tarafından kabul edilme mecburiyeti hissiyatı arasında ikilem yaşamaktadırlar. Edebiyat uğruna, bu kadınlar zihinsel rahatsızlık ve depresyondan mustarip olmaktadır. Sonunda da bu kadınlar arasında intihar eğilimi ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Bu tez çalışması kadınların ne kadar yaratıcı akıllara sahip olursa olsun toplumsal ve ailevi kısıtlamaların onların gelecek planları üzerindeki etkisini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma bu konuyu Sylvia Plath'ın *The Bell Jar* ve Susan Sontag'ın *Alice in Bed* eserlerini inceleyerek ele alacaktır. Bu kaynaklar Feminizm ve Foucault'nun Panopticon kuramları çerçevesinde incelenirken bu çalışmanın ana kaynakları olacaklardır. Her iki eser de ataerkil toplumda kadının konumunu sorgulamaktadır. Romandaki ve oyundaki ana karakterler baskın güçler yüzünden hissettikleri baskıyı açıkça göstermektedirler. Bu karakterler, ataerkil sistemin oluşturduğu gücün örnekleridir ve bu sistem yüzünden kadınların başarı alanlarının kısıtlanmasını açıkça göstermektedirler. Kendilerini kaybolmuş hissederler ve depresyondan mustarip olurlar, böylece bu karakterlerin intihar etme eğilimleri vardır. Bu nedenle, bu tez toplumun kadınların arzuları ve kimlikleri üzerindeki baskısını yansıtacaktır ve kadınlarda sonrasında psikolojik problemlere sebep olan kadına karşı uygulanan çifte standarttı gösterecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Feminizm, Panopticon, Kadının Baskılanması, Psikolojik Problemler, İntihar Eğilimi*

**ANALYSING AND COMPARING SYLVIA PLATH'S *THE BELL JAR* AND
SUSAN SONTAG'S *ALICE IN BED* WITHIN THE FRAME OF FEMINISM
AND PANOPTICON**

ABSTRACT

Throughout the history, there is a crucial difference between men's and women's position. Women have been the ones who are expected to engage in some social roles such as being an ideal mother, housewife while men have been expected to deal with outer world. Especially, women who have an intellectual power to write have had paradox between their creative minds and feeling of obligation to be accepted by society. For the sake of literature, these women have suffered from mental illness and depression. At the end, suicidality emerges among these women.

This thesis study aims at demonstrating how social and familial constraints have an impact on the future plans of women no matter how they have creative minds. This study will handle this issue by analyzing Sylvia Plath's novel, *The Bell Jar*, and Susan Sontag's play, *Alice in Bed*. These works will be the main sources of this thesis while they are being analyzed within the frame of Feminism and Foucault's notion of Panopticon. Both of the works question the position of women in patriarchal society. The protagonists in the novel and the play clearly demonstrate the oppression they feel because of dominant forces. These characters are the examples of the power that patriarchal system creates, and they clearly show the limitation of women's scopes of success because of this system. They feel engulfed, and they suffer from depression, so they have a tendency towards committing suicide. Hence, this thesis will reflect society's pressure on women's desires and their identity, and it will demonstrate the double standards applied to women which later gives rise to psychological problems for women.

Keywords: *Feminism, Panopticon, Oppression of Women, Psychological Problems, Suicidality*

1. INTRODUCTION

“The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself” (Woolf, 1929, p. 72). What Woolf emphasized in *A Room of One's Own* is a way of expressing the oppression of women in the society. Not only did she summarize the past, but she also envisaged the future about the position of women in society by this utterance. Even in twentieth century, it is not challenging to see the fallout of this convention dating back. According to Raushenbush, in Cold War era, women were prompted to alter themselves to arrangements already in society instead of questioning and changing the social structure in fifties. In this time, activism was displeasing, and feminism was seen as something to be avoided. This era promoted the idea of women domesticity. They received lots of messages about their roles in society such as being a mother, wife, etc. (qtd. Eisenmann, 2007, p. 2). It is also enlightening to share thought of Giddens about gender bias. He states “Gender is the social concept which gives men and women different kinds of responsibilities and social roles” (112). As it is understood, throughout the history, the social position of women has not changed. They are the ones who are expected to deal with some social roles, conventions which play a fundamental role for the shape of society. They are not suitable for certain jobs while they are held responsible for being an angel of the house which is very insulting for women.

This study aims at examining how Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Susan Sontag's *Alice in Bed* present underestimation of women who have an intellectual power to create in the patriarchal society. The focus in this dissertation is to demonstrate the paradox that women have to have owing to their willingness to write and their feeling of obligation to be accepted by the society within the frame of feminism. They both question the women's role in patriarchal society. Therefore, firstly, *The Bell Jar* and *Alice in Bed* will be examined under the headings of “Feminism” including “Repressive Sexuality, Deconstruction of Ideologies, and Metaphorical Usages”. After these, “Mental Illness”, “Suicidality” will be analyzed by including the Foucault's

notion of Panopticon. Finally, “Finding the True Self” will be the last point that will be touched on. I have chosen Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar* and Susan Sontag’s *Alice in Bed* for my dissertation due to their representation of oppression on women’s bodies and mental health. They present how society affects women’s desires, their identity.

In *The Bell Jar*, young woman who tries to eradicate the widespread prejudice about the women’s position in society is portrayed by Plath. The protagonist Esther is not satisfied with her position in society as a woman. According to the conventional view of the society, a woman should create an attractive home atmosphere by having a holy duty such as being a mother after finding a nice, rich young man to get married. However, this expectation disturbs her due to her ambition to write. Getting married means relinquishing her dreams about writing. Also, her desire to write isn’t taken seriously by society which thinks that being a writer is something that can be achieved just by men. She strives against this conventional view; however, she can’t help feeling pressed due to traditional clash between being a mother and being a writer. *The Bell Jar* is an autobiographical novel which is based on Plath’s struggle to survive in patriarchal society. Hence, the protagonist, Esther, can be regarded as the reflection of Plath.

In Susan Sontag’s play, *Alice in Bed*, traditional view about gender bias can be seen, as well. Alice is the youngest of five children, and she is the only girl in the family since mother figure is absent in the play. She is the fictionalized character of Alice James. Her father and brothers stand for the male dominant society which gives rise to her disability. She is a young woman confined to bed that is the representation of the society. In one of the conversations between her and her brother, she says “Why should equality reciprocity be more of problem for me than for you” (Sontag, 1993, p. 30). Gender apartheid that she is subjected by society is so apparent in this sentence. She suffers from restriction of her genius while her father is a well-known author which backs up the idea that writing is a man activity. She shares the same fate with Esther as a creative mind in a world of bad luck for women. It is useful to share Sontag’s notes about that issue at the end of the play, *Alice in Bed*.

The all too common reality of a woman who does not know what to do with her genius, her originality, her aggressiveness, and therefore becomes a career invalid, merged in my mind with the fictional figure of the Victorian girl-child who discovers the world of adult arbitrariness in the form of a dream (in the style produced by that perfectly legal and widely used nineteenth-century drug, opium), in which the changes in and perplexities about her feelings are imagined as arbitrary changes in physical size and scale (Sontag, 1993, p. 112).

It will be better to relate *The Bell Jar* and *Alice in Bed* to Foucault's notion of Panopticon. It is essential to mention this notion briefly to catch on the topic. According to Foucault, The Cold War hysteria is an outcome of surveillance performed by the government and citizens. People were observing each other at work, in the neighborhood. Everybody could be a Communist spy. People didn't know who was a person to trust because there was a belief like that: "Gaze is alert everywhere." In public places such as schools, hospitals, etc. stable gaze of individual can be mentioned. In this notion, there is a supervisor who notices the move of the inmate so the inmate cannot realize when he is observed (Foucault, 1979, p. 195).

Reflection of collective gaze in Esther's life can be observed in *The Bell Jar*. She rejects accepting the stereotypical representations of women that she feels. However, it is not possible for her to express her thoughts to avoid public anger. Macpherson (1991) states that Esther does not speak out her thoughts in public areas; she keeps her silence (p. 39). It is difficult for her to adjust herself to the conventional way of thinking; hence, her sense of self is seen as wrong by her supervisors. This kind of point of view makes her suffer from feeling of fragmented self which ends in madness and suicide. Ester has several suicidal attempts because of the bell jar she is imprisoned. As a result, she finds herself in mental ward because of suffering from nervous breakdown.

In *Alice in Bed*, Alice turns down determined practices, and she is pretty conscious of her lack of collective confirmation. Her endeavor to abandon the moral system of society makes her lifetime invalid. In one scene, she refuses to put on make-up when she is warned about her appearance by nurse. She is against the expectation of society about being attractive as a woman. No matter how she stands for taboos, she is in unbreakable prison which gives rise to hysteria, depression. Her limitation starts by being a part of a brilliant family including Henry and William James. Being a sister of Henry and William James is one of the reasons that imprison her achievement. In addition, the era that she lives in is burdened with prohibitions for women; therefore, her being captive entrenches Alice's psychological turmoil. Social constrains that limit her creativity results in her living in a fantasy world and desire to commit suicide.

Both writers choose these titles *The Bell Jar* and *Alice in Bed* to demonstrate how social and familial limitations drag women into a deadlock which ends up mental illness or suicide. These titles are the representations of Panopticon for women.

Conventional views, others' thoughts are prisons of women which cause psychiatric problems. Thus, madness, depression, suicidality are chosen by women writers for their books to emphasize women's suffering. Small (1985) states that female writers use madness to eliminate their paradox resulting from their ambition to be appeared in society as women artists inasmuch as being a woman writer includes psychological oppression due to their inevitable social roles as a woman (p. 115). Both Esther and Alice have internal conflicts arising from their dilemma about being an intellectual individual or expected housewife which at the end disrupts their minds. And, at the end, both of them want to commit suicide. The power of patriarchy over women constrains their scope of success. Their personal struggles to exist in patriarchal society lead to women's passivity, depression. In other words, women's psychiatric problems are caused by double standard applied to women.

Before starting to analyze the book and the novel, it is necessary to mention the history of feminism as background information to grasp women's condition from the beginning. In the early postwar years, women lived in hard conditions. As mentioned above, they had to care their family as an angle of the house, and they couldn't have a profession apart from some certain jobs. They were insignificant people who had no rights to get education, vote because women weren't wanted to take part in politics. Also, their decisions were underestimated. Society was managed by men who had a power to create prejudice towards women. Even in childhood, girls adapt themselves to the confinement of society by acting like a lady. Gender distinction was so keen. Being breadwinner was brought to the front for men while women were featured as housewives. Also, women who looked for freedom from pressure of society which impressed some fix jobs on women and women who were in the search of new financial gains were prevented. These circumstances all paved the way for predicament of women in Cold War.

Nonetheless, in the second half of the twentieth century, the traces of this apartheid to which women have to be exposed began to be obliterated. Their status started to be open to change which is the consequence of feminist movements. Women were conscious of the fact that they needed to have organizations to get their rights and to persuade society by taking samples such as Abolition of Slavery. These social groups heartened women's movement. These movements were against the idea of discrimination apt to externalize women in the society. In contrast to this exclusion, it

supported the idea of equality, equality of rights to overcome gender bias. Its aim involved not only equal rights but also legal protection for women. These movements provided a distinguishing contribution for women's life inasmuch as they raised awareness in society by enlightening women's roles in institutions such as the family, the workplace. Hence, their being regarded as inferior to men started to have been replaced by the thought of equality, and many women writers were inspired to write about themselves, their own experiences.

To start with, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* which is the earliest work of feminist philosophy is a pioneer book for feminist thought. In the book, she emphasizes the influence of society on women. She puts forward the idea that society gives a shape to women's lives by providing a role. Their being attractive, submissive, docile is determined by society. She is against the idea of enslavement of women, so the book focuses on women's conditions. She also puts emphasis on the importance of education by revealing that education provides freedom for women. "The most perfect education . . . is such an exercise of the understanding as is best calculated to strengthen the body and form the heart or, in other words to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent" (Wollstonecraft, 2016, p. 21). From these sentences, it can be understood that she exalts the education for women to be an independent individual.

Like Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf is mainly concerned with the importance of financial gain and education for women by touching on the past of women's literal experience and their occupations in *A Room of One's Own*. She believes that gender roles are man-made which relates imaginary with madness for women; however, what her contribution to literary work is to make her fellows be aware of the fact that this thought can be changed if they have their own money and room. In *Professions for Women*, Woolf writes that sentence: "My profession is literature, and in that profession there are fewer experiences for women than in any other" (Woolf, 2016). What she basically wants to say that women should write about their own experience as men are not capable to write women's experience out. She states that women writers are prevented by social obstacles and the taboo of womanhood. They are the things which hamper woman to write about her own body. That's why she underlines the importance of independence in terms of socially and economically. According to her, that is the only way to be able to write without any border.

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* points out the difference between gender and sex. According to her, shortly, sex is natural while gender is socially constructed. Gender is man-made, so being a woman attributes to cultural elaboration. She stresses the objectification, otherness of women which is the outcome of patriarchal structure in society. She maintains that being a woman is determined by society. In this regard, her views fit the notions of Butler. According to her, "Gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, 1990, p. 140). Here, Butler argues that gender is formed in particular time and place that society creates. And repetition of acts refers to dominant ideologies over man and woman. From the second wave feminism, Kate Millet is an important feminist writer who is against the notion of gender. She confronts with culturally defined concept of sexual identity which is called as gender. Performing roles that society gives us in an unfair way is called as sexual politics by Millet. Thus, in *Sexual Politics*, she focuses on inequality between men and women in all ways including history, literature, psychology, politics, and sociology. What she argues in the book is mainly about patriarchy which demonstrates women as if they had a subordinate position, and she links sex to politicization which is the direct source of social inequality. She highlights the fact that women's area of freedom is pervaded by male hegemony, and women's oppression is resulted from male domination. "The entire culture supports masculine authority in all areas of life and--outside of the home--permits the female none at all" (Millet, 1990, p. 35). From that sentence, it is clearly understood that patriarchy shapes conventions of society which is always biased towards women.

It is worth mentioning Elaine Showalter who is a well-known feminist critic due to having original views about feminist criticism. She is an influent feminist critic who suggests women to obtain their own theory, voice instead of adhering to male critical theory. According to Showalter (1979), there are three phases concerning to women's writing history. In *Towards a Feminist Poetics*, she explains these phases. The first phase is called as "feminine phase" (1840-1880). In this phase, woman wrote to catch equality between male and female nature. In the second phase, "feminist phase", (1880-1920) woman wrote to defend their rights against male values. In the last phase, "female phase", (1920-) self-awareness has appeared by standing against imitation and advocating female experience for their work. In *Feminist Criticism in Wilderness*, Showalter (1981) asserts that there are two kinds of feminist theories. First one is

feminist critic which concerns women as a reader while the second one is “gynocritics” which women are handled as a writer. What “gynocritics” minds out is the position of women as writers, producers. That term is used to form a female frame for the analysis of women’s works which have been shadowed under the influence of men’s literature. It aims to highlight female writer’s experience. It is concerned with women producers’ work by setting themselves free from male prevailing literature. Her theory of gynocritics is based upon some concepts that show four dissimilar versions of women’s writing. These concepts are related to body, language, psyche, and culture. In biological section, she puts forward an idea that turns down the inferiority of women’s biology in texts. It tries to demonstrate how women’s writing is influenced by female body. In linguistic section, certain differences that men and women have while using language and women’s writers’ language is examined. For the psychoanalytical section, how women’s psyche affects their writing is studied. In the cultural model, the concern is the relation of women’s writing and the society that gives a shape the culture of men and women.

It is also crucial to mention Elaine Showalter’s *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture*. In her book, what she focuses on is women’s insanity from Victorian era to the modern times. She tries to figure out the connection between women and madness. She illustrates who were the frequent patients of psychiatric care. The book includes study of the sexual politics of British psychiatric history, and it shows that women are the ones who mainly get psychiatric treatment owing to a cultural phenomenon involving male hegemony in society. She further states that until the late 1970s, because psychiatry cured women within the context of femininity, this situation was enervating for women. To emphasize how madness is attributed to women, she states that “Psychiatrists’ attribution of the cause of disease to an organ that belongs to women only shows that hysteria is considered to be a female malady” (Showalter, 1978, p. 148). Generally, Showalter maintains that women are perceived irrational, childlike, so they are forced to be out of legal and political rights. She states that according to medical belief, instability of women nervous and reproduction system make them more inclined to mental alienation than men. “It was used as a reason to keep women out of the professions, to deny them political rights, and to keep them under male control in the family and the state. Thus medical and political policies were mutually reinforcing” (Showalter, 1978, p. 72). Apparently, in Victorian era, women’s

desires created problems, so obtaining women's minds through psychiatric treatment is the reflection of societal attitudes encouraging male hegemony.

After Showalter, mentioning Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* is necessary. In the book, they state that female characters are shaped by male writers' perspective. According to male writers, there are two types of women including "the angel of the house" and "the madwoman". The angel of the house meets the needs of men by carrying out some certain duties such as cooking, taking care of children. This figure is perfect wife which does not endanger men's power. Other woman figure is "madwoman" who is totally different from the angel. The woman who turns down conventional beliefs about gender roles are named as "mad" by male writers. Women's rejection is unacceptable by society, and this situation put them in a different positions. In order not to lose their influence, women are called mad, monster by men. What Gilbert and Gubar want to highlight is that the figure of madwoman stands for a woman who is rebellious towards patriarchal structure in society. Apart from male writers, Gilbert and Gubar also mention female writers who create their characters according to their own worries, hardships. "The character (particularly the mad-woman) is the author's double, an image of her own anxiety and rage" (Gilbert, Gubar, 1979, p. 61). Unlike male writers, women writers' writings, characters are symbols for objection of double standards between men and women in society. One of these characters has a vital role to stand against sexual disparities. Therefore, that character is labeled as mad due to being different from the expected female figure.

After these feminist writers, it is crucial to mention French writers who have proved that feminist theory cannot be restricted by national boundary. One of them is Helene Cixous who is an eminent figure to try to break down stereotypes of female authors writing. In *Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous addresses female writers not to censor their body to write because she correlates them with each other like breath and speech. Women writers should write to encourage other women in order not to stay under male shadow. And she asserts that writing is the only way for woman to avoid herself from the position that she has occupied so far. She describes the female writers with these definitions:

...their territory is black: because you are Africa, you are black. Your continent is dark. Dark is dangerous. You can't see anything in the dark, you are afraid. Don't move, you might fall. Most of all, don't go into the forest. And so we have internalized this horror of the dark. Men have committed the greatest crime against women (Cixous, 1976, p. 336).

Here, she strictly criticizes phallogocentric tradition which confines female authors' writing and causes women to internalize passivity.

Another significant French feminist is Luce Irigaray. In her work, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, she elaborates on the issue of woman's position in phallogocentric culture. Generally speaking, she is against the idea of Lacan whose claim is based on women's absence. Lacan's diagram below will be beneficial to see the difference that he puts between man and woman.

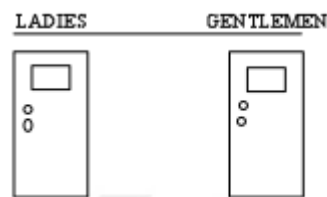


Figure 1.1: Lacan, Jacques. Lacan and Language.

In this diagram, ladies and gentlemen own the similar doors. However, they do not share the same language system when it is entered. These doors of Lacan are significant to demonstrate the dissimilarity of man and woman because they put the difference clearly concerning to linguistic and social aspects. They are the signifiers of two sexes symbolically. The thing it indicates is the gender difference in society within the frame of social roles. At this point, putting Freud's thought about women may be a striking example. He asserts that "Woman never speaks. What she emits is flowing. Cheating" (qtd. in Gallop, 1976, p. 34). This idea expels women from the world that patriarchy creates. Furthermore, there is another dissent between Freud and Irigaray about women's position. Unlike Freud's notion of penis envy which claims that women are lack of sex organ, Irigaray maintains that women have double sex organs, and women do not need to get satisfaction from men sex organ.

After giving information about the history of feminist literary in consideration of paramount feminist writers, it can be stated that feminist literary criticism have made women put their bodies, experiences into words. The truth that has been imposed on women has changed for women. Feminist literary criticism has changed the women images in the society, as well that was determined by male writers because they have started to advocate their beings with the help of their books. Feminist critics manifest themselves against phallogocentric tradition in literature by expressing their ideas without being under the influence of male dominant literature.

All in all, throughout the history, women's position has nearly remained the same even though some feminist critics have showed themselves through writing. To put it bluntly, most of women have sustained a life under the influence of men rather than living their own choices. Hence, as mentioned earlier, the aim of this study is to examine Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Sontag's *Alice in Bed* within the frame of underestimation of women. Although these two works belong to different centuries, both James and Plath and protagonists share the similar fates about oppression, and it is the main reason to have been selected as a thesis topic. Alice James was born in a patriarchal family, and one of the members of it, Henry James, thought that girls scarcely seemed to have a chance for success. Her psychologist brother, William James, saw her as a collection of symptoms rather than a person. Also, her father removed her from outside stimulation. Hence, she suffered from hysteria. Like James, Plath was raised by a strict father whose effects can be seen in her poems. She has troubled relationship with his father. In addition to it, her troubled marriage with Ted Hughes gave rise to suffer from depression like James. Hence, it can be stated that both writers suffered from male dominance which led to depression later. Even though Elizabeth Barret Browning lived in the same century with Alice James, and both of them were invalid, Browning was luckier than James because of a family who supported her in literature. Her mother collected her poems to get them published, her male cousin introduced her to the literary society and thanks to him, she published her adult collection of poems. Also, her father and her husband who admired her poems encouraged her works. When she died in the arms of her husband, she was happy with her life. These examples demonstrate that reaching success is mostly related to the environment, atmosphere people live. Hence, this thesis will focus on Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Sontag's *Alice in Bed* because of sharing the similarities within the frame of oppression caused by society and family, and it aims at showing how this oppression affects their mental and physical health even though they have creative minds.

2. FEMINISM IN *THE BELL JAR* AND *ALICE IN BED*

2.1 Repressive Sexuality

Repressive sexuality in *The Bell Jar* and *Alice in Bed* is apparent. They fight against entrapment which makes them feel suffocated. This chapter will touch on Esther's and Alice's struggle against repressive sexuality to gain their freedom. However, mentioning the conditions of women in postwar America briefly will be better before leading in the main topic. In the second half of the twentieth century, women's enslavement didn't change. Fulfilling the necessities of being a woman was of paramount importance. Serving to men, domesticity, abidance, purity were prerequisite for any sort of marriages. Also, some limited jobs such as being a secretary were appropriate for women. Therefore, these social roles made them feel unsatisfied. It is thus noteworthy to share Tompkins utterances including women's situation. "What engages me is the way women are used as extensions of men, mirrors of men, devices for showing men off, devices for helping men get what they want. They are never there in their own right, or rarely... Sometimes I think the world contains no women" (Tomkins, 2016). These sentences provide a fascinating inside into the world of women which comprises inferiority, slavery. Their economic dependence, sustaining a life without their husbands resulted in their being invisible in the society. As de Beauvoir (1949) says "he is the One, she is the Other" (p. 301). Society put pressure on women to be the Other, and forced them to be powerless. Men were seen as a part of self while the women could not exist without self. It was not possible to define women's existence apart from men's existence. Women were a part for men's existence.

Sylvia Plath is one of the woman victims who struggled to take a place in a society as a woman writer and a woman being. She was the child born with the effects of Cold War. No sooner had she attended the school in 1938 than her intelligence was discovered. She ran her success and her love of literature together. She went on her

education at Smith College which was the most prestigious woman college in America. It was a tough task to study at Smith as a scholar among many girls belonging to prestigious families. Therefore, luxurious life of New York, social pressure she felt, people's expectation brought about depression in her life. Shock treatments, psychotherapy led to new traumas in her life. She attempted to commit suicide due to the fact that her writing ability was blocked. Her marriage and children could not prevent her from committing suicide. Separation from her husband and the hardships of everyday life gave rise to her death at the age of thirty.

In *The Bell Jar*, Plath created the identity who conveys her life, desires under the name of Esther. She is introduced as an alienated young woman who combats against the double standard in a society having sexual restrictions. This protagonist is actually Plath's voice which might be the way for Plath to feel better. Like Plath, Esther gets a scholarship to college, and her stories, poems make her win a contest in New York. This contest paves the way for her being intern in Ladies Day Magazine which is a golden opportunity for her to live in a big city and be free from her family. However, working as a guest editor and going out with friends are not satisfactory for her. The atmosphere in New York and the hotel which only girls stay makes her feel empty. She describes the girls in the hotel with these sentences. "These girls looked awfully bored to me. I saw them on the sun-roof. Yawning and painting their nails and trying to keep up their Bermuda tans, and they seemed bored as hell... Girls like that make me sick" (Plath, 1999, p. 4). This scene points out the general expectation of women that should be attractive and empty in society. Also, this idle time disturbs Esther inasmuch as she is aware of her missing out many opportunities.

Doreen and Betsy are other characters in the novel that are totally different from each other. Unlike stereotypical girls, there is no limitation in Doreen's behavior; she never acts on other people's thoughts by being free for her actions. Therefore, she represents freedom against repressed female image for Esther. Her being independent, experienced girl makes her distinct from others. In contrast, Betsy is an inexperienced, pure girl, so she is the symbol of innocence. These two opposing characters lead Esther into a dead end. She gets stuck between having freedom and being accepted. She has an inner journey traveling to both the self and the world. In one scene, Esther and Doreen go to the bar where they meet Frankie and Lenny. Spending time with people that she doesn't know disturbs her, and she lies about her name, her life. She prefers

to have conversation in disguise to avoid being bothered by society; thus, she introduces herself as Elly Higginbottom to feel secure. Acting against conventional views towards girls makes her feel guilty. At the same time, her lack of experiences in life prevents her from proceeding with writing. She is aware of the fact that it is not possible to write something without gaining experience. Her sentences clearly demonstrate how she endeavors to write. “When I took up my pen, my hand made big, jerky letters like those of a child, and the lines sloped down the page from left to right almost diagonally, as if they were loops of string lying on the paper, and someone had come along and blown them askew” (Plath, 1999, p. 137). Both trying to have experience about life and paying attention to taboos at the same time create paradox in her mind. Elly is a way to be free from oppression of society, not to feel guilty because being another person leads up to emancipation of herself as a repressed girl.

In one scene, she goes to the movie which is called as Football Romance. The film handles two opposing girls in the society. One of them is immoral while the other one represents morality. The one who has chastity before marriage is rewarded by getting married a nice football hero whereas the other one suffers for her sin by not getting married anybody. She is disciplined for being sexually free in the film. Howlett (1999) states that “In that production, the sexy, assertive young woman is ‘punished’, deserted by the male characters and the docile young woman collects the reward of marriage” (p. 14). It can be understood that premarital sex is something condemned by society, and the girls who cannot protect the values of virginity should be punished. Also, her boy friend, Buddy Willard, who is supposed to be a perfect husband candidate, and her mother expresses the importance of being virgin on all occasions. In chapter 6, Buddy states that “No, I have been saving myself for when I get married to somebody pure and a virgin like you” (Plath, 1999, p. 73). He emphasizes the importance of purity for woman which is related to virginity. Stereotypical women should be purified from immorality and shouldn’t commit a sin about sexuality without getting married. In another chapter, Esther mentions an article that her mother cut and mails it to her at college. This article which is written by a married woman lawyer with children is called as ‘In Defence of Chastity’. It is crucial to share the gist of the article to catch on the point of view towards man and woman’s sexuality.

The main point of the article was that a man’s world is different from a woman’s world and a man’s emotions are different from a woman’s emotions and only marriage can bring the two worlds and two different sets of emotions together properly. My mother said this was

something a girl didn't know about till it was too late, so she had to take the advice of people who were already experts, like a married woman (Plath, 1999, p. 85).

Hence, these lines clearly express that the girl who has chastity is exalted, and protecting yourself for marriage as a virgin is something that is expected by society. It is so apparent how society determines the social roles for man and woman. Man is free for their actions because of being a man whereas a woman is restricted for having virginity. Virginity is their prison whose key is in men's power. This reality disturbs her, and she hates her mother. Her hatred derives from her fear of ending in like her who is trapped in male dominant society. She feels encompassed with conventional points of view which make her inactive.

In Susan Sontag's *Alice in Bed*, we encounter repressive sexuality, as well. What Sontag wants to do in this play is to echo the heroine of Lewis Carroll's in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. She recreates Alice in her play. Her borrowing stems from the similarities that both Alices have. Both of them bear resemblance in terms of being career invalid which means they do not know what to do with their genius because they feel restricted by dominant forces. Both play and the book reveal blockaded female bodies in fantasy world. The book cover has two Alices side by side. One photograph belongs to Alice James remaining in her sickbed while the other photograph belongs to Carroll's Alice who is confined in the rabbit's house because of her huge body.

In the play, historical Alice James who was as brilliant as her brothers stands for the women hindered to fulfill her ability. In the play, Alice cannot pursue a career in her bed due to being bedridden. Not only does she combat with physical breakdown but also she deals with hysteria which results from common intimidation of women's genius, abilities. Alice suffered nervous breakdown when she was nineteen, and it dragged her to the hysteria until she contacted cancer. Her conditions were different from her brothers who were well-educated. Henry and William James got good education whereas Alice attended the school for girls whose education was based on accomplishments of girls. In her play, Sontag wants to demonstrate the conditions of women in 19th century who were unable to perform their genius because of facing an obstacle of men. Hence, as mentioned before, Alice is the representation of women who couldn't go forward in the patriarchal society. Her confined body to bed symbolizes oppression of women in the Victorian period. Sontag touches on the women who endeavor to use their genius and how their effort ends in failure by making

a reference from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* at the end of the book. In her book, she asks this question: "What should have happened had Shakespeare had a wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith" (Woolf, 1929, p. 39). And she answers the question with these lines:

For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty (Woolf, 1929, p. 41).

Unlike Shakespeare, Henry James who was a successful novelist and William James who was the greatest philosopher had a sister who suffered a lot. However fantasy the book is, it is based on a real life, Alice James's life. This hypothetical situation matches the condition of Alice who dealt with both cancer and hysteria. Her competing against these things is not related to lack of gift; it is because of the society which fails to have genderless mind. Alice in the play projects how social and familial pressure limits the smart women onto the readers. Thereupon, her internal conflict which results from her gift and constraints for her gift is clearly seen in the play. She uses the word 'exhaustion' in order to define how she feels. She feels exhausted to struggle with oppression which absorbs her life of energy. In the third scene, her father wants her to be optimistic, and he states that he doesn't give up living even though he is a crippled man. Nevertheless, what he doesn't grasp is that her being bedridden is not the reason for her depression, her life which is surrounded by patriarchal norms brings about prostration in her life. The need to have lady conduct gives rise to affliction. She states "Long ceaseless strain and tension have worn out all aspiration save the one for Rest" (Sontag, 1993, p. 35). Writing is a way for her to seek emancipation from male-dominant disciplines forced upon women and their bodies. However, she cannot achieve it in the play like Alice James who has unsung ability as a female writer. This play partially has been attributed to Alice James' posthumous career. Her diary which mirrors self-representation wasn't appreciated during her lifetime. Ironically, Alice James couldn't bear witness to her diary which was lauded in 1940s. Given that the play was written in 1990s, the protagonist evokes the times of Victorian period including resignation, longing of women for readers. In the play, her genius is overshadowed by her brothers' success, and it leads her to be carrier invalid. Being not able to use her talent makes her not only carrier invalid but also socially invalid. She never gets married and has children, so she doesn't sustain a life socially. These things are the most compelling evidence for her being afflicted figure. In the light of some

female writers, the conditions of genius women can be notably stated. According to Gilbert and Gubar (1979), “Female writer’s anxiety of authorship is a radical fear that she cannot create because she can never become a precursor, the act of writing will isolate or destroy her” (p. 49). This is a fact rife with hardship of female writers. To put it bluntly, it demonstrates how male authority affects literary genealogy, and how pursuing a literary dream is difficult for women. As mentioned above, Alice’s belonging to male dominant society and family that is good at art gives rise to melancholy to her, and her melancholy brings about indignity among her family members who have self-regard in the play. Her shattered life brings torments both physically and emotionally. Therefore, she can’t flourish as her father and brothers do.

In *Alice in Bed*, Alice’s appearance comes to the forefront in an anomalously. Sontag describes her as a child although she is in thirties. Descriptions of furniture and Alice are out of portion. Interestingly, she is smaller than the furniture. What Sontag wants to emphasize in the play is unbalanced force between man and woman. Inequality between man and woman is unveiled here. Alice gets caught in the trap of weakness as a woman which makes her small. She defines her position with these sentences: “I’m trapped inside this turbid self that suffers, that closes me in, that makes me small” (Sontag, 1993, p. 103). These different sizes determine the social roles in the society explicitly. Male power dominates women by idealizing domestic roles for them. That’s why women take part in domestic scenes whereas the characterization of men is stereotypically shaped by power relations. To a greater extend, women roles are devalued which makes them incompetent, invisible. Alice is aware of this demeaning public opinion of women; thus, she feels smaller even than the furniture.

Correspondingly, sharing Woolf’s views from *A Room of One’s Own* may be striking as an illustration to back up the view above. She asserts that “Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size” (Woolf, 1929, p. 30). According to these sentences, it can be maintained that women are the mirrors of men that show men bigger than their normal size, and project the power onto men. In other words, power of men is shaped by woman who is the subsidiary part of man voice. This situation derives from the women’s embracement of powerlessness. Internalizing the power of man coincides with Alice’s feeling of being trivial, small.

Alice's situation corresponds to other Alice's situation in Wonderland. Alice in Wonderland changes size constantly. Sometimes she becomes large; sometimes she becomes small in relation to everyone around her. That situation cannot be controlled by her; it is arbitrary. There is no balance in that size. However, there are some times specific that change her size. For example, when she learns something new such as sexuality, she becomes bigger. When she becomes a good girl, she becomes smaller. It can be concluded that discovering new things make women bigger whereas being a stereotypical woman does not make no progress for them. Hence, Alice in the play and Alice in Wonderland bear resemblance within the frame of size. Idealized female roles make them feel smaller.

When we analyze both *The Bell Jar* and *Alice in Bed*, the protagonists suffer from repressive sexuality. One of them is in a tight situation between her ambitious and restriction of society. The other one is not capable to accomplish her literary aspiration. Hence, their image is repressed, weak. They clearly demonstrate the fact that stereotype of woman image is a sanction that society gives. Thanks to this stereotype, man possesses enormous power while woman desires to have genderless brain to make use of their genius. However genius they are, women have to give in to inevitable society's demands seeing that gifted mind and domesticity which is considered equal with women are incompatible with each other. Esther and Alice damage their psychology because they are forced to satisfy the societal needs. Being confined to limited social roles is their common tragic destiny which causes invalidism for them. Their intellect for writing is constrained inasmuch as being a writer belongs to man's role. There is an explanation that stresses that situation: “. . . whereas men are rewarded for deriving their sense of self

from creative endeavors. . . , a woman's creativity is unrewarded” (Wetzel et al., 1993,p. 35). Accordingly, to a greater extend, this attitude is valid for Esther and Alice, and it can be stated that practicing double standard can be seen both in the book and the play. Given that they do not want to adopt these social roles, and they struggle not to be a person to whom society wishes, it is not possible to be totally away from the effects of these circumstances.

2.2 Deconstruction of Ideologies

Woman is female to the extent she that she feels herself as such. There are biologically essential features that are not a part of her real, experienced situation: thus the structure of the egg is not reflected in it, but on the contrary an organ of no great biological importance, like the clitoris, plays in it a part of the first rank. It is not nature that defines women, it is she who defines herself by dealing with nature on her own account in her emotional life (De Beauvoir, 1949,p. 69).

What De Beauvoir wants to emphasize here is that the way woman describes herself demonstrates who she is. As De Beauvoir states, in the *Bell Jar*, Esther is aware of the fact that how you describe yourself in society is a precursor of your future. Hence, Esther prefers defining herself as a poet rather than a girl waiting for a perfect husband. Her endeavor to become different from other girls is the evidence to stand against conventional beliefs. In some scenes, she behaves as if she fell in line with the rules by being silent. She tackles her silence by writing; art is the way for her to break the dominant ideology imposed on women. She accomplishes freeing herself from all expectations of Cold War. The idea of being a mother, a wife is far away for her.

That's one of the reasons I never wanted to get married. The last thing I wanted was infinite security and to be the place an arrow shoots off from. I wanted to change and excitement and to shoot off in all directions myself, like the colored arrows from a Fourth of July rocket (Plath, 1999, p. 88).

She rejects the idea of fawning over a husband, and the idea of being homemaker, having children which are portrayed as the natural way of life makes her angry. She is opposed to the idea of serving a man because marriage hinges on dominance of male according to her. Instead, as a person who knows her power to be a career woman, she wishes to broaden her horizon by experiencing different life. She tries to bring her inner self into the forefront by getting rid of her false self forced upon her by society. Her rejecting conventional notions go with defeating the fragmentation caused by Buddy. He is the emblem of patriarchal forces in Cold War era. External forces of that time are shaped in flesh and bones through Buddy. Because of him, Esther gains a new experience and destruction at the same time. However, her discovering about his real character related to his hypocrisy triggers her to leave him. Moreover, her abilities give courage to her to turn down the Buddy's wedding proposal which is unmissable opportunity for most of the girls according to society. She is aware of the fact that the talents of smart women are wasted in marriage. Thus, she prefers profession rather than Buddy who expects to give up her ambitions when she gets married. She has the idea that motherhood equals brainwashing: "So I began to think maybe it was true that

when you were married and had children it was like being brainwashed, and afterwards you went about numb as a slave in some private totalitarian state” (Plath, 1999, p. 90). Her feeling on motherhood, marriage which gives necessity to revolve around husband and children is not something she is keen on. Pursuing her career removes the notion of settling into monotonous life by having children.

Also, she breaks taboos by losing her virginity. Irwin is the ideal partner for her to have sexual intercourse. As a result of the sex, she starts to bleed which is not normal because of her being hemorrhaging. Her blood is half black which signifies losing her innocence in tawdry society. Her uncommon bleeding is the sign of repressed life that Esther has to sustain. In society, marriage is supposed as a solution for legal sexuality for women. Nevertheless, she cannot stand the huge division between men and women. Having sex before marriage challenges the repressive ideas for women. By losing her virginity, she demolishes artificial purity and oppression about sexuality. No matter how she is surrounded by people such as her mother or Mrs. Willard who strictly support the idea that having virginity until marriage is very vital, Esther is the aware of the fact that:

The Virgin is fecundity, dew, wellspring of life; many statuettes show her at the well, the spring, the fountain; the phrase ‘Fountain of Life’ is one of the most widely used; she is not creative, but she fructifies, she makes what was hidden in the earth spring forth into the light of day. She is the deep reality hidden under the appearance of things: the Kernel, the Marrow. Through her is desire appeased: she is what is given to man for his satisfaction (Beauvoir, 1949, p. 212).

Her ideas clash with what society dictates. Despite the fact that she knows that having sex before marriage may result in ungrateful viewpoint for her future husband and it can defame her, she sets free herself by experiencing sex. “Marriage and motherhood loom as the monstrous maternal maw, threatening to swallow up her non-maternal self, desire to express herself, and sexual desires. This totalitarian state of kitchen-mat-wifery is the fate of Mrs Willard in *The Bell Jar*” (Macpherson, 1991, p. 49-50). Through losing her virginity, what Esther aims at is that purifying herself towards her mother and Mrs. Willard who have generally gendered discourse. After the night that she has lost her virginity, she meets Joan who cannot understand her condition easily. After that episode, Joan disappears, and her disappearing results in death. Even though there is no exact explanation for the death of Joan in the novel, it can be grasped that her end is related to Esther’s losing virginity. Joan represents conventional female who likes Mrs Willard. Also, she states that she likes Esther better than Buddy. Hence,

Esther's losing virginity is a huge disappointment for her because she both loses a person whom she likes and Esther's demolishing taboos for virginity hurts her. Maybe, that event reminds her the things that she wants to do but she cannot. However, her death is not so tragic in the novel because it is the representation of the death of traditional female figure in the novel.

In chapter nine, she goes out with Doreen, and she meets Marco, a woman-hater. He treats her harshly and affronts to her, so she fights him. Aftermath of that event, she manages to find a ride home to Manhattan. She climbs to the roof of the hotel and throws away her entire wardrobe piece by piece. "Piece by piece, I fed my wardrobe to the night wind, and flutteringly, like a loved one's ashes, the grey scraps were ferried off, to settle here, there, exactly where I would never know, in the dark heart of New York" (Plath, 1999, p. 118). Her throwing clothes stand for the reaction to the male gaze towards women. Also, she throws away all taboos that she is exposed to by this way. She questions the capitalist idea which backs up women to be attractive, as well. Her forsaken garments to the ashes of a person she once loved urge on the connection between capitalism and femininity. She gives over-arching message here. What she wants to accentuate is that the things which were crucial for her before are not important anymore. Through that way, she demolishes the idea that performing an attractive girl in society takes shape from fashion. It was one of the releasing acts like writing.

Another way that she does to comfort herself against ideology is hot bath. Her frequent taking hot bath is a counter attack against the dominant ideology, purification of the dirt of bell jar which gives rise to deep scar in her inner self because all the time she encounters men or women that try to teach something to her. She refuses to be a stereotyped woman whom everybody embraces: "Why do I attract these weird old women? [...] [T]hey all wanted to adopt me in some way, and, for the price of their care and influence, have me resemble them" (Plath, 1999). She has troubles with these doctrines. She does not want to be entrapped in some tenets. In chapter six, Buddy tries to teach something to her like other women: "Buddy's father was a teacher, and I think Buddy could have been a teacher as well, he was always trying to explain things to me and introduce me to new knowledge" (Plath, 1999, p. 71).

She conflicts with her mother, as well. The relationship with her mother is not satisfactory for Esther. Her hatred for her mother results from her own fear of being

like her, repressed in a conventional life. Their viewpoints towards life are totally dissimilar. Mrs Greenwood does not understand Esther's wishes. Therefore, she states, "I wish I had a mother like Jay Cee. Then I'd know what to do. My own mother wasn't much help [...] She was always on to me to learn shorthand after college, so I'd have a practical skill as well as a college degree" (Plath, 1999, p. 41-42). According to Esther, Jay Cee is a possible mother figure because, contrary to her own mother, Jay Cee has a successful profession based on writing. Instead of trying to get Esther to learn shorthand, unlike Mrs. Greenwood, Jay Cee encourages Esther for a career in journalism and to learn new languages. Mrs Greenwood has a great faith in male dominance. Esther's restricted relationship with her mother has a great influence on divergent views on maternity. Esther develops a nonmaternal concept in the novel. However, no matter how she develops a nonmaternal concept in the novel, she is not capable of understanding the fact that her mother is one of the victims of society as a woman. These conditions of her era create conflicts in her psyche. Perloff (1972) states that Esther's struggle to heal the disjointedness between her inner self and the false outer self and to be released from self-policing is the vital conflict in *The Bell Jar* (p. 509).

Deep scars drag her into suicide attempt which ends in hospital. Suicide is a rebellion act against the oppression of society which was a very common problem of 1950s. Because of its concerning to many American women of the Cold War era, this issue can be encountered in numerous works. Esther shows resistance against patriarchal society which is one of the direct causes for depression. Esther's psychological trauma leads to suicide which is actually necessary to gain freedom and to resist against society. Another short story of Plath called *The Wishing Box* reflects the act of suicide as an endurance. In *The Wishing Box*, Plath demonstrates suicide as a purification and necessity to regain a new identity. It creates the true self by killing the false self.

Such poems in which Plath's protagonist confronts death, or contemplates dying or suicide, are essentially envisioned rituals whose ultimate motive is to kill the false self along with the spoiled history and to allow the true self to be reborn that is, simply to be disclosed...(Kroll, 1978, p. 171)

After her suicide, she wants to see a mirror to see the effects of her attempt and her false self brought into existence by society. What she wants to see in the mirror is the consequence of male dominant ideology. Through that mirror, actually she mirrors the position of women in Cold War period. When she sees her image in the mirror, she explains her feelings with these words below.

At first I didn't see what the trouble was. It wasn't mirror at all, but a picture. You couldn't tell whether the person in the picture was a man or a woman, because their hair was shaved off and sprouted in bristly chicken-feather tufts all over their head. One side of the person's face was purple, and bulged out in a shapeless way, shading to green along the edges, and then to a sallow yellow. The person's mouth was pale brown, with a rose-colored sore at either corner. The most startling thing about the face was its supernatural conglomeration of bright colors (Plath, 1999, p. 197).

Her facing with the picture of herself and generation doesn't prevent her from smiling. How depressing the picture is, her smiling illustrates that she demolishes all gender based ideologies. The predicament of her hair, mouth, and face does not meet the expectation of an attractive woman, so she keeps on smiling inasmuch as she is probably flushed with violating the norms. While she is in the room, her roommate questions her about the reason of her being in the hospital. Once she says that she commits suicide, her roommate swoops up a movie magazine regardlessly, and she acts as if she read it. That roommate represents whole women entrapped in twentieth century by ignoring the facts of the generation that are galling women psychologically. Plath uses magazine in order to refer to the phantasy world prompted to women at that time by favor of patriarchal structure. That magazine is used in the book symbolically to demonstrate the popular female tendencies of that era. It only involves fashion, enjoyment which constrains women from the real life. These kinds of distractions make women remain closed in the bell jar, and most of the women in the bell jar are satisfied with their position due to the feeling of safe. The outer world is dangerous for women who are disturbed by the suffocating atmosphere of the bell jar. Esther realizes that men live out their fantasies while women are bounded by magazines, fashion. As a consequence of consumerism, women are pacified in the dominant ideology. By this way, to Esther, women's brains are benumbed which makes them stay under surveillance.

The woman who checks her makeup half a dozen times a day to see if her foundation has caked or her mascara has run, who worries that the wind or the rain may spoil her hairdo, who looks frequently to see if her stockings have bagged at the ankle or who, feeling fat, monitors everything she eats, has become, just as surely as the inmate of the Panopticon (Bartky, 2003, p. 42).

Hence, Ester refuses reading that kind of things, opining her feelings to the others. She knows that her hellish torture is fine for others; they are away from grasping her social discontent and strife for it which leads her to silence.

Like Esther, Alice seeks escape from contradictions between men and women. She yearns for more self-expression that is generally shaped by her brothers and father.

She attempts to resist the pressure of societal norms. In scene 2, her brother and friends visit her at the hospital. Before they see her, nurse warns Alice about her appearance to make herself presentable for them: “Perhaps if you put on some powder, a little rouge. You are a woman, you know” (Sontag, 1993, p. 9). However, Alice¹ rejects her offer by saying “I think I am not dissatisfied with my appearance” (Sontag, 1993, p. 11). Although she declines, nurse keeps on insisting about that matter: “Don’t be so vain [...] A woman can always make herself more attractive” (Sontag, 1993, p. 12). Eventually, she turns restlessly in the bed by answering: “I was not thinking of that kind of improvement. Why are you tempting me?” (Sontag, 1993, p. 12). According to her, as a woman, dedicating yourself to these things is nonsense. This scene reminds Esther’s rejection to do her daily activities such as taking a shower, changing and washing her clothes. Both of them show their resistance to social expectation. Their experience is not a pivotal role in their life.

She also makes a difference in domesticity by not getting married and having no children. From the very beginning, Alice is a motherless figure born into a patriarchal place. The absence of mother and her not getting married abandons the idea of holiness of family. Family is related to concrete necessities; however, Alice does not have any responsibilities towards anybody, so she doesn’t have to center on carrying out the framework of domesticity, household chores. Her desires, talents override domestic ideology although her skill is belittled by his father: “[...] you know I am not given to flattery, you are not the least endowed. Of my five children I would rate you third in order of genius. [...] Less brilliant than two of your brothers, you exceed in brilliance the other two” (Sontag, 1993, p. 18). She isn’t evaluated as a separated talent. She may seem she is a person who is socially not useful; however, what she seeks for is self-discovery, liberation. She revolts against patriarchal ideologies by not embracing domestic life.

Another way that she sets herself free is the power of imagination. Imagination offers her an escape from her ailing body and the oppression that she feels due to domination of men in her life. Escaping from confining reality makes her get victory. She is aware of the fact that nobody can interfere in her mind, so she begins traveling in her mind: “I walk on the streets. That’s the power of imagination”. [...] That’s a mind. The power of a mind. With my mind I can see, I can hold all that in my mind” (Sontag, 1993, p. 80-81). Women often cannot dare to enter a world that the men suppose peculiar to

themselves; nevertheless, Alice strides social canon thanks to her imagination. She crosses borders for her emancipation from entrapment without encountering any limitation on her own. She is on the road in her mind which makes her transcend the contradictions impinging on each woman. She breaks the conventional ideologies by imagining herself in Rome alone: "I am alone in Rome, even though it's a city where women are harassed when walking about alone, I can be alone there, quite invulnerable, altogether safe-in my mind, in Rome" (Sontag, 1993, p. 8).

Her acting is liberating, her world is away from norms which afford women only incomplete liberation. Through her imagination, she challenges the dichotomy between men and women freedom, and she gets rid of limitation that is left women as a burden. She reconstitutes her experience which has been stunted before by crossing the bridges, walking vigorously in that she realizes that her mind has no boundaries: "My mind doesn't have a size. One size fits all" (Sontag, 1993, p. 85). Since she gets great pleasure to keep moving, she forgets her ache. Traveling in her mind has a curative effect. The power of imagination overcompensate her being invalid; it makes her forget her acute sense of pain both physically and mentally. Through her imagination, she encircles the words. By this way, she abolishes internalized discourse on domesticity, and she establishes a new paradigm of woman having no limitation. Her envision spurs her fearless, luminous experiences which have been prohibited to perform imaginatively. She frees herself from canons imposed by patriarchal society by creating a brief for her. Independence gives satisfaction because experience of being a wife and a mother remains remote domain that she cannot sustain. And she knows that family ties sign the emergence of limitation.

In Scene 7, a young man pushes the door as a burglar while Alice sleeps. Later, she opens her eyes and watches the man before she speaks. When the man recognizes her waking, he asks why she doesn't scream, and Alice states that she is not frightened. Here, Alice breaks taboos about women's cowardice. Instead, the young man scares and starts to sweat with fear. In this scene, Alice manages to abolish expectations for men and women Cultural definition of men and women can be renegotiated here if social judgments come to matter. She maintains a brave stance while the burglar remains coward presence which reflects the deconstruction of gender roles. In addition to their dissimilar images as a woman and a man, the conversation that takes places between them is crucial to grasp how Alice overcomes a bias about gender roles. In

scene 7, she asks if there is a woman burglar or not to a young man, and he gets bewildered with this question which is unconventional for him. He finds that question ridiculous because women are not able to climb the walls according to him.

A woman cracksman. How could that be. [...] A canary, that's a woman who carries the tools, if it's a big job, an' sometimes she keeps watch on the street, like the crow does, but I don't see a woman goin' up walls. That couldn't be. You don't know nothing about it (Sontag, 1993, p. 9).

It can be understood that he is under the influence of gender roles people have been assigned for many years. He is one of the people who have been socialized into particular roles related to biological sex. He doesn't presume that women can climb the walls. Hence, it is clear to see that gender roles shape people's the way they think. He associates femininity with passivity, weakness while he thinks that masculinity is related to power. However, Alice stands against the stereotyped beliefs: "But why can't women climb walls, I could imagine a woman climbing walls. In my country, in the West, women carry guns and ride horses and perform feats of daring quite unknown in this old-fashioned kingdom of yours (Sontag, 1993, p. 93). By these sentences, she stands against prejudiced attitudes that value males over females. She proves that gender roles are not results of inherent instead they are just socially constructed duties. She demolishes a false sense based on societal expectation which dictates certain attitudes to men and women. Her imagination subjugates repeated socialization that gives rise to prescribed roles.

2.3 Metaphorical Usages in *The Bell Jar* and *Alice in Bed*

Metaphorical usages related to woman's boundaries of domestic sphere are apparent both in *The Bell Jar* and *Alice in Bed*. To start with, "fig trees" are one of the most striking examples for metaphorical usages in *The Bell Jar*. Each fig in Esthers life represents different life for her future; however, she finds herself in a tight situation because of the societal dictation that advocates entrapment for women. Career versus motherhood, sexuality versus chastity, stereotyped behavior versus delinquency are clashing options for her since society obtrudes that it is necessary to choose one of them. She has difficulty in controlling her future. "One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor, and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America[...] (Plath, 1999, p. 81). The confusion that she

has prevents her from deciding. Her desires and female identity that is socially constructed make her get stuck. She feels that she does not have a path when she compares herself with other girls in New York. Even her desire to be a poet doesn't avoid her from suffering of being in a quandary. Jay Cee who is the editor of magazine where Esther works as a quest editor stresses the difficulties of woman's career in Cold War Era, and she asks if her work interests her or not. Esther defines her feelings with these words below.

Oh, it does, it does," I said. "It interests me very much." I felt like yelling the words, as if that might make them more convincing, but I controlled myself. All my life I'd told myself studying and reading and writing and working like mad was what I wanted to do, and it actually seemed to be true, I did everything well enough and got all A's, and by the time I made it to college nobody could stop me (Plath, 1999, p. 33).

She gets disappointed with the awareness of the fact that success is limited within the boundaries of college. Apart from it, there is no place for women to be successful. When Jay Cee asks her what she is going to be after college, she realizes that her success in college is not enough for her to prepare a future path. Studying hard, winning prizes, and getting A's are the only things that she can achieve. Jay Cee reminds the necessity that she needs which makes Esther think about her genius. However, at the same time, she thinks expectations of society waiting for obedient individual. She wants to be everything, but she doesn't become anything, and the figs start to fall to the ground.

I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet (Plath, 1999, p. 81).

Fig tree comprises many choices; nevertheless, the aura of Cold War avoids women from selecting these choices. She is aware of the fact that selecting one means losing all the others which precludes her from deciding her future. All figs stand for impossibility to choose for women. Green which is the natural color of fig turns into black due to the male hegemony. Society dictates that it is better to find a male counterpart while at college apart from making a career. It is the only way that society gives permission. To demonstrate, Elaine Tyler May's opinion will be beneficial.

For white middle-class women, then, college was an entry into affluent domesticity. Many no doubt believed that if they found a suitable mate at college, it made good sense to quit school and marry. By 1956, one-fourth of all urban white college women married while still in college. To do otherwise was a gamble. A woman who decided to postpone marriage, complete her

education, and attempt to pursue a career during these years was likely to find it difficult, if not impossible, to gain access to a professional school or to find a job in the occupation of her choice. She might also find her chances for marriage reduced if she waited too long (May, 1999, p. 69).

Esther feels self-alienated because neither her desires nor societal expectation has been achieved. She seeks for true self which should be away from restraints.

Another metaphorical usage is “birth” in *The Bell Jar*. Esther witnesses the moment of birth at the hospital. The situation of women seems like inhuman treatment to her. This abnormal situation frightens her. She observes that woman has a sharp ache while giving a birth, but she thinks that this pain will not avoid her from giving another birth due to the drug she is given. Doctors, generally men, make her forget her pain. That’s why Esther feels that women are entrapped into motherhood with other pregnancies. Drugs are the metaphorical usages for dominant forces’ trick which make women blind. Buddy’s words verify the severity of the situation. He states “You oughtn’t to see this.”... “You will never want to have a baby if you do. They oughtn’t to let women watch. It’ll be the end of the human race” (Plath, 1999, p. 68). By this way, Buddy apparently shows the simulacra of Cold War America which gives rise to twilight sleep for women. It is patent that the pain in women’s mind and body are forgotten by patriarchy so that they can be responsible for their destiny of motherhood. To Esther, motherhood represents suffering, deception which she does not want to encounter. However, she realizes that it is the fate of women which is inevitable. She describes the traumatic scene with the statement below.

Here was a woman in terrible pain, obviously feeling every bit of it or she wouldn’t groan like that, and she would go straight home and start another baby, because the drug would make her forget how bad the pain had been, when all the time, in some secret part of her, that long, blind, doorless and windowless corridor of pain was waiting to open up and shut her in againBut the baby’s head stuck for some reason, and the doctor told Will he’d have to make a cut. I heard the scissors close on the woman’s skin like cloth and the blood began to run down-a fierce, bright red. Then all at once the baby seemed to pop out into Will’s hands, the color of a blue plum and floured with white stuff and streaked with blood, and Will kept saying, “I’m going to drop it, I’m going to drop it,” in a terrified voice (Plath, 1999, p. 69).

In that statement, it is clear that baby is the metaphor for freedom of women, and the cadaver act is the metaphor for castration. Therefore, here, doctors not only represent male dominant society which deceives women by diminishing their pain but also they represent patriarchy which cuts off freedom of women. Liberation of women culminates with the doctors who are the sign of social castration. Birth moment turns into male castration for Esther.

“Blood” is another metaphor in the novel. During her sexual intercourse with Irwin, she loses her virginity, and she begins to bleed in an abnormal way. Her blood is half black which stands for corrupted society. That blood symbolizes her sacrifice of her body for the sake of easing her mind. By this way, she can feel victorious. In addition, blood is the symbol of gaining experience which is a compulsory act for Esther. It stands for the getting a new identity, transformation, and it clearly demonstrates that transformations comprise pain not joy. However, at the end, it brings freedom to her.

“Rosenberg trial” and “their execution” play a crucial role as a metaphor in the novel, as well. In the summer of 1950, Ethel and Julius were arrested because of being Soviet espionage agents. They were thought to have committed atomic spying. Three years later, they were electrocuted due to being accused of treason. Therefore, they were both parts of basic symbol and victims of the Red Square (Schrecker, 1995, p. 127). Their case was equivocal in terms of political reasons. Some people were not sure about Rosenbergs’ guilt, so they thought that their sentence was merciless; on the other hand, some people thought that receiving that punishment was necessary for them to stand against Communism. However, Esther does not touch upon the politic sides of this event. What disturbs and terrorizes her is that the machinery that gave rise to their death. Esther thinks that America in 1950 is not a moral place to live in instead a suffering place. She feels that their execution is the evidence of what her generation was exposed in Cold War America. She states that “I kept hearing about the Rosenbergs over the radio and at the office till I couldn’t get them out of my mind. It was like the first time I saw a cadaver” (Plath, 1999, p. 1). Here, the word cadaver refers to social castration. And the reason of Plath’s opening *The Bell Jar* with the execution of Rosenberg’s is to emphasize how political powers have impact on *The Bell Jar* in Cold War era. These political and social norms infiltrate and mold people’s ideas and characters by involving in every part of life. These norms not only encapsulate women but also men in that era. However, it is explicit that their effects on women are much more. Ethel Rosenberg had a bad image as a mother in the media for the purpose of reminding women that it was compulsory to respect the dictates to be a good housewife and mother. She was accused of being the power behind their espionage, and she was believed that she was the person who affected her husband. Antler (1950) maintains that although Hoover at first did not want the execution of Ethel, who left two children behind, FBI files, which demonstrated that she was a bad

mother, changed his mind, and she states that gender-based discourse in her letter to his son is apparent "... it is the woman who is the strong and recalcitrant character, the man who is the weak one (p. 206). It is patent that the words "woman" and "housewife" are interchangeable for absolute powers, and they bring social norms to the light for women. If they do not carry out their duties as a housewife and mother, they deserve to be punished. It can be understood that how media, political powers are influential on people's views, and how they create physical and psychological trauma for people. Rosenbergs' trial is a vital metaphor to exhibit a chaotic atmosphere of that era. What Plath wants to do is to stimulate her protagonist, Esther, to see the real face of Cold War era by using Rosenbergs' execution at the beginning of the novel. And this metaphor makes her away from simulacra generated for that generation. Not only Plath selected the name (Esther), which is very close to Ethel, to create her character as a chosen person but also she puts some qualities of Ethel Rosenberg's into Esther's characters to present the fact that different individuals may own the same characteristic features. At this juncture it can be clearly maintained that, in the novel, Esther's life and thoughts about family have parallels with Ethel Rosenberg's ideas and life.

The most significant metaphor in the novel is its title "the bell jar". The bell jar normally hides everything in an airtight way so that nothing can change. For this reason, Plath selected this title to demonstrate stationary position of women's entrapment in society. It is a paramount metaphor in order to symbolize mental illness, depression of women. The glass jar that Esther is in makes her feel suffocated inasmuch as her desires, dreams are confined in the bell jar which drags her to the madness. Societal expectations are full of snares for those who have ambitions like Esther, and reaching these goals without falling into trap is almost impossible in male dominant society. She describes how she feels during her nervous breakdown with the following statements: "Wherever I sat- on the deck of a ship or at a street café in Paris or Bangkok- I would be sitting under the same glass bell jar, stewing in my own sour air" (Plath, 1999, p. 195). After electroshock therapy, she supposes that the bell jar is lifted; however, at the same time, she has worries about her future bell jars owing to the fact that she knows that women's lives are imprisoned by men's identity. Through the transparent glass, she can see everything, but the glass jar disrupts the vision of the world, and she cannot interfere in the outside world. The bell jar constricts not only Esther but also all women who cannot live outside of it. They are the just viewers of

the outside world involving exciting work, having experiences. The bell jar is their prison which makes their escape impossible. Their captivity gives rise to emotional illnesses attributed to only women. Wagner- Martin explains the condition of the bell jar in 1950s with the words below stated.

The Bell Jar remains an accurate if frightening view of American life during the 1950s. There were few achieving women during that decade; the average age for women to marry had fallen to 20.3. As Douglas Miller and Marion Nowak conclude in *The Fifties: The way We Really were*, “Everybody got married in the fifties, or at least it was a supreme sign of personal health and well-being to be engaged in the social act of marriage and family-raising.” Accordingly, women were viewed as mates, and all kinds of “rights” came to be questioned –the value of education, for example, the real intentions of childless couples. The non-married life-style was a suspect as deviant sexual behaviors (although those were not subjects one found in print during the 1950s), and pressure on women to marry – no matter how career oriented, how ambitious, how intelligent – was inescapable (Wagner-Martin, 1992, p. 3).

Like most of the women, Esther is squeezed by conservatism, domesticity. Marriage, children, shortly societal norms create a stifling obstruction around her. Because of being constricted in the bell jar, her voice cannot be heard from the outside. Intellectual women like Esther suffer from mental illness due to their dilemma resulted from their eagerness to assess their creativity and their desire to be accepted by society. They are overwhelmed by confinement of the bell jar.

After mentioning the metaphors in *The Bell Jar*, it is necessary to touch upon metaphorical usages in *Alice in Bed*. To start with, the name itself, “Alice”, is a metaphor in the play. The name was popularized in Victorian era by Queen Victoria after she gave that name to her baby. After the baby Princess, “Alice” became one of the most popular girl’s names in that time. However, that name indicates more than a name. It is a metaphor manifesting Victorian women. That name stands for women belonging to domestic sphere without having rights such as voting or owning a property apart from land property. In Victorian era, when women got married, men became responsible for the rights of their women whereas women were responsible for their home and children. Women had disadvantages both socially and economically. Like Victorian women, the responsibility of Alice is given over her father and brothers representing male dominant society. Despite her intelligence, she is obliged to endure inequalities between herself and her brothers, and she is thrown into bedridden life due to insufficient opportunities for women of that time. Hence, it can be stated that Alice who is born into a patriarchal place without having mother figure from the beginning symbolizes all women who have been passive under the men’s shadow. Even if Alice desires to commit suicide, she gets permission for it from

her father: “May I kill myself Father” (Sontag, 1993, p. 23). Choosing that kind of name is the willful preference for Sontag to highlight the repressiveness of women in that time. Hence, it is apparent that Sontag selected that name as a cultural signifier.

Another metaphor that plays a vital role in the play is “illness”. As mentioned before, Alice suffers from nervous breakdown which paves the way for hysteria and breast cancer. Her confinement to the bed because of these troubles is representative for oppression of women in the Victorian era. What Sontag (1979) accounts for in her book, *Illness as Metaphor*, is that cancer results from depression (p. 49) like Alice’s situation whose depression develops into cancer later. In other words, cancer is a disease that ambushes people who are oppressed like Alice. Tumor growing in her body inhibits her from looking for treatment, and this situation greatens her hysteria. Here, cancer is the society which mortifies women day by day, and Alice is the symbol for oppressed women in society in Victorian era. Her shrivelling from cancer is an enlightening metaphor for limited female body. Like cancer invading body insidiously and creating stoppage at the end, society imposes some gender roles on women on purpose slowly in order to form gender discrimination, and it causes women not to move at the end. According to society, a woman must have knowledge of music, dance, and she must possess code of conducts apart from being a perfect housewife. These thoughts cause blockage for women as cancer does. Cancer is generally attributed to losers of life like Alice. How cancer deadens desires for the patients, dominant ideology wipes out her intelligence, as well. Her desire to write is tried to be pressed like Esther. While Alice has a conversation with her brother, she states that “Ah you are a man, while my thoughts women’s thoughts are diminutive” (Sontag, 1993, p. 36). It becomes evident that she is aware of the fact that she is the victim of society, and it is worse than a disease. It leads her to depression, isolation by imprisoning her within the confines of her body. Harsh treatment is required for cancer inasmuch as some healthy tissues of cancer victim can be lost during the treatment. Similarly, Alice knows that if she wants to make her dreams real, she has to pay a price for it in Victorian era when women’s desires are dehumanized. Apparently, cancer was selected for Alice by Sontag to emphasize the people who are singled out on the behalf of Alice since cancer is more than an illness by referring to any other issues.

Besides, another metaphor that needs to be mentioned is “burglar”. The burglar symbolizes the patriarchal forces in the play. In that scene, Alice is the embodiment of

oppressed female freedom whereas the burglar is the embodiment of oppressive force who castrates the creativity of women. He insists her on getting in bed all the time. His insistence is the extension of patriarchy which wants her to be submissive. Also, when they have conversation about the power of women, imagination, he makes fun of her dreams. Hence, his being in the play is a metaphorical usage for male-dominated society which cuts off women's dream. His embodiment intensifies the impact of restriction. Alice stands for women who have creativity and aspiring mind. However, the creativity of women is prevented by men because creativity is only attributed to men. If the women have a tendency to dream, they are labelled as mad. In other words, "... madness is the price women-artists have had to pay for the exercise of their creativity in a male-dominated culture" (Showalter, 1987, p. 4). That quotation indicates that women's imagination turns into disappointment inasmuch as women have to do the things that society decrees for them. By this way, women have to accept biologically and mentally destined role arranged for them. The burglar is a vital metaphor and accurate depiction to symbolize the impact of male-dominant society. In addition, when the burglar asks if she has money or not, she says that she has no money. That conversation brings Woolf's advice for women to mind. In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf generally states that money and the room provides woman to have freedom which is necessary for her creativity because intellectual freedom hinges on material things. However, Alice stands for women who did not have financial security and whose creativity was refuted by men in Victorian era.

The last metaphor that should be mentioned in the play is "the bed". The bed of Alice is the bell jar of hers. Alice gets stuck in her bed without having any hope for emancipation. She is trapped inside the bed representing societal conventions with the feeling of entrapment. The bed is the symbol to convey her being separate from other people. The bed manifests her motionless body. It is worth considering the influence of that confinement. Because she realizes that there is no salvation, she covers her body with blankets in the bed with the aim of becoming invisible. Her suffocation induced by the bed points to her depression, mental breakdown. Parallel to this suffocation, the bed imprisons her body, as well. However, her body is not the only part that is confined; her psyche surrounded by unavoidable settling of depression is affected by it, as well. She knows that it is not possible for her to leave the bed now and later. At the beginning of the play, Alice and her nurse are in Alice's bedroom.

The nurse wants Alice to get up, but Alice says “I can’t” (Sontag, 1993, p. 5-6) insistently at every turn. Her ailing body in the bed helps people identify career invalid women in Victorian era where only men can take part in professional world. Writing novel, poem is just attributed to men whereas women have to have burden of enormous pressure. Her being enclosed within her bed resulting from society’s stifling constraints triggers her into the gloomy atmosphere. To illustrate, Alice and young man’s (burglar) conversation can be given how she is obliged to get in the bed.

Alice: “You don’t seem to appreciate that I’m out of bed”.

Young man: “Appreciate! Lord, is this something’ to appreciate.

Alice: “I don’t want to be in bed. You are an intruder, I can’t be in bed with a stranger here.

Young man: “You ’ ave to. Get in”.

Alice: “You could take the bed. (Laughs) Take it.

Young man: “I don’t want yer smelly bed. Get in the bed. Cracked!” (Sontag, 1993, p. 99-100).

It is apparent that this conversation gives clues about societal expectations for women. The qualities of womanhood requires being submissive by being passive, immobile, and domestic. In addition to this expectation, in the eyes of society, women are ill-equipped for the outer world such as getting a job, being active individually. Woman’s salvation from the confinement is not something appreciated by society. That viewpoint of society makes women away from the public sphere. Also, it is clear that the women who want to be free from the bonds of society are perceived as cracked, awkward; freedom is damaging for them. According to cult of true womanhood which is a prevailing value system, home is the proper sphere for women, and being active outside is damaging the most satisfying and natural role of women.

(t)he family seemed to offer a psychological fortress, a buffer against both internal and foreign threats. In this ideological climate, independent women threatened the social order. Under cultural pressure and with limited options for work outside the home, women, contained and constrained, donned their domestic harness (Meyerowitz, 1994).

In the play, that situation is clearly expressed through the usage of the bed. It reflects the cult of domesticity for women, and it is the emblem of the oppression of women.

3. MADNESS AND SUICIDIALITY CAUSED BY THE NOTION OF PANOPTICON IN *THE BELL JAR* AND *ALICE IN BED*

3. 1 Panopticon and Madness

As mentioned before, both in the novel and the play the titles comprise madness resulting from being locked. The bell jar represents Esther's Panopticon while the bed symbolizes Alice's Panopticon. Before analyzing the novel and the play, it will be enlightening to give information the history of Panopticon and madness. The Panopticon is a prison which was first introduced by Jeremy Bentham and revised by Foucault. It is a ring-shaped building divided into cells having equal size. These cells own two windows having light to illuminate the cells. In that system, the inspector can see prisoners without being seen. In other words, the inmate "is seen, but he does not see" (Foucault , 1979, p.200 and Miller, 1987, p. 3)

What Foucault (1979) claims is that the traces of Panopticon can be found in institutions in terms of its shape and its enforcement. In other words, disciplinary power is implemented to the public places such as prisons, hospitals, schools. This power confiscates the society apart from those places; its effects are seen even in family structure which is the smallest unity of society. He asserts that "One also sees the spread of disciplinary procedures, not in the form of enclosed institutions, but as centers of observation disseminated through society" (p. 212). Discipline involves some techniques which bring the body's operations under control. Individual's movements are arranged and censored. Disciplinary power achieves this oppression through observation, normalizing judgment, and examination. This sovereignty does not need a force to oppress, surveillance, constant watches are very essential things to oppress individuals as these gazes make them inmate who cannot know when he is observed. In that case, it can be stated that "Panopticism is the general principle of a new 'political anatomy' whose object and end are not the relations of sovereignty but the relations of discipline" (Foucault, 1979, p. 327). As a result, individuals feel

coerced to carry out their duties. The pressure of the gaze makes individuals self-regulated. According to Foucault (1979), “The more numerous those anonymous and temporary observers are the greater the risk for the inmate of being surprised and the greater his anxious awareness of being observed (p. 32).

Also, Foucault analyzes punishment in society. His research goes back to distant past when public executions and torture were common punishments. Punishment was applied through ceremony by accepting the audience which is the indicator of power. Prisoner’s body was a fundamental point; it is the object of attention. He maintains that “The body as the major target of penal repression disappeared” (Foucault, 1979, p. 8). The reason of involvement of the public for these punishments was to create docile and capable bodies which are the notions of Foucault. In short, creating fear among people and to force them to accept the power were the main purposes. Docility was the strategy for authority to control inmates. By this way, they could be used and transformed according to the desires of the power. Conformity to social norms paid the way for some prospects such as parole, release in prisons or asylums whereas standing against the authority make individuals impose sanction.

After mentioning Panopticon, it is necessary to touch on madness. In Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization*, generally, he claims that madness results from society that it exists in, so it is not normal. Different cultural and economic structures trigger and construct madness. He also mentions confinement specific to the eighteenth century. What he says about it that society creates a place for certain people including mad people. They are locked and excluded from society. Sharing his quotation about confinement and madness will be helpful if it is sketched out.

Confined on the ship, from which there is no escape, the madman is delivered to the river with its thousand arms, the sea with its thousand roads, to that great uncertainty external to everything. He is a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger par excellence: that is, the prisoner of the passage. And the land he will come to is unknown—as is, once he disembarks, the land from which he comes. He has his truth and his homeland only in that fruitless expanse between two countries that cannot belong to him” (Foucault 9).

Apart from Foucault’s ideas about madness, madness related to women can be analyzed separately. As mentioned in introduction part, Elaine Showalter’s *The Female Malady: Woman, Madness, and English Culture* states that female mental illness is the consequence of a cultural phenomenon shaped by male dominance. She elaborates on the issue of the contribution of male dominant society to the women madness. Women who want to set themselves free from restraints of patriarchal culture

are marked as “mad”. In the Victorian era, doctors who were mainly interested in female lunacy bind this situation with puberty and child-bearing. Girls who couldn't adjust to confinement of society had difficulty in coping with this situation. As a result, it caused mental breakdown for girls. Also, women giving births shared the same feelings with these girls, but for different reason. After birth, it was hard for women to pay attention to their appearance, behavior which caused them to be far away from some certain roles. At the end, these events lead them to have psychological problems. Besides, Showalter states that at that time, new diagnosis such as hysteria, anorexia nervosa, and neurasthenia, usually attributed to women, but they showed some differences for psychiatrists. For instance, nervosa anorexia was seen as a very feminine disease due to being self-sacrificing whereas hysteria was generally presumed selfish, destructive, and a revolt, so it was not approved by doctors (Showalter, 1987, p. 133).

Silas Weir Mitchell, an American physician and nerve specialist invented 'rest-cure' for generally women who suffered from neurasthenia. These women were thin because of suffering insomnia, depression, etc. Rest and crucial diet were solutions for them. Leaving bed was not allowed by doctors. According to him: "the 'rest-cure could be used to discipline women whose illness became a means of avoiding household duties" (Stiles, 2013, p. 4). Women were prevented to write and read by this way which resulted in calamitous outcomes. This situation illustrates the position of women as amenable and well-mannered to men. Another women's disease mentioned above is anorexia nervosa which is related to not eating. These women did not care nourishment, and they turned down eating. At that time, that illness reflected these patients' rebellion against society's expectation for women, and its pressure upon females although that illness was supposed to be associated with hysteria.

Female doctors were not common until 1847. As a result, women were under the control of men medically in the first half of the century. Therefore, the psychiatry profession was completely under the influence of men (Showalter, 1987, p. 127). As a striking example, Darwins theory which Showalter (1987) mentions in *Female Malady* can be given. Generally speaking, Darwin's theory mainly focuses on women mental breakdown which is based on the idea that women are more inclined to mental illness because of men's supremacy. Therefore, it can be stated that this theory rests upon gender apartheid by valuing male mentality above female mentality. To Darwin's

psychiatrics, motherhood is something that should be devoted by women as the most suitable work rather than other works. They support the idea that professional world detracts them from feminine world, so women who behave in the ways that male society opposes can be labeled as mad.

After giving information about “Panopticon” and “Madness”, the novel and the play can be analyzed within the frame of these notions. Begin with, *The Bell Jar* as a title stands for insanity. The reason of Plath’s selection of this title is to reflect how the protagonist, Esther, is locked up in the airless jar which brings forth madness. The image of the bell jar is a symbolic simile of “Panopticon” which society is heavily involved in. In other words, the bell jar is Esther’s Panopticon which makes her feel baleful gaze on her life. As Foucault (1979) states “Visibility is a trap” for Esther (p. 321). She is captivated in that jar, and escaping from that prison is almost impossible. Clear glass leads to watchful gaze in her life. At that point, sharing Foucault’s quotation can be helpful to grasp how society creates a collective gaze for the victims of gender-biased policy: “Our society is not of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of the images, one invests bodies in depth... (Foucault, 1979, p. 217). Also, Esther puts her feelings about being trapped into these words: “The air of the bell jar wadded round me and I couldn’t stir” (Plath, 1999, p. 195). Apparently, suffocating atmosphere of the bell jar is everywhere in her life preventing her motions. It blocks her pursuing a profession as a writer. Esther’s Panopticon coerces her to stay in the bell jar by internalizing gender biased roles as other women did in 1950s. Burdened with societal expectation, she is expected to see domesticity as a duty, but she turns down the concepts that society imposes on her by seeking fulfillment in outside world because she sees domesticity as burdensome. Thus, her being apart from conventional minds, and being lack of collective confirmation make people consider that she is on the wrong track. That attribution of women who have desires is “understood to be a direct consequence of the ways patriarchy operates in women’s lives to undermine our sense of self and thus, through self-surveillance, maintain particular relations of power” (Swan, 1999, p. 105).

In the novel, it becomes evident that male characters such as Buddy Williard, Marco, and Constantin represent power. They leave out Esther in balance of power. To illustrate, at the beginning of the novel, Buddy and Esther have conversation about poem:

Buddy: “Do you know what a poem is, Esther?”

Esther: “No, What?”

Buddy: “A piece of dust” (Plath, 1999, p. 59).

Given that Esther disagrees with Buddy, she accepts his opinion by being silent. Panopticon supported by male dominance dictates Esther to be submissive and docile. Similarly, when Jay Cee suggests Esther to learn other languages, she accepts her opinion by not revealing her real thoughts about it. Taking these examples into consideration, it can be stated that there is a conflict between her inner self and her false-self created by the power of Panopticon. She is the prisoner of society and her own body, so her inner turmoil owing to the chaos of the outside world drags her into madness. As an oppressed one, she feels she has to enforce rules because she is aware of the fact that if she does not accept, she will be guilty.

Female is especially prone to guilt, and to a form of concern for relationship with others which can lead, for example, to the feeling that “not upsetting people” must always be given priority, and that it can never be right to do something which will fracture a relationship or break a connection. They are prone, too, to the feeling that they should never put their own needs or desires before those of others (Grimshaw, 1986, p. 196).

In *The Bell Jar*, being a young talented woman, Esther suffers from madness which stems from pressure she feels to practice the conventional roles of women or to break taboos. As mentioned earlier, she is not capable of being agent of her life due to being up to others; however, her inner self desires to act opposite. Because of being torn by conflicting emotions, she sinks deeper into depression. Her endeavor to preserve her true self ends up by recognizing the cultural realities. She realizes that patriarchy is a leading cause for oppression of women such as the females around herself. She states that “May I could study the eighteenth century in secret. But I didn’t know shorthand, so what could I do? I could be a waitress or a typist. But couldn’t stand the idea of being either one” (Plath, 1999, p. 140). Evidently, to her, being waitress is equal to serving men. Similarly, being a typist means writing what patriarchal power states.

When she returns to her home from New York, she doesn’t want to respond to the outer world because suburbia is Panopticon for her. In fact, she is already restricted in her mind, and suburbia accelerates her inner turmoil. That unwillingness prevents her from daily activities such as having a shower, washing her clothes. “. . . I hadn’t washed my clothes or my hair . . . because it seemed so silly. . . . It seemed silly to wash one day when I would only have to wash again the next. It made me tired just to

think of it. I wanted to do everything once and for all and be through with it” (Plath, 1999, p. 135).

To Esther, daily routines signify nothing apart from futility and the chaos of the outside world. She starts to remove herself from the outer world which is becoming tenuous day by day. Things are happening around Esther without making part of her which is actually pleasing for her. Because of being disengaged from the life around her, she prefers living in seclusion and isolation. In addition, her rejection from a summer writing class accelerates her bad mood much more. When her mother tells her the bad news, she says that “I slunk down on the middle of my spine, my nose level with the rim of the window, and watched the houses of outer Boston glide by. As the houses grew more familiar, I sunk still lower” (Plath, 1999, p. 121). Eventually, she is troubled by difficulty in writing and reading. Her writing begins to be fragmented day by day. Besides, she thinks that being unable to write is related to her lack of experience in life which is another reason for her depression. As a result, she starts to fall apart completely and to have mental health problems. When she decides to visit their family doctor, Teresa, for much more sleeping pills, she is suggested to see a psychiatrist called Dr. Gordon who might help Esther much more. It is noteworthy that Teresa as a woman doesn’t believe that she can be helpful to her; male doctors in Cold War era were respected much more due to the fact that they were more talented to cure the illness.

When Esther gets into the waiting room, the atmosphere is a little bit disturbing for her because of deprivation of pictures, mirrors arousing a feeling of captivity. Instead, the walls are covered by the certificate of Dr. Gordon typifying his power. Not only the certificates but also the color of the room which is dark green and the room’s devoting from windows bring suffocating atmosphere into existence for Esther. They all signify for her that it is not possible to be cured under the male dominant place.

When she faces with Dr. Gordon, she is welcomed with entire apathy. Gordon asks: “Your mother tells me you are upset” (Plath, 1999, p. 135). Nonetheless, while asking that question, his pencil’s noise accompanies him. That situation reminds her patriarchal discourse giving rise to entrapment for Esther. Besides, his questions including what is wrong for her reflects that he is not capable of developing empathy towards Esther. He is not aware of the fact that what is perceived as wrong is actually

the lives of women in Cold War era. To patriarchal society, female psyche is liable to madness if they have imagination, so Esther's position certifies that situation.

Because of the lack of true understanding for Esther's problems, Dr. Gordon thinks that shock treatment is necessary for her; however, the results of it are saddening. The pain she feels makes her get worse rather than curing. According to Esther, through the shock treatment, she pays the price for seeking freedom, and she feels that it is not the way of treating but the way of managing. She expresses her pain with these words:

Then something bent down and took hold of me and shook me like the end of the world. Whee-ee-ee-ee, it shrilled, thought an air crackling with blue light, and with each flash a great jolt drubbed me till I thought my bones would break and sap fly out of me like a split plant. I wondered what terrible thing it was that I had done" (Plath, 1999, pp. 151-152).

What Dr. Gordon tries to do is to rehabilitate and restore her back to the world of "sane" by jolting, shocking her. That treatment encompasses a wide range of male power in order to foreshadow her imagination, desires. She is under the control of male power which makes her escape impossible. The more she mentions imaginativeness, the more she is labelled as "mad", and the more shock treatment comes to the fore for Esther. To her, it is not a treatment but torment to make her comply with manners and customs of society. In order to elaborate on the issue, it is useful to share Cowen's ideas:

There were women, they were there, I knew them, their families put them in institutions, they were given electric shock. In the '50s if you were male, you could be a rebel, but if you were female, your families had you locked up. There were cases, I knew them, someday someone will write about them (qtd. in Osterweil, 2010, p. 33).

As Cowen states, Plath handles this issue by creating her protagonist. Her feelings demonstrate the severity of the situation. That machine scares her so much that she feels that the sight of that machine could kill her. Dr. Gordon who is an unsympathetic psychiatrist makes Esther more unstable than ever by prescribing electric shock therapy. Therefore, in desperation, she thinks that suicide seems the emancipation for her all pains, so shock treatment causes catastrophic results ending in several suicide attempts. After her suicide attempt, her friend, George, visits her; however, Esther is aware of the fact that he desires to see an insane girl who commits suicide. Due to the fact that she doesn't want to feel his gaze, she yells at him, and she says that she doesn't want him to come back. She doesn't want to feel like an animal in the zoo that can be watched by people.

Private mental institution, where she meets Dr. Nolan, becomes the next possible solution for her. Unlike the mainstream of society, Dr. Nolan owns a respectable profession as a woman which shocks her at first. Because of identifying Esther's mother's contributing role in Esther's depression, Dr. Nolan tries to guarantee to Esther that her future will not resemble her mother's life. Esther reveals in private about marriage, motherhood, gender roles which lay a burden on her shoulders. Hence, her psychology gets better by making Esther aware of her own identity thanks to Dr. Nolan.

Esther shares her experiences at the institution. One of the experiences she has is her meeting Miss Norris, whom she identifies with. She is a patient who is described as something of a spinster, with a purple dress. She has rusty hair knotted. She is so silent that Esther feels close to her, so she uses the word "sister". Miss Norris's silence demonstrates how women's needs and desires are silenced by society. "I pulled up a chair opposite [Miss Norris] at the table and unfolded a napkin. We didn't speak, but sat there, in a close, sisterly silence, until the gong for supper sounded down the hall" (Plath, 1999, p. 201). The reason of establishing intimacy is their being silent due to society's pressure. However, later Miss Norris begins to ignore her. To Esther, the reason for that is the effect of misinformation of the staff who told Miss Norris that Esther is stupid.

Her being different from other patients makes her illness irrelievable. She knows that the scar she has inside is so deep that it is not possible for others to recognize and cure it. As the slaves of the system, neither her mother nor nurses are people being able to understand her illness completely which derives from her desire to abolish the system. One of the nurses takes her temperature when she says she is sick, and after that she defines her situation with these sentences below.

I wanted to tell her that if only something were wrong with my body it would be fine, I would rather have anything wrong with my body than something wrong with my head, but the idea seemed so involved and wearisome that I didn't say anything. I only burrowed down further in the bed (Plath, 1999, p. 206).

Esther's situation describes mental illness of 1950s in an empathetic way. Esther gains experience of formidable treatment at the hands of Dr. Gordon. Fortunately, she can move to another hospital, but many didn't have opportunity for it. They were exposed to indictment of inhumane practices of psychiatrists which actually escalated their depression. According to Keller, "Among patients seeking treatment for depression,

longitudinal studies have reported that between 50 and 85% with one major depressive episode will have at least one additional episode” (qtd in Hammen, 1985). Many female identities circulating around men in 1950s dragged them to the whirlwind, and in the end, they began to descent into madness. Like these women, Esther, at first, feels that she gets stuck in chasm resulting in withdrawal from outer world and collapse. Her necessity to conform to womanhood and suburban domesticity clearly lead to her depression. The lack of a proper understanding of her mother and surroundings gives rise to relapses of depression for her since she cannot endure the suffocating atmosphere of hers.

After analyzing *The Bell Jar* within the frame of “Panopticon” and “madness”, *Alice in Bed* can be analyzed concerning to the same concepts. Like Esther, Alice grows up in a male dominant household including her father, four brothers. The absence of mother, who passes away when she is young, empowers the influence of men in family. Alice has to live under the influence of Panopticon which is mainly controlled by her father, brothers, and nurses. Her male-dominant family receives custody of her which makes her physically destitute. Not only her male dominant family but also society stifles her creativity as a genius woman. Hence, she does not know what to do with her ability in a restricted place which culminates in career invalid individual. It is difficult for her to use her creative mind to produce. Her bed which she is trapped into is the representation of Panopticon. Her being motionless, bedridden aggravate her psychology because she feels authorized protection orders deeply. No matter how a dramatic fantasy is, the play refers to the real life story of Alice James as mentioned earlier. After her parents’ deaths, Alice James moved to her brother, Henry, who took much of the responsibility for her in terms of finance and health care. Undoubtedly, Alice James felt the authorized protection on her life until her death as well as Alice in the play. Given that she desires to change the circumstances, she is aware of the fact that it is not easy to change her end because of her oppressed surrounding which results in unavoidable settling of hysteria upon her psyche. The stand-out dialogue between Alice and her brother, Harry, delineates her situation clearly.

Alice: ... “Now the question is how to end”.

Harry: “I told you what the end was. We’re not going to talk about it anymore”.

Alice: "I can talk about what I like. It can have a different ending. Perhaps I shall have a narrow escape. Perhaps everything will change at the last minute" (Sontag, 1993, p. 37).

That dialog not only touches on a feminist issue of that time but also one of the central problems of society that imprisons women. In the play, Alice sustains a life in prostration, bedridden which is the metaphorical resonance of her being trapped. In other words, she is the prisoner of her societal role and her own body. Given that she is being said the opposite, she is conscious of the fact that her vivid imagination and intelligence can never fit into her societal role.

Harry: ... "Perhaps you're the most intelligent of us all".

Alice: "Don't mock me. Don't mouse me".

Harry: "I'm not".

Alice: "Don't patronize me" (Sontag, 1993, p. 29).

That dialogue illustrates that Alice internalizes being devalued as a gifted woman so much that she no longer desires to use her potential which leads to inertia soon. She feels learned helplessness due to her physical and psychiatric plight resulting from Panopticon she has. Thus, she welcomes the literal death in despair. What is more, to her, her brother's soothing looks as if he might fool her like a child which enhances the severity of the situation. In Victorian time, women seemed in the risk of becoming an outcast because of not behaving in certain ways, so it is not surprising that Alice has to share the same fate of many women having talents. The play clearly demonstrates how paternalistic setting eradicates a woman's potential and debilitates her. Being victimized by patriarchal impulses, Alice is one of the paradigms of pathetic women. Metaphorical reading of the play mirrors the women in the realm of oppression.

As a bounded woman to her physical and mental ailment because of societal conventions, Alice has a shattered life. She is diagnosed as hysteric which is a systemic nervous and physical collapse. Having debilitating illness, she takes some drugs in many scenes of the play. Receiving an injection of painkiller follows taking laudanum which was commonly used as an opiate in nineteenth- century. These are palliatives for Alice; however, they give rise to hallucinations in Alice's mind. One of these hallucinations involves Mad Tea Party which is another similar version of Lewis

Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Actually, it reflects Alice James's inner world. In that party, Sontag's guest list includes Margaret Fuller who is one of the early feminists and writer of a notorious proto-feminist book *Women in the Nineteenth Century*. Also, Emily Dickinson who is again important American poet is summoned to the party. In addition to Fuller and Dickinson, fictional two women accompany to the party. One of them is Kundry from Wagner's opera Parsifal, and she represents a woman who wants to sleep. Another character is the angry Myrtha, Queen of the Wilis, from a romantic ballet called Giselle who dies of a broken heart after betrayed in love. And the Wilis are a group of supernatural women who look for revenge on any man who has betrayed them. Descending into hysteria makes these fictional characters merge in her mind. These women stand for mother figure which is absent in the play. They are summoned to the party to give advice to Alice. In the play, Alice says "I wanted advice. From a woman I could respect. I've always sought advice from men" (Sontag, 1993, p. 53). Thus, she reflects her longing for taking advice free from patriarchal powers. Sontag stated that while she was depicting a group of women consoling each other, she was inspired by Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls* (1982) which is about a career-driven woman, Marlene, like Alice. She is mainly interested in women's success in business. In the famous opening scene, she hosts five famous women from different historical eras for a dinner party. These women back up each other because of sharing the same attitudes against patriarchy and oppression. What differentiates them from each other is Sontag's using 19th century feminist figures instead of different historical eras because she wanted to highlight the restraints that women had to cope with in Victorian era. The woman who is trapped is not only Alice. Mad tea party represents all extraordinary but career driven women. Another difference is the purpose of these surreal parties. In *Top Girls* of Churchill, Marlene invents her guests for celebration of her promotion; she has achieved professional success whereas, in *Alice in Bed*, Alice hosts her guests to take advice for her life rife with bitterness, resignation, morbidity.

In the mad tea party, long dramatic monologue through Victorian female figures and mythological figures from Victorian fantasy fiction can be seen. At the party, Alice encounters opposing characters like Fuller and Dickinson who show up, respectively, as active and contemplative. Unlike Fuller, Dickinson is interested in death. In addition, other characters, Myrtha and Kundry are clashing characters. Myrtha has a vision whereas Kundry has a desire to sleep. However opposing characters they are,

they are the role models for Alice. She tries to find out their female being and their desires. Especially thanks to Fuller, at least, at the end, she learns to free herself from restrictions via her mind. Fuller usually encourages Alice to imagine: “It’s just as you imagine. That beautiful. Are you imagining it” (Sontag, 1993, p. 53). “Thinking doesn’t help? I always found it helped” (Sontag, 1993, p. 54).

Their dialogue is mainly based on life, death, and Alice’s inner struggle whether or not to get out of bed. Alice knows what is wrong with her which makes her so sensitive. And Fuller fulfills willingly a very useful role by giving advice.

Fuller: My idea is this. Want what you are capable of, and what you are capable of wanting, and be completely clear on the matter, and live according to it.

Alice: Life is not just a question of courage”... “You don’t know the fearful things I see when I close my eyes. I have to die so I don’t see the monstrous things (Sontag, 1993, p. 68).

Despite the effort of Fuller to console Alice, Alice utters her desire to die in order to end her fears. Facing with social and familial constraints that bind her intelligence and being exposed to rigid gender expectations result in emergence of hallucinations in her mind which does not leave her alone. What is more, Fuller plays the role of a character that does not rely on anyone’s cravings. Therefore, Alice and Fuller reflect themselves in a different way.

Fuller: I was an embarrassment to others. And then to the relief of many I died.

Alice: I’m an embarrassment to myself (Laughs). And you wanted to live. Look what it took to subdue you. Those were mighty waters (Sontag, 1993, p. 47).

Given that Alice represents somebody who knows exactly what condition she is in, the image of Fuller tries not to let her down like others. Feminist activist Fuller is a prominent role in the play. She represents a strong figure against immobility but instead she symbolizes daunting, capable woman. By this way, Sontag perpetuates an outdated stereotype. During the tea party, it can be encountered the reconstruction of gender roles. Alice remembers a young man, Julian, who was a friend of her brother and tells her feelings about him: “But he liked me. I used to imagine that we could go swimming together. I used to imagine his body” (Sontag, 1993, p. 67). At this juncture, it can be stated that Alice’s body can be immobilized, but she is active mentally. After

Alice, Kundry shares her experience about corrupting the young man in *Parsifal*: "To make him desire me. He did desire me, but more as a mother than as a lover. And, still, he resisted me" (Sontag, 1993, p. 73). From those dialogues, female desires come to the forefront rather than men desires. Reconstruction of gender roles opposes the male centered discourse with the exploitation of men's body. It changes the attributive discourse whose subject is generally man and whose object is woman. These women are summoned to the party to attend in the free fantasy world taking place in Alice's mind and to contribute to her with the help of their intellectual exchange.

In Victorian era, it can be stated that women had to give up either their mind or their social position like Alice. As Gilbert and Gubar (1979) claim that female "feels herself to be literally or figuratively crippled by the debilitating alternatives her culture offers her" (p. 57). They also touch on internal conflict which they call "dis-ease" in their book, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. The underlying reason for this is that they believe it is not possible for people who are exposed to constraints to be healthy, and that dis-ease gives rise to their poor health. In that era, mental breakdown was so common among gifted women, so stories, plays about that topic were encountered recurrently. One of them is a drama in 19th century (1892) called *The Yellow Wallpaper* including losing one's mind.

The story is about a woman who suffers from postpartum depression. Mental illness and aporia of the protagonist in Victorian era are the focal points of the story. Depiction of the husband as a domineering perfectly compromises with the male figure of nineteenth century. He underestimates her desires, needs which drags her into the worse situation. He stifles her vivid imagination, creativity, and he does not allow her to write. The wallpaper in their room disturbs her and results in hallucinating. Although she indicates her fear and disturbance, her husband ignores her. Hence, her insanity gets worse day by day. Her mind is teemed with hallucinations. She starts to see a woman behind the pattern of the wallpaper. Eventually she begins to see the woman everywhere. "I can see her out of every one of my windows! It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep by daylight" (Gilman, 2011, p. 801). In the end, after thinking about suicide, she begins tearing down the wallpaper to free the woman in the wallpaper, or emblematically to free herself from her own boundaries (Gilman, 2011, p. 802). Therefore, it can be interpreted that it shows woman's battle to free herself from social constraints. Like Alice, the narrator

cannot escape from the yellow color representing oppressed bounds. Evidently, oppression of women which leads to insanity was everywhere in Victorian era. However, that insanity provides freedom from oppression at the same time for creative and career invalid women which creates paradox.

As it can be understood, the concept of insanity was encountered in Victorian era owing to traditional gender roles and distinctions. Many gifted women mentioned earlier suffered from mental break down, and they were labeled “mad” due to having unconventional ideas and creative minds.

3. 2 Suicidality

Victorian notion of an ideal woman could be encountered in Cold War era during 1950s. The image of women was selfless, and they were expected to devote themselves to their husbands and children. As a result, they were captivated by their necessities related to social norms. Individual desires to commit suicide were mainly related to social determination rather than individual choices in both Cold War era and Victorian Era. The impacts of society forces gave rise to suicide among women. Women’s mental illness impinged on psyche so deeply that suicidality was the salvation for them. Thus, this self-destruction became the cultural obsession.

It is vital to see Plath’s reaction towards double standards of Cold War era causing destructive results in the novel through her character. Also, her writings in journals reflect her idea towards gender contradictions in society.

My greatest trouble, arising from my basic and egoistic self love, is jealousy, I am jealous of men... It is an envy born of the desire to be active and doing, not passive and listening. I envy the man his physical freedom to lead a double life-his career, and his sexual and family life. I can pretend to forget my envy; no matter, it is there, insidious, malignant, latent (Plath, 2016, p. 35).

In *The Bell Jar*, the troubled psychological condition of protagonist, Esther, is clear because of social factors. Her desire for death results from her disappointment and the huge gap between her expectation about life and the realities she is trapped in. There are numerous external effects that lead to frustration on her psyche. For instance, she cannot be the ideal woman who is expected to be engaged in marriage and children. Also, execution of the Rosenbergs which is one of the darkest sides of life is disturbing for her. Her relation with men including distrust, violence is another problem she faces with. Apart from social problems, she has family problems. Death of her father at a

young age has a deep impact on her. In addition, she has a mother who is very conventional and smiles at the death of her husband. Hence, her point of view towards life is full of apprehension. Her inner contrasting feelings such as inferiority and perfectionist complex drag her into the deadlock, as well. She loses her confidence after the refusal of writing course which is one of the important reasons for her. She cannot see herself under the wings of academic world which is once a promoter power for her. She finds herself in the cycle of waning intelligence and self-debasement. Apparently, at the end, it can be grasped that she feels the influence of the bell jar deeply.

The Bell jar remains an accurate if frightening view of American life during 1950s. There were few achieving women during that decade; the average age for women to marry had fallen to 20.3. As Douglas Miller and Marion Nowak conclude in *The Fifties: The way We Really were*, "Everybody got married in the fifties, or at least it was a supreme sign of personal health and well-being to be engaged in the social act of marriage and family-raising." Accordingly, women were viewed as mates, and all kinds of "rights" came to be questioned –the value of education, for example, the real intentions of childless couples. The non-married life-style was a suspect as deviant sexual behaviors (although those were not subjects one found in print during the 1950s), and pressure on women to marry – no matter how career oriented, how ambitious, how intelligent – was inescapable (Wagner-Martin, 1992, p. 3).

Fossilized patriarchal forces drag her into the rift which saddens her in that she has to cope with oppressive forces which do not show respect women's desires. Tacit injunctions of patriarchy embitter her mind to commit suicide. Her condition is associated with anomic suicide which is "characterized by a state of irritation or disgust, irritation resulting from the many occasions of disappointment afforded by modern existence, disgust being the extreme form of perception of the disproportion between aspirations and satisfactions" (Aron, 1990, p. 44). At the end, she contemplates suicide. Her obsession with death results in being interested in death news in the newspaper. Her attention is caught by people who commit suicide. She wonders how they feel while doing it. She says:

I folded the paper and wedged it between the slats of the park bench. It was what my mother called a scandal sheet, full of the local murders and suicides and beatings and robberies, and just about every page had a half-naked lady on it with her breasts surging over the edge of her dress and her legs arranged so you could see to her stocking tops (Plath, 1999, p. 144).

Esther goes to the beach with her boyfriend, Jody, and his friends. She asks one of these friends about the ways of committing suicide. He says he would shoot himself which disappoints her in that she believes that it is the way of males. After trying to cut her wrists with razor, she tries to drown herself. Later, she tries to hang herself; however, her hands weaken and loosen their hold on the rope for each time. Thus, her each attempt to commit suicide ends in her failure. After that, because of visiting her

father's grave for the first time, she seeks out it in a rainy day. When she finds the grave, she starts to weep by realizing that she has never cried for her father like her mother. Her mother does not let her take part in the funeral. That is why his death never seems real for her. Therefore, Esther accuses her mother of preventing her from attending his burial. It is one of the reasons for the hatred of Esther towards her mother. Not being able to see her father's corpse inflicts a deep wound in her soul, and it is one of the reasons for her depression. Apart from depression, it also influences her relation with men. She fails in getting a strong relation with men since she does not know how to behave towards them. She lacks of father figure who can teach these kinds of issues. Evidently, it can be stated that her father's death promotes her constant pain in terms of several ways.

Overdosing on sleeping pills and hiding herself in the basement wall become the next step to kill herself, and it ends up in the hospital. Due to her suicidal attempts and overreactions, she is thought that she is abnormal. Everybody lacks of understanding her problem related to losing herself. Nobody can empathize with her feelings. "What I wanted to kill wasn't in that skin or the thin blue pulse that jumped under my thumb, but somewhere else, deeper, more secret, and a whole lot harder to get at" (Plath, 1999, p. 147). Evidently, she has inner conflict about her identity. Search for identity takes her into the center of mental disorder, so she commits suicide again to be freed from her pains. She says that she goes for a long walk on her note to her mother, and she goes out with sleeping pills after leaving a note for her mother. When she swallows the pills, she starts to see red and blue lights flashing in front of her eyes. She cannot feel anything apart from darkness.

I felt the darkness, but nothing else, and my head rose, feeling it, like the head of a worm. Someone was moaning. Then, a great, hard weight smashed against my cheek like a stone wall and the moaning stopped... Then the chisel struck again, and the light leapt into my head, and through the thick, warm, furry dark, a voice cried. 'Mother' (Plath, 1999, p. 179).

Esther feels the complete darkness, and this darkness resembles a tunnel. When she is taken to the hospital, and when she has recovery of consciousness, she can feel the flashing lights, strange voices disturbing her. She asks the nurse for a mirror; however, she encounters the refusal of the nurse because of her appearance which is not pretty. At the end, the nurse relents and gives the mirror. When she sees her hair is shaved off, her face is purple, she drops the mirror in horror. Esther is conscious of how doctors, nurses, visitors stare at her. She is labeled as crazy. However, nobody is aware of her situation. Even her mother who is an outstanding part of her depression has lack

of understanding towards her daughter. She reprimands Esther for not cooperating with the doctors. "...O Esther I wish you would cooperate. They say you don't cooperate. They say you won't talk to any of the doctors or make anything in Occupational therapy..." (Plath, 1999, p. 188). Esther is given a bed next to Mrs. Tomollilo. When she tells that she tried to commit suicide, Mrs. Tomollilo does not want to stay with her and asks Doctor to draw the curtain to separate them. That behavior of Mrs. Tomollilo reflects the idea that even Esther's fellows fail in showing empathy towards her which once triggers her personal trauma.

Her suicide attempt does not relieve her because she cannot get rid of the thing she wants which is the part of her mind. Being conscious constitutes her deeper part which she cannot be freed from. Suicide seems the way of escape for Esther. Underlying reasons for these attempts stem from longstanding pain that she suffers and her anxiety over her sexuality. Hence, some visible changes can be seen in her behaviors. Awakening from unconsciousness makes her truculent towards others while she is listless before.

After Esther's suicide attempt and rescue, language misuse and misidentification continue. There is no difference between her state during the depths of her depression and her state she is "recovering." The contortions of sight (she cannot see at all for a while), hearing, language, and then physical appearance continue Esther's anxiety: nothing is as it should be; nothing is recognizable. And the apparent malaise that confronting her world creates in Esther forces her into a catatonic still point (Wagner-Martin, 1992, p. 78).

This act may be the signal of the devolution of stifling social norms which embitter her mental illness and suicide. By this way, she abandons social dictates about etiquette. However, this act makes her taken to the private mental institution.

Like Esther, Alice's hysteric condition makes her think of committing suicide. Her life is rife with resistance opposed the life. The emotional upheaval created by her disappointed future, poor health conditions, loss of ambition is a prevailing reason for her lack of individual power. When the life is intolerable for her to resist, she desires to confront her impending death by ending her life. However, the strong temptation of suicide does not hinder her from getting permission from her father. Firstly, her tacit discourse comes to the forefront: "Is it wrong to want to take one's life" (Sontag, 1993, p. 18). Then, she shows her true colors by asking "May I kill myself Father" (Sontag, 1993, p. 23). Her desire of suicide culminates in getting permission from her father which represents dominant figure in society. That endeavor for getting permission is a strong confirmation of the impact of oppressive forces. Even death depends on their decisions.

Alice's question may be threat rather than the action. She may want her father to dissuade her from her thought. However, her father is so unaware of her unhappiness, condition that she is not able to desist from expressing that saddening words: "Aren't you impressed Father by how unhappy I am" (Sontag, 1993, p. 20). On the contrary, she is consciously aware of her condition that plunged her into hysteria. Owing to overwhelmed by intense emotional anguish, a result of the life of resistance, she cannot handle with an impulsive longing to abandon her inevitability by ending her life. She cannot either escape or accelerate the moment which makes life unbearable for her. Her pleasures are all exhausted by the society she belongs to, and her incapacitated life leaves her in despair which cannot be surmountable by herself. Her father seems not to help her: "Why do you ask me. Could I stop you if you're really set your mind to it? Your willful mind" (Sontag, 1993, p. 23). With these words, it is clear that he ratifies her suicide. Even though he has no say in how she faces severe outcomes of her resistance towards life, he has a word for her death. His indifference towards her desires for life changes direction when she states her wanting for suicide. He allows her by stating "Your father says you must do what you want"... "I ask only one thing. Do it gently. So as not to distress those you leave behind" (Sontag, 1993, p. 24). This paternal permission recommends perfectly gentle suicide for Alice. He may think that suicide is the necessity rather than the choice for Alice because of her sufferings. Her father grants her permission by giving solemn lecture not to be saddened. He may not think that it is a sin; however, he solemnly wants her not to take her life in a saddening way which is an act of selfishness. Apparently, his words make Alice feel as a stranger in their house. By this way, her suicide desire is driven largely by her awareness of this situation, and, to Alice, death is sought for salvation from weariness of life. The lifestyle thrust upon her in the form of oppression related to her career, health brings her to the deadlock. At the end, after the conversation with her father, she states "Is there a hole I can fall into. Do I have to go to sleep first" (Sontag, 1993, p. 25). Here, there is a metaphorical usage by referring to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. The hole in the *Alice in Wonderland* is like a tunnel which is very deep and dark. Even though there are doors around, they are all locked for Alice, and she does not know how to get out again. Alice desires to fall into that kind of hole with despair due to being afflicted with the indifference of her family towards her life.

In another scene with her brother, Harry, they talk about committing suicide again. Harry acts as a temporal imperative intrusive person to delay the death of hers. After lack of paternal resistance for her suicide, Harry's words such as my precious turtle are like the words which console a child. They may be disarming, but not convincing for Alice. She knows that her brother sees her desire to commit suicide as a real illness. Harry's attitudes bear a striking resemblance to Esther's relatives and her social sphere unlike Alice's father who thinks that suicide is the act of evading yourself from bitter suffering. In the 19th century, women outnumbered men in terms of mental breakdown; they were more prone to these kinds of illnesses because of oppressive circumstances for women. Alice herself, however, does not see her mental breakdown as a real illness; she sees it as a consequence of being trapped between her will and dominant ideology. She states that

So I didn't commit suicide. And I'll have, I gather from your discreet silence, a real illness. Much preferable to this tiresome neurasthenia. I never quite saw myself as Elizabeth Barrett, being unable to envisage for myself either the literary gift or the ardent rescuer. Cancer (Sontag, 1993, p. 31).

She knows that there are few women who accomplish to have a career, and she feels weak both to achieve a good career and to battle against cancer. Despondency about her future and listlessness caused by cancer give rise to deteriorating health in terms of both physically and mentally. Her anguish mingled with apathy prompt her for self-destruction. Also, she feels insufficient among her talented brothers and father who make her mind restless. She sometimes accuses her father of distressing her in the belief of not being able to meet the standards. When she is at mad tea party with her ghost guests, they talk about unhappiness. Once Alice is asked who has broken her hearth, she demonstrates her father as a reason. She believes that it is tough to gratify her father: "Yes it is mad isn't it. But you see how difficult it was for us. Father had high standards. We were not supposed to be, well, like the others" (Sontag, 1993, p. 64).

Her bedridden and oppressed life does not experience anything. At the tea party, another topic that they talk about is life experience. Alice states "I remember when my mother died my youngest brother said that we had all been educated by Father to feel that death was the only reality and that life was simply an experimental thing" (Sontag, 1993, p. 63). To her father's thought, it may be stated that the life belongs to those who have experiences. Hence, it is not surprising that her father gives permission Alice for death because of her lack of experience. Also, Alice mentions that she has crossed the

Atlantic with her family, and she hasn't left her cabin. That situation makes Fuller surprised. Actually, Alice's condition represents Victorian women. In that era, life went on around them with full of experience whereas they remained closed in their homes. Hence, cabin is the signifier of women's Panopticon in Victorian era. Besides, Alice mentions her lack of experience related to parties. She states "I'm afraid I have never been gifted for having or even attending a party" (Sontag, 1993, p. 51). She has too little experience about life that this situation prompts her for self-destruction. Her separation from men who have practical knowledge of life takes her craving to exist away. Alice is aware of the fact that apart from intelligence, the experience is a must for existence. The defect of experience in fact exacerbates the effect of her mental breakdown although she doesn't show it clearly. *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gillian gives a binary opposition of men and women. According to her,

[...] there is a very general psychological sex difference that distinguishes women from men throughout life, beginning in infancy. Women are oriented toward attachment and "connectedness" to others, whereas men are oriented toward individuation and "separateness" from other [...] According to this position, distinctly male and female orientations are formed early, and irreversibly, with the mother child relation [...] Males are commonly viewed as more independent, objective and ambitious, and the like, while females are seen as more aware of other's feelings and more tactful and expressive (Gillian, 1982, p. 11).

It is clear that life has totally different meanings for men and women, and these differences are generally manipulated for patriarchy's sake. In the play, Alice's confinement of bed signifies the passiveness of women. One of the underlying reasons for her desire of suicide stems from her being inactive. The only way for her to be free is imagination. Without it, real life is burdened with restrictions. It is no doubt that women's liberation is only possible with imagination whereas men's freedom depends on real life experience.

Like the fictional character of Sontag, Alice James suffered from the affliction of hysteria. Actually, not only did she have nervous breakdown, but also she had physical breakdown caused by breast cancer. Her medical history reflected Victorian psychiatric treatment. Firstly, she received therapeutic exercise in New York. It was followed by rest cure, and all of these treatments ended in electrical massage. Because of identifying the gender biases of 19th century, Alice knew that her hysteria came from the widespread oppression of women's genius in the name of femininity. Hence, her hysteria was mainly due to her father who made her remain at home and kept her from outside world. Although she was born into a wealthy and intellectual sphere in 19th century, she felt the impacts of oppression.

In the play, Alice's permission to commit suicide is based on a real life of Alice James. In the summer of 1868, Alice asked her father if it was ok to end her life. To her father, Alice's problem was about spiritual influx, and he provided full permission to her to end her life. Permission to die was granted to Alice by her father. Her temptation to end her life resulted from to leave her bonds; it was an act of escape for freedom. Both body and mind could not be preserved due to hysterical fragmentation. In addition to bodily decline, she was exposed to exploding of emotions which pulled her down. However, to Alice James, moral prostration was harder than physical pain to endure, so that situation made her obsessed with death. Self-fragmentation made her desire abandon the body. In her diary, James stated her feelings about that issue:

I have passed thro' an infinite succession of conscious abandonments and in looking back now I see how it began in my childhood, altho' I wasn't conscious of the necessity until '67 or '68 when I broke down first, acutely, and had violent turns of hysteria. As I lay prostrate after the storm with my mind luminous and active and susceptible of the 60 American Literature clearest, strongest impressions, I saw so distinctly that it was a fight simply between my body and my will, a battle in which the former was to be triumphant to the end (James, 1890).

When she mentioned her body in her diary, her body was called as "other". It was detached from her intellect, will. Her desire to abandon her body made her suffer a lot. Eventually, before she ended her life, the breast cancer which caused her invalid for years took her life in 1892.

Both Alices bear resemblance within the frame of the split self of hysteria due to the tragic outcome of their life. Like Alice James, Alice wants to remove the self from the body by committing suicide. They are the characters who are burdened with self-destruction owing to the longstanding obstacles that are all the time valid for women. To both Alices, abandonment of consciousness is available by ending the life which is the way of getting freedom from oppression of dominant forces of society and patriarchal family structure. Given that their self-fragmentation which gives rise to suicide may be perceived as an emblem of weakness, it is an act of self-preservation from the body which is actually the other.

3.3 Finding the True Self

Esther's world is full of contraries as mentioned before. She has a desire to have the things such as profession, marriage, etc. at the same time. She is different from others with her unconventionality, and that situation causes inner conflict. The role that society wants her to play and the things that she wants to do are totally contrasting.

Hence, her desire involving clashing things makes her called as neurotic by the people around her. "If neurotic is wanting two mutually exclusive things at one and at the same time, then I'm neurotic as hell. I'll be flying back and forth between one mutually exclusive thing and another for the rest of my days" (Plath, 1999, p. 99). Apparently, she is ready to be labelled as neurotic because of choices because she is aware of the fact that thanks to them, she will be free from her inner conflicts. All her choices about life drag her into the mental institution which in fact provides her to find her true self. In the private mental institution, she meets Dr. Nolan who is a positive female character. She provides Esther to get a new identity by helping her rid herself of her problems involving social norms, her identity. She trusts her doctor because she is the only person who can really understand her. Owing to her support, she is convinced by the idea that her choices can exist in society by standing against them. She becomes aware of her abilities thanks to her unlike the others who limit her actions. By providing Esther confidence, Dr. Nolan is an influential power on the road of Esther's recovery. She is like a mother figure in that Esther lacks of mother love. Because of economic reasons after their father's death, her mother has to work and cannot give a full attention to her. Actually, it is a must for her mother; however, Esther is not mature to understand the conditions as a child. Dr. Nolan prescribes shock treatment and insulin treatment which make Esther better to forge a new identity, and the bell jar starts to arise.

Unlike Dr. Gordon's therapy with ECT which blunts Esther's creative mind, Dr. Nolan prescribes insulin therapy. At first, she thinks that it does not work; however, Valerie who is swollen owing to insulin treatment persuades her. Valerie to whom Plath uses as a reflection of trapped women in 1950s is an embodying character of females of that era. She represents women who become swollen because of dominant forces. Plath criticizes psychiatric practices which has no purpose of turning women into vacuous robots. These treatments usually render passivation for women. When Esther asks how she feels after the insulin treatment, she says that "Fine. I'm not angry any more. Before, I was always angry. I was in Wymark, before, and now I'm in Caplan. I can go to town now, or shopping or to a movie, along with a nurse" (Sontag, 1993, pp. 202-203). It is clear that that treatment takes her nervous and makes her a stereotype woman who is under the control of somebody. On the contrary of that result, insulin treatment becomes beneficial for Esther. She turns the disadvantages of mental

institution into her advantage. Also, the electro shock treatment of Dr. Nolan affects Esther in a positive way. When she wakes up from the shock treatment, she feels surprisingly good. And the theoretical bell jar begins to lift from Esther.

However, Plath herself was not lucky as her character in the novel. Like her fictional character, Plath also had suicide attempts resulting from lack of love and desire for rebirth. 1950s society, there was a huge paradox related to women. Educated woman could win scholarship, prizes like Esther; however, it did not make any sense in that society, so the duality of 1950s was unendurable for Plath. Professional world belonging to men was only possible for women under the shadow of their husbands. The things men supposed to provide for women were actually the oppression of women. Therefore, hypocrisy of those oppressive forces was hard to embrace for Plath, and, at the end, depression that made her feel enclosed in a wall of glass had overcome.

Plath's Journals are full of comments that show that pressure, and her anger about it. From Cambridge, England, as a Fulbright student, already a 23-year-old unmarried woman, she writes, "Suddenly everyone is very married and happy."... The duality of the 1950s plagues Plath; she does not want to marry and never have a career, but neither does she want to be some stereotype of the unfulfilled ("unwomanly") spinster. Where are her role models? "Why," she writes, "did Virginia Woolf commit suicide? Or Sara Teasdale...Neurotic? Was their writing sublimation (oh horrible word). If only I knew. If only I knew how high I could set my goals, my requirements for my life (Wagner-Martin, 1992, pp. 3-4).

These circumstances she was engulfed in made her commit suicide. For Sylvia Plath, the bell jar did not arise. Hence, at the age of 20, she swallowed sleeping pills and went to sleep to her family's basement; however, she could not manage it. Ten years later, her book, *The Bell Jar*, was published under pseudonym, Victoria Lucas, in January 1963. After her book was published, in February 1963, at the age of 30, she committed suicide by gassing herself in spite of her children who were sleeping. And tragically, she was successful that time.

Other significant factor for arising of the bell jar and the turning point in Esther's life is her double, Joan. She comes to the forefront late, but she has a crucial impact on Esther's view on life. Joan stands for a double character of Esther concerning to their views towards life and giving up living. The similarities between Esther and Joan are striking. They are both overachievers who are successful in their fields. At the same time, they are against the epitome of stereotyped woman in 1950s. Their desires which give a negative impression on people are unconventional. They date the same men, Buddy, and they get treatment in the same hospital for the same problem with the help of a woman psychiatrist. Hence, Esther believes that they have something in common;

they possess shared qualities. Joan is inspired by Esther to kill herself when she sees news about Esther on the newspaper as Esther is once affected by other people who commit suicide. Like Esther, Joan gets into depression which results in committing suicide, so her attempt ends up in mental institution to get treatment. These similarities make Esther think that Joan is her doppelganger who symbolizes her inner self. In that part, what Plath may want to attract notice is that suicide news on newspapers may encourage people to follow the same act. She was true about that issue because her suicide was influential for other women writers' suicide such as Anne Sexton.

Even though Esther does not like Joan, she feels that she is her affinity. Most probably, Esther needs the presence of another person who knows and understands her. Joan is the person who evokes Esther's presence. Otherwise, "her sense of her own identity drains away from her". "In order to exist, she needs someone else to believe in her existence" (Laing, 1969, p. 60). Nevertheless, Esther needs to exterminate Joan to reach her unity. Joan's mental illness drives her over the edge resulting in her suicide. She hangs herself. By this way, Esther feels freed from her alter-ego which provides relief to her. This physically annihilation of Joan ensures Esther's autonomy to emerge again. Hughes (1994) elaborates on the issue: As a consequence of Joan's self-destruction, Esther's "authentic self emerges," and she manages to break her "old ego" (p. 3). Because Esther sees her presence like evil double, her annihilation impedes Esther's recovery. She states "Her thoughts were not my thoughts, nor her feelings my feelings, but we were close enough so that her thoughts and feelings seemed a wry, black image of my own" (Plath, 1999, p. 231). Hence, it can be understood that her dark self fades away with Joan's death, and it paves the way for re-gaining her identity.

Another turning point in Esther's life that changes her point of view is her sexual affair with a man, Irwin who is a professor of Mathematics at Harvard. Esther wants to have a sexual intercourse with that her young friend in that she believes that he is an appropriate candidate to sleep with due to being intelligent. In order to stay with him, she gets permission from Dr. Nolan by saying that she will stay overnight with Joan in Cambridge. The reason of Esther for selecting Irwin is not only about his intelligence but it is also about her craving to perform her new personality which is far from the bell jar with the help of that man. This decision symbolizes taking a firm action towards her new life free from taboos. And, to her, Irwin is the ideal partner to experience sexual act. Before this experience, she uses vaginal diaphragm which

ensures freedom to her for her sexual act. That diaphragm is the signifier of self-determination for sexuality. White states “I resented virginity, and the so-called ‘purity’ of women, and reacted violently to any suggestion about it. It had always shamed me that men judges women by such a standard” (qtd. in Macpherson, 1991, p. 16). Like White, Esther stands against the idea of purity, so she is ready to break the double standards of females.

After the sexual intercourse, Esther starts to bleed copiously because she has hemorrhage. Also, its color which is half black is different. This color of the blood represents the losing of her innocence in a crude society. It is a compulsory act for Esther for transformation comprising pain since she is aware of the fact that obtaining a new identity consists of suffering rather than pleasure. She chooses to sacrifice her body so as to ease her mind. No matter how she needs medical treatment for her bleeding, she feels that she comes out victorious. She says “Then the stories of bloodstained bridal sheets and capsules of red ink bestowed on already deflowered brides floated back to me...it occurred to me that the blood was my answer. I couldn’t possibly be a virgin anymore. I smiled into the dark” (Plath, 1999, p. 241). Her first sexual experience gives her autonomy and transforms her into overconfident woman because her desires overcome conventional beliefs, taboos which have affiliation motive between sexuality and oppression. As Foucault (1984) states “If sex is represses, that is, condemned to prohibition, non-existence, and silence, then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression. A person who holds forth such language places himself to a certain extend outside the reach of power” (p. 6).

These events cause Esther to leave simulacrum of her generation which does not allow her to select what she wants to be. The imposition of the dominant ideology is broken by Esther’s choices. She is aware of the fact that submissiveness, chastity are the extensions of patriarchy, and they are postulated by women. It is patent that her awareness provides the preservation of true self at the end of the novel. There is a hopeful note of hers about the bell jar. She says that the bell jar lifts from her “suspended, a few feet above my head” (Plath, 1999, p. 227). By this way, it is apparent that entrapment surrounding her begins to ascend. The reasons that drag her into depression are varied such as Rosenbergs’ execution, Buddy Willard’s hypocrisy, her relation with men, her mother, her father’s death, exclusion from writing school,

oppressive society, etc. However, when she reaches the degree of consciousness to break the taboos, her confidence starts to wax, and she starts to be free from precipitating events. Rebelling against contaminated society provides self-preservation for Esther; it is a significant step to find her true self and to release herself from the bell jar that traps her.

Even though Esther and Alice share the similar destiny as a woman whose oppressions become integral to their psyches, Alice does not have a rapid recovery period like Esther. Unlike Esther, Alice does not commit suicide; her desire cannot go beyond her desire. Nonetheless, the anger and grief of her delve deeply into her psychology. Hence, in the last chapter, which submits the interpretive impact, gives an idea that she cannot be recovered totally both mentally and physically. However, through the end of the play, some optimistic conversations between Alice and nurse catch the attention. Throughout the play, Alice refuses to get out of the bed, but at the end of the play, she states that she has gotten up which is a vital step to defeat her weakness caused by her understanding of her illness. When she shares her situation with the nurse, the nurse states that it is very important. In addition to this, no matter how her intellectual mind is infested with frustration, she requests a story which does not have an unhappy ending from a nurse. That desire signals that she may want to leave her hysterical thoughts for a while. Up to that conversations, it can be interpreted that she has a tendency towards getting rid of her chronic hysteria resulted from societal oppression. However, the last conversations indicate that her desire for leaving troublesome situation lasts too short. They demonstrate that she cannot succeed in abandoning of gloomy thoughts. She says “I used to be a real person or different. I tried. I feel as if I fell” (Sontag, 1993, p. 109). Given that the nurse promises to catch her, she cannot decide what to do. She repeats the same words “Let me fall asleep. Let me wake up. Let me fall asleep” (Sontag, 1993, p. 110). And the curtains are closed with the nurse’s reply: “I will” (Sontag, 1993, p. 110). That instability most probably stems from her hysteria which maximizes the vulnerability of mental imbalance. There is no clue about her awareness of her own state of confused perception. Her state of anxiety, delusions deteriorate her fragile mental condition, and the conversations above both positive and negative are the plainest evidence of her fallacy. Taking everything into account, it cannot be concluded that there is a certain conclusion about her mental situation. Unlike her mental illness, Alice’s physical condition in the play can be

predicted from the life of Alice James who died at the age of 43 because of cancer. That psychical condition is the perpetuation of the strains of life in the outside world which she cannot break. Even though her physical condition can be guessed, the play mainly remains open-ended.

The novel and the play bear resemblance in terms of many aspects, but their endings about finding the true self differentiate them from each other. Esther's finding her true self mainly hinges on the action of committing suicide apart from several reasons. That action provides her to establish equilibrium in her life by killing her false self. It is a way of abandonment of restraints which are deemed as reasons for lunatic actions. However, in the play, Alice does not commit suicide to reach her true self and to get rid of the distractions of mind. Besides, Esther loses her virginity which is the step for reaching relief. By this way, she shows that she acts upon her desires; her false self which involves fixed ideas is left out. She rebels against the outer world where the adoption of restraints is embraced, and she breaks the long-established taboos by losing her virginity. Unlike Esther, Alice does not get married, and she does not have sexual experience which is another handicap for her mental stability. That lack of experience affects her patterns of behavior in a negative way. Another good effect on Esther to make her recover is Joan, her double character. Joan seems the evil self, false self of Esther. Joan's death opens a new door for Esther. It symbolizes her new life which is free from false impression of society. However, Alice does not have a social life due to living with her family and being bedridden. The only people she talks to are her family and her nurse. The lack of friends and her hysteria cause her to see hallucinations. Hence, it is not possible for her to find her false self because of her secluded life. Finding her false self may encourage her to resist against the outer world, and it may alleviate the distractions of her mind. However, in the play, there is no other character apart from her family and her nurse who are the reasons of Alice's indulgence of gloomy thoughts. They are the leading factors for her deteriorating mind which becomes fixated upon sobering feelings. Taking everything into account, it can be inferred that Alice cannot reach true self like Esther at the end of the play. The underlying reason behind it may be Esther's gaining much more experience than Alice. The more she gains experience, the more recovery period accelerates for Esther whereas Alice cannot be exposed to any experiences due to her being invalid. Hence, Alice cannot reach the complete abandonment of restraints, and it is not possible for

her to establish equilibrium. Esther proves the fact that gaining experience is a crucial effect for the recovery of psyche.

The Bell Jar is constructed upon the bedrock of significant existential experiences: the protracted illness and early death of the author/ heroine's father that filled her with lifelong anxiety; the rite of passage into adulthood necessitating choice and forcing a discovery of her own aging process; and the escape into madness as a reaction to intolerable internal and external stress. But it also bears witness to female specificity, most notably in the recurrent images of decaying figs, dead babies, jarred fetuses, and other forms of aborted maternity that are objective correlatives of the protagonist's inner state of terror....Paradoxically, one way of denying the absolute reality of death is by taking control of it by killing yourself before death kills you (Yalom, 1985, p. 14).

Esther manages to preserve her true self by committing suicide. Also, losing virginity and the death of Joan provide to reach her true self, as well before contaminated society establishes restraints upon her life. As mentioned above, not having experience for Alice prevents her from reaching her true self. Esther's voice is an accurate depiction of Plath's real life which was full of depression, but she might want to leave a hopeful ending which is different from her own ending. Sontag's play as well is actually the representation of Alice James; however, Sontag leaves the play open-ended unlike the novel. Esther's preparing to be discharged does not overlap with Alice's opaque end even though they have many similarities. No matter how their endings are, both the novel and the play are essential to unveil the strains of society for women in a poignant way, and they clearly show that their distractions of mind emanate from these patriarchal forces.

Like their protagonists, James and Plath suffered from depression during their lives. Plath attended Smith College, Boston University whereas James attended schools related to girls' achievement. During her life, Plath succeeded in getting rewards for her writing. However, that success could not prevent her from ending her life. Unlike Plath, James could not be successful so much during her lifetime because of her patriarchal family. After her death, her diary brought fame to her in literature. Before it was published, Henry James who feared the diary's gossip with names attached did not want her diary get published in order not to endanger his social standing. After his death, the diary could be published, and her name was known. No matter what obstacles they encountered for the sake of literature, at the end, they could manage to make their voice heard with the help of their works.

4. CONCLUSION

Both Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Susan Sontag's *Alice in Bed* offer a striking perspective on women's conflicts which are related to their desires and repressive society. Given that their genres are different, most strikingly, they touch on the similar topics such as repression, creativity, madness, suicidality. In addition to these topics, they are also similar within the frame of reflecting the real lives of Plath and James. They have a potential to demonstrate a critical analysis of oppressive forces on women's creativity. They are both milestone works to reflect how society's expectation puts pressure upon women's choices, intelligence in Victorian era and Cold War era. Actually, not only do the protagonists in the novel and the play represent Plath and James's lives but also they are embodiment of the whole generation of their era.

Plath's *The Bell Jar* mainly takes up the issue of being trapped in society's expectations while having cravings as a woman. The novel is regarded as one of the most vital literary works of American literature of Cold War era owing to representing social pressure on women in terms of every aspect. It provides an over-arching message for the entire women who have desires. According to Bonds (1990), it demonstrates "the oppressive atmosphere of 1950s and the soul-destroying effect this atmosphere could have on ambitious, high-minded young woman like Plath" (p. 49). The novel's main concern is the protagonist's struggle against impositions of dominant ideology, having mental instability because of facing antagonistic social forces, and finding her true self at the end.

The protagonist, Esther, is a young girl whose literary aspirations are repressed by long-established taboos of society. When she wins a fashion magazine contest, she goes to New York which is a civilized society to her, and she gains experiences which is different from her small town provincial life. However, these experiences are unpleasant for her. In New York, she feels entrapped between her choices about future because she realizes that she is not free for her choices. Her ambitions do not meet

society's expectations. Society's concept of an ideal woman including marriage, having children does not overlap with her ambitions. Unlike stereotypical ideal feminine image, she wants to pursue a career in literature. However, to society, a girl has two options; "she is either loved for denying her needs, or she is abandoned as punishment for exploring the world on her own, for using her unprecedented emotions and desires as a guide" (Leonard, 1992, p. 70). Being a socially constructed female identity or following her dreams destroy her identity. Hence, that situation results in identity problem which later cause mental breakdown in Esther's psyche. Because of depression, she is not capable of writing, concentrating. The hopelessness suffocates her. However, mental institution makes her health better thanks to her woman doctor. Also, some suicide attempts, losing her virginity, the death of Joan play a significant role to eliminate her depression because, thanks to these events, she realizes that she needs to recreate her own identity by killing her false self. Self-destruction becomes the way of rebirth of Esther. By this way, she reaches her freedom that she longs for so far. By committing suicide, she establishes equilibrium in her mind and body. This equilibrium enables her to abandon restrictions and reach purification.

Like Esther, Plath herself faced the dilemma of possessing a dependent life by getting married and breeding children or pursuing her literary aspirations. She could not determine what to do. Even though, she got married and wrote poems, cultural restrictions contradicted that different female identity. What society demanded from her was completely contrasting to her inner self, desires. She was torn between housework and her ambitious. To her, society's rigid distinctions between gender roles would never change. "Sylvia could not guess that society would ever change; she seemed to see the taboos and tension ever be substantially altered; and she bore them with surface resignation" (Connell, 1993, p. 40). Plath was aware of the fact that women's condition of 1950s would be permanent. That's why her writings were rife with despondency, and *The Bell Jar* is an autobiographical novel which represents Plath's life. She was burdened with despair, ambiguity which is the consequences of strife between her and contaminated society. The tragedy of Sylvia Plath represents the tragedy of a woman whose desires are different from society's expectation. Because of that unsatisfying socially constructed female identity, she could not manage to preserve her identity. Contrary to Esther, Plath could not get rid of restlessness in her life, and she could not reach breakthrough. That entrapment dragged

her into mental breakdown. Her fragmented-self decided to abandon the body because the life could not be endured for her. As a result, she committed suicide by gassing herself.

It is apparent that women have been a silent part of the human history; the voice of women has not been heard so far. In the Victorian and Cold War era, women were restricted in terms of many aspects. Especially, the literary arts were rarely open to women; it was difficult for them to express themselves in literary arts. A woman who had a vivid imagination, creativity like Plath suffered from mental breakdown. Female novelists encountered a variety of obstacles apart from the risk of being an outcast because of the thought that literature is not an appropriate business for woman. Even if they had had a chance to write about themselves, their writings would have been censored. In their writings, they had to avoid including strong emotions which means that they were not given an opportunity to write about their emotions and bodies. This makes women a half person who has no experience, no feeling to write down. Hence, not being able to act on their dreams and aspirations led them to mental illness. Madness is the price for women-artists for the sake of their restricted literature. Like Plath, Alice James was one of these women artists.

Susan Sontag's *Alice in Bed* is a work which is free fantasy based on a real person. Sontag reflects the life of James who suffered from hysteria during her life span. In the play, Alice suffers from both physical and mental illness owing to the pressure of her patriarchal family structure and male dominant society. In the name of lady conduct, her energy is consumed. Living bedridden removes her from outside stimulation which is a must to gain experience. This kind of life descends her into depression. In the play, there is a reflection of the position of intellectual Victorian women in dominant culture. It clearly demonstrates that gifted women are led to madness due to indignation against double standards in society. Being a woman writer is a challenging profession while men are praised for their writing. "Whereas men are rewarded for deriving their sense of self from creative endeavors . . . , a woman's creativity is unrewarded" (Wetzel, 1993, p. 35). Under these circumstances which result in her physical and mental illness, it is not possible for Alice to mold her life in accordance with her own aspirations. Sontag reflects that situation in an artistic way by confining Alice into bed with multiple layers of mattresses on her which makes her inactive. In the play, Alice is torn between her patriarchal family members that are successful in their fields and socially constructed female identity. Therefore, to her, her father's and brothers' affections have a sly intention to dominate her

and keep her at home. Within this framework, Alice is a cultural signifier of Victorian women. The ambiguity that comes from the conflicts between their creativity and male-dominant culture intensifies the impact of oppression for them. Alice is the embodiment of an aspiring mind which is cut off by patriarchy. Thus, it can be stated that *Alice in Bed* is a kind of play that illustrates creative mind sodden with despair, anguish, and it clearly shows how oppression is the integral to a woman's psyche. In addition to these, it also reflects that no matter how a person is invalid, the power of imagination makes her active. Although Alice is bedridden, it is apparent that she is mentally sharp, and nobody has a power to damage it. Hence, Sontag weaves the text by juxtaposing contrasting ideas to demonstrate the power of imagination to inspire following female writers.

Alice James belonged to one of the most distinguished families in terms of intellectuality in America. She was invisible among her gifted brothers. Henry was a famous novelist who was regarded as the finest with regards to language. William's philosophical and psychological works were among the successful ones. However, Alice was not lucky like her brothers due to suffering from the array of mental disorders resulting from oppression of society. Even though she looked for treatments for her physical and mental ailments, she could not reach a relief. No matter how creative, witty she was, she could not escape from the internal conflict which was an outcome of her aspirations and social convention. Given that her intellect was on par with her brothers, she was bound to 19th century societal conventions. Therefore, she was tormented by tacit imposition of society. James's condition apparently reflects the idea that Victorian era was not an ideal atmosphere to write for women. According to Gilbert and Gubar (1979), female writers feel "anxiety of authorship" whereas their male counterparts suffer from "anxiety of influence" (p. 49). They support the idea that female writers could not take up "the pen" like penis which is the symbol of male "generative power" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p. 6). Therefore, female writers' "anxiety of authorship" is "a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a 'precursor' the act of writing will isolate or destroy her" (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p. 49). Living in this condition made James suffer from debilitating illness both physically and mentally. Hence, at the end, after suffering recurring bouts of nervous disorders, she died from breast cancer in 1892.

To conclude, both Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Sontag's *Alice in Bed* reflect 19th and 20th century's oppression on women. Both of the works illustrate the darkness which is unavoidable for women even though light occasionally shines. The protagonists'

disintegration into mental breakdown shows how the existence of women is hard in a stifling society, and how silence has to become the integral part of women. At the end, death can be an inevitable ending for women. One of the Plath's poems which is called "Crossing the Water" captures that situation perfectly and reflects the aporia of women in her time in a poignant way. No matter how it emphasizes the silence, darkness of women, thanks to her poems like other female writers, it is possible to hear the roar of women's silence.

Black lake, black boat, two black, cut-paper people.

Where do the black trees go that drink here?

Their shadows must cover Canada.

A little light is filtering from the water flowers.

Their leaves do not wish us to hurry:

They are round and flat and full of dark advice.

Cold worlds shake from the oar.

The spirit of blackness is in us, it is in the fishes.

A snag is lifting a valedictory, pale hand;

Stars open among the lilies.

Are you not blinded by such expressionless sirens?

This is the silence of astounded souls.

(Plath, 1962)

REFERENCES

- Antler, J.** (1995). Ethel Rosenberg, Molly Goldberg and Radical Jewish Women in the 1950s. In M. Garber & R. L. Walkowitz (Ed.), *Secret Agents: The Rosenberg Case, McCarthyism and Fifties America* (pp. 197-215). New York: Routledge.
- Aron, R.** (1990). *Main Currents in Sociological Thought 2*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bartky, S. L.** (2003). Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power. In R. Weitz (Ed.), *The Politics of Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior* (pp. 25-46). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bonds, D. S.** (1990). "The Separating Self in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*." *Women Studies* 18.1: 49-64. Print.
- Boudreau, K.** A Barnum Monstrosity: Alice James and the Spectacle of Sympathy. *American Literature* (pp. 53-67). US: Duke University Press.
- Butler, J.** *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge: New York, 1990.
- Churchill, C.** *Top Girls*. Date of access: 14.03.2016, address: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Top_Girls
- Cixous, H.** (1976). *The Laugh of the Medusa*. Trans. Keith and Paula Cohen. United States: Chicago University Press.
- Connell, E.** (1993). *Sylvia Plath: Killing The Angel in the House*. Pennine Pens: Hebden Bridge.
- De Beauvoir, S.** (1949). *The Second Sex*. Trans. H.M. Parshley. New York: Penguin.
- Amazon.** (n.d.). *Deconstructing Psychotherapy*. Date of access: 02.05.2016, address: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Deconstructing-Psychotherapy-Ian-Parker/dp/0761957138>
- Eisenmann, L.** (2007). *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945-1965*. USA: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Foucault, M.** (1979). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin, Print.
- Foucault, M.** (1984). *The History of sexuality- An Introduction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. Print.
- Foucault, M.** (1988). *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Random House.

- Gallop, J.** (1976). The Ladies' Man. *Diacritics* (pp. 28-34). Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Hammen, C. L.** (1997). *Depression*. C. R. Brewin (Ed.). UK: Cornwall.
- Giddens, A.** (2013). Gender and Sexuality. *Sociology* (pp. 578-596). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilbert, S. M., and Susan G.** (1979). *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman . Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP. Print
- Gilligan, C.** (1982). *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge: HUP.
- Gilman, C. P.** (2011). The Yellow Wallpaper. In N. Baym (Ed.), *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* (pp. 792-804). NY: W. W. Norton.
- Grimshaw, J.** (1986). *Feminist Philosophers: Women's Perspectives on Philosophical Traditions*. Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books.
- Howlett, J.** (n.d.). Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* as Counter-Narrative. *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*. Date of access: 03. 04.2016, address: <https://homepage.univie.ac.at/melanie.loidolt/courses/ws2007Inter/Bell.htm>
- Hughes, T.** (n.d.). On Sylvia Plath. *Raritan* (pp. 1-10) Date of access: 11. 04. 2016, address: <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/plath/article/viewFile/4714/4350>
- Irigaray, L.** (1985). *The Sex Which Is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Kroll, J.** (1978). *Chapters in Mythology: The Poetry of Sylvia Plath*. New York: Harper Colophon.
- Lacan, J.** (n.d.). *Lacan and Language*. Date of access: 11. 02. 2016, address: <https://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/elljwp/lacan.htm>
- Laing, R. D.** (1969). *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*. London: Tavistock.
- Leonard, G. M.** (1992). The Woman is Perfected. Her Dead Body Wears the Smile of Accomplishment. *Sylvia Plath and Mademoiselle magazine. College Literature* (pp. 60-82).
- Macpherson, P.** (1991). *Reflecting on the Bell Jar*. Routledge: London.
- May, E. T.** (1999). *Homeward Bound. American Families in the Cold War Era*. Basic Books: New York.
- Meyerowitz, J.** (1994). *Not June Cleaver, Women and Gender in Postwar America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Miller, J. A.** (1987): Jeremy Bentham's Panoptic Device (R. Miller, Trans.).

- October* (pp.3–29). Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Millet, K.** (1990). *Sexual Politics: The Classic Analysis of the Interplay Between Men, Women and Culture*. Simon Schuster: New York.
- Osterweil, A.** (2010): Queer Coupling, or the Stain of the Bearded Woman. *Framework* (pp. 33-60).
- Perloff, M. G.** (1972): A Ritual for being born twice: Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*. *Contemporary Literature* (pp. 507-522).
- Plath, S.** (1999). *The Bell Jar*. UK: CPI Group.
- Plath, S.** (n.d). *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* K. V. Kukil (Ed.). London, England: Random House. Date of access: 10. 03. 2016, address:
[http://www.e-reading.club/bookreader.php/1008498/Kukil -
The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath.html](http://www.e-reading.club/bookreader.php/1008498/Kukil_-_The_Unabridged_Journals_of_Sylvia_Plath.html)
- Plath, S.** (n.d.). Crossing the Water. In T. Hughes (Ed.), *The Collected Poems of Sylvia Plath*. Date of access: 23.05. 2016, address:
https://monoskop.org/images/2/27/Plath_Sylvia_The_Collected_Poems_1981.pdf
- Schrecker, E.** (1995). Before the Rosenbergs. Espionage Scenarios in the Early Cold War. In Marjorie Garber and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (Ed), *In Secret Agents: The Rosenberg case, McCarthyism, and Fifties America* (pp. 127-142).
- Showalter, E.** (1979). Towards a Feminist Poetics. *Women's Writing and Writing about Women* (pp. 22-42). London: Groom Helm.
- Showalter, E.** (1981). Feminist Criticism in Wilderness. *Critical Enquiry* (pp. 179-205).
- Showalter, E.** (1987). *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture*. Virago: London.
- Small, H.** (1996). Madness as a Theme in Women's Literature. *Approaching Literature: Literature and Gender* (pp.114-120). New York: Routledge.
- Sontag, S.** (1979). *Illness as Metaphor*. New York: Vintage.
- Sontag, S.** (1993). *Alice in Bed*. Canada: HarperCollinsCanada Ltd.
- Stiles, A.** (2013, July 20). The Rest Cure, 1873-1925. *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*. Ed. D. F Felluga. *Extension of Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*. Date of access: 12.02.2016, address:

http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=anne-stiles-the-rest-cure-1873-1925

- Swan, V.** (1999). Narrative, Foucault and Feminism: Implications for Therapeutic Practice. In I. Parker (Eds.), *Deconstructing Psychotherapy* (pp. 103-114). London: Sage Publication.
- Tompkins, J.** (n.d). *Me and My Shadow*. Date of access: 23.04. 2016, address: <http://wayanswardhani.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2013/04/Tompkins-1.pdf>
- Wagner-Martin, L.** (1992). *The Bell Jar, a Novel of the Fifties*. Twayne: Maxwell Macmilan Canad: New York: Toron.
- Wetzel, J. et.al.** (1993). *Women's Studies: Thinking Women*. Kendall Hunt: Iow
- Wollstonecraft, M.** *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Date of access: 15. 01. 2016, address: <http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/vindicat.pdf>
- Woolf, V.** (1929). *A Room of One's Own*. UK: Hogarth Press.
- Woolf, V.** (n.d.). *Profession for Women*. Date of access: 03. 03. 2016, address: <http://iws.collin.edu/grooms/wl2woolfpw.pdf>
- Yalom, M.** (1985). *Maternity, Mortality, and the Literature of Madness*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

RESUME

Name Surname: Sıla Selçuk Kurtuluş

Place and Date of Birth: Fethiye/Muğla/Turkey 08.10.1987

E-Mail: silaslck@gmail.com



EDUCATION :

Bachelor : 2010, Mersin University, Faculty of Science and Letters, English Linguistics

Master : 2016, Istanbul Aydın University, Social Sciences Institute, English Language and Literature

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University: English Instructor- 2011-2015

Kadir Has University: English Instructor - 2015-today