

KADIR HAS UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



FROM “BOXES” to “CAGES”:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS of FEMINIST THEMES  
in SEViM BURAK and URSULA K. LE GUIN

GRADUATE DISSERTATION

SULTAN KOMUT

December, 2016

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences  
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in  
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“I, Sultan Komut, confirm that the work presented in this dissertation is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the dissertation.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sultan Komut', written in a cursive style.

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## ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Philosophy in American Culture and Literature

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As a comparative literature study, this study aims to analyze the works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin in order to unearth the similar feminist themes they explore in their works indicating that two authors differ in exploring them; including some and not the others. In that matter, the study tries to analyze the exclusions as well as the inclusions.

While Sevim Burak explores in these feminist themes in common, usual worlds that resemble ours with unconventional writing style, Ursula K. Le Guin creates unusual worlds and characters with traditional writing style. While creating their works they both aim to destroy phallogocentric language in different ways, which makes them become the representatives of Feminist Writing. Sevim Burak, in particular, can be considered a representative of *Ecriture Feminine*. In the selected works of Burak and Le Guin three principal themes are analyzed by the help of context, character and discourse analyses; otherness, oppression and internalized submission. It is argued that women are looked at through a patriarchal ‘male’ gaze; considered to be the other both in mind and in space. Otherness in mind is explored as mental devaluation and otherness in space is explored as the tangible results of being considered as the other. Some characters who are ‘womanized’ through the ways of devaluing are also focused as a special parenthesis to otherness. Oppression on women, on the other hand, is analyzed under two categories; individual forms of oppression and collective forms of oppression. In the selected works, oppression resulting from family which focuses on parental pressure and marriage are analyzed as a form of individual oppression. Yet, oppression resulting from religion, patriarchal society and commodification of women are explored as the collective forms of oppression. It is also argued that those who are oppressed in one way or another have limited options; internalizing submission or questioning, further, fighting with the oppression. The ones who internalize submission become either dependent or image driven women. In their struggles with oppression, most women get lost in the tension between them and the forms of oppression, which most generally ends with the deaths of these characters.

**Key words:** Sevim Burak, Ursula K. Le Guin, feminist criticism, fiction, representations of women, forms of oppression, religion, family, marriage, commodification, otherness, internalized submission

## ÖZET

### “KUTU”LARDAN “KAFES”LERE: SEVİM BURAK ve URSULA K. LE GUIN’DE FEMİNİST TEMALARIN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ANALİZİ

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Karşılaştırmalı bir edebiyat çalışması olarak bu tez Sevim Burak ve Ursula K. Le Guin’in eserlerindeki feminist temalardaki benzerlikleri ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlar. İki yazarın bazı temaları eserlerine dâhil edip, bazılarını dışarıda bırakmak suretiyle temaları ele alış şekillerindeki farklılıkları işaret eder. Bu bakımdan tez, dahil etmenin yanı sıra, dışarıda bırakmayı da konu edinir.

Sevim Burak bu temaları yaşadığımızı benzeyen, sıradan dünyalarda alışagelmemiş bir yazı stiliyle dile getirirken, Ursula K. Le Guin geleneksel bir yazı stiliyle sıra dışı dünyalar ve karakterler yaratır. Eserlerini yaratma süreçlerinde her iki yazar da phallogosentrik dili yok etmeyi amaçlar, bu nedenle her iki yazar da feminist yazın geleneğinin temsilcileri olarak düşünülebilir. Özellikle Sevim Burak *Écriture Feminine* geleneğinin bir temsilcisidir. Burak ve Le Guin’in eserlerinde temel olarak incelenen; ötekilik, baskı ve içselleştirilmiş itaatkarlık temaları bağlam, karakter ve söylem analizleri yoluyla incelenmiştir. Kadınların patriyarkal, ‘eril’ bakış açısı ile değerlendirildiği; hem zihinde hem de mekanda ‘öteki’ olarak kabul edildiği ileri sürülmüştür. Bu bağlamda zihindeki ötekilik kadınların mental olarak değersizleştirilmesi olarak ifade edilirken, mekandaki ötekilik daha elle tutulur, somut sonuçlar olarak sunulmuştur. Ötekilik başlığında değersizleştirilme yoluyla ‘kadınlaştırılmış’ karakterlere de özel bir parantez açılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, kadınlar üzerindeki baskı iki ana başlıkta incelenmiştir: Bireysel baskı formları ve kolektif baskı formları. Eserlerde, anne baba baskısı ve evliliğin getirdiği baskı bireysel baskı formları olarak ele alınırken, kolektif baskı formları din, patriyarkal toplum ve metalaştırmaya odaklanır. Çeşitli yollarla baskılanan kadınların sınırlı seçenekleri olduğu ifade edilmiştir: İtaatkârlığı içselleştirmek ya da baskıyı sorgulamak hatta onunla mücadele etmek. İtaatkârlığı içselleştirenlerin zamanla ya bağımlı ya da imaj güdümlü karakterler oldukları ifade edilmiştir. Baskıya karşı mücadelelerinde çoğu kadın kendileri ile baskı şekilleri arasındaki gerilimde kaybolmuş ve çoğunlukla bu mücadele karakterlerin ölümleriyle sonuçlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sevim Burak, Ursula K. Le Guin, feminist eleştiri, kurgu, kadın temsilleri, baskı türleri, din, aile, evlilik, metalaştırma, ötekilik, içselleştirilmiş itiatkârlık

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 1. Difference Makes ‘No Difference’</b> .....	18
1.1. Insights&Sources.....	20
1.2. Syntax.....	24
1.3. Motifs, Symbols, Metaphors .....	25
1.4. Characterization.....	29
1.5. Settings .....	31
<b>Chapter 2. Otherness</b> .....	37
2.1. In Mind.....	39
2.2. In Space.....	61
2.3. Womanization.....	72
<b>Chapter 3. Oppression</b> .....	80
3.1. Individual Forms of Oppression.....	81
3.1.1. “Daughters in Boxes”.....	82
3.1.1. Women “in Cages”.....	91
3.2. Collective Forms of Oppression.....	104
3.2.1. Patriarchy.....	104
3.2.2. Religion .....	115
3.2.3. Commodification.....	121
<b>Chapter 4. Internalized Submission</b> .....	132
4.1. Dependent Women.....	134



4.2. Women “in the Table” .....	146
4.3. Death; Final Submission.....	157
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	170
<b>References</b> .....	183
<b>Appendixes</b> .....	191





## Introduction

*When I think of my relationship to feminism, for example, I can rewrite my coming into being as a feminist subject in terms of different emotions, or in terms of how my emotions have involved particular readings of the worlds I have inhabited. The anger, the anger that I felt about how being a girl seemed to be about what you shouldn't do; the pain, the pain that I felt as an effect of forms of violence; the love, the love for my mother and for all the women whose capacity for giving has given me life; the wonder, the wonder I felt at the way in which the world came to be organized the way that it is, a wonder that feels the ordinary as surprising; the joy, the joy I felt as I began to make different kinds of connections with others and realize that the world was alive and could take new shapes and forms; and the hope, the hope that guides every moment of refusal and that structures the desire for change with the trembling that comes from an opening up of the future, as an opening up of what is possible.*

**Sara Ahmed**

### I.

Throughout the history of the world, women are oppressed by patriarchal and sexist power, repressed by the formal and informal conventions of heteronormativity, stereotyped through gender roles and degraded and subjugated by the very language and literature they use. Since the split between “the mind” and “the body”, women are associated with the body and men with the mind. (Kolmar & Bartkowski 6) Consequently, they were and in some parts of the world still have been kept out from political and social life. Thomas Hobbes, for example, considered “the state as a male enterprise” (Kerber 16) excluding all women. Some women have consented to oppression but others have resisted it. The history of “man” is full of women who tried to break the rules of patriarchal society so as to acquire their deserved place. It was not just women who supported women rights, there were/ have been men who stand side by side with the women to destroy the status quo. For instance, John Locke, in contrast to Hobbes, accepted that “The first *Society* was

between Man and Wife which gave beginning to that Parents and Children.” and “*Conjugal Society* is made by voluntary Compact between Man and Woman.” (77-8) This shows that Locke considers woman as an important part of the society and does not state it as a “male enterprise.” However, while trying to support women and endorse their rights, as a result of the *phallogocentrism*, he could not fully achieve what he argues. The word “voluntary” for example claims that women consent to their situation in a conjugal society. When Montesquieu argues that “in republics women are free by the laws and constrained by manners”, shouldn’t we ask the question who it is that constrains women’s manners? Moreover, he accepts that men have authority over women and it is “tyrannical”; and yet, he asserts that “they have allowed us to impose it only because they are more gentle than we are, and consequently more humane and reasonable.”, which openly indicates that the tyranny over women is accepted by women and also are the results of the gender roles dictated to women by patriarchal society.

Every period in history manifests itself in literature in the forms of poetry, short story, drama or novel along with other genres. Experiences, emotions, movements, revolutions, civil wars, world wars, plagues, earthquakes along with festivals, Christmas, holy days, as a matter of fact, everything that is experienced, dreamed of, afraid of can be the subject matter of literature. As Walker maintains an infinite number of presences, or traces are present in a given text. (569) Women’s oppression, similarly, has long been the subject matter of literature.

This study is a means to compare two female and feminist writers Ursula K. Le Guin in American Literature and Sevim Burak in Turkish Literature through their

works in order to explore themes they held in common. It puts forward the claim that despite the linguistic differences their works present and two authors having lived in different societies with contrasting religions, traditions and conventions, they both produced works of arts which are the examples of feminist writing. It also indicates where/why/ how their works differ from each other as a result of these contrasting elements. The purpose of the study, thus, is to indicate that despite the very fact that these two women had/have had very different backgrounds, lifestyles and societies around them, they had/have had something in common; they formulate patriarchy in the same way and focus on transnational themes which can be seen in many societies. The following questions are the main focus of the work: How are women stereotyped in the selected works? Are the authors guardians of this stereotyping or not? In what ways are the women oppressed? What are the characters' solutions to these oppressions? Do they fight with the oppressor or do they accept their destiny? Can we talk about internalized submission and if so, how do women internalize submission?

Both authors wrote in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when feminism gained significance worldwide and they are affected by feminist movements. Despite the differences Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin portray, they both formulate patriarchy in the same way and deal with the themes of otherness, oppression and internalized submission.

## **II.**

As one of the most significant social movements in history, feminism has been defined by many scholars, thinkers and activists. As Jane Freedman attempts to

present a definition, she writes “feminisms concern themselves with women’s inferior position in society and with discrimination encountered by women because of their sex.” (1) As a starting point, feminism can be defined as a movement for the emancipation of women which aims to bring to a halt to the forms of the sexist and patriarchal power. In her book *Feminist Theory, From Margin to Center* bell hooks asserts that; “Feminism is the struggle to end sexist oppression. Its aim is not to benefit solely any specific group of women, any particular race or class of women. It does not privilege women over men. It has the power to transform in a meaningful way all our lives.” (28) Nawal el Saadawi states that “To me, real feminism means being revolutionary. To be revolutionary means that one examines the problems of women from all aspects: historically, sociologically, economically and psychologically...” (3). For this project, Nawal el Saadawi’s definition of feminism is used seeing as this is thematic comparison project which includes women issues from all aspects. In the works of Burak and Le Guin, women’s sociological status, economical dependence on men and the psychological problems of women resulting from these factors can be seen vividly.

Western feminism has widely been categorized into three waves. In *first wave feminism*, the advocates of feminism tried to show the obvious, the inequality between men and women; thus, they fought against the injustices about ownership, heritage, education, the right to vote, legal protection over their bodies, discrimination in workplace and such issues. (Buchanan 167) After quite a long first wave in the 1950s and 1960s a new group of feminists took the stage who are called as *the second wave feminists* among which we can refer to Betty Friedan from the United States, Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Monique Wittig from France and many more. The very influential book by Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

(1949), is generally accepted to be the spark that started the second wave of feminism. In the U.S, on the other hand, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) was very significant at the beginning of the second wave. As Nicki-Anne Moody puts it; "When second-wave feminism laid the social, economic, and political groundwork to make other choices available (albeit only to the white middle classes), many educated white middle-class women either chose to leave the domestic sphere or supported the right of others to do so." (182)

In a different vein, French Feminists wrote about the importance of the language and the writing itself. These feminists also turn their attentions to the topics of sexuality, gender, family, domestic violence, rape, reproductive rights and women's control over their bodies. Even though, one cannot draw lines perfectly between these periods, it is generally assumed that *third wave of feminism* started in the 90s and it continues today. The subject matters of concern to second and third wave feminism are similar, however how they deal with issues in different way. Third wave feminists try to erase the boundaries that different identities draw, rather they aim to create diversity in terms of identities such as race, color, gender, religion or ethnicities; thus, they formulate an understanding which emphasizes individual rather than the group identity. They aim to destroy the idea that there is a universal woman identity, instead they favor an individualistic feminist wave. The most important figures of the movement are Jennifer Baumgardner, Amy Richards and Rebecca Walker among others.

The theoretical discourse of feminism is feminist theory that is defined as "a body of writing that attempts to describe, explain, and analyze the conditions of women's life."(Kolmar & Bartkowski 2) It is a very diverse field, the origins of

which cannot be traced to a single author. It can be regarded as the combination of most disciplines, focusing on social sciences. Ian Buchanan determines four main concerns of feminist theory;

i) elucidate the origins and causes of gender inequality; ii) explain the operation and persistence of this state of affairs; iii) delineate effective strategies to either bring about full equality between the sexes or at least ameliorate the effects of ongoing inequality; and iv) imagine a world in which sexual inequality no longer exist. (165)

When we specifically consider feminist literary criticism, in which literature is read through various and multiple feminist theories, we come across different approaches to interpret the works of literature such as socio-historical, Marxist, psychoanalytic approaches all of which can also be understood by the very names they carry or Anglo-American Feminist criticism and French Feminist Criticism. Mary Eagleton points out that Anglo American feminist criticism specifies in women characters in male writer's works, women's writing and culture. (9) French Feminism, on the other hand, examines literature, the language used, in particular, in terms of sexual difference. This approach emphasizes the importance of women's writing as a reflection of sexual differences. ('Feminist Literary Criticism' Romić)

### **III.**

The linguistic differences of the works by Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak are of great significance seeing as two authors reach the same result despite their differences in language apart from their personal differences. As a result, some linguistic analyses are performed and employed throughout the work. Feminine writing is discussed to show that although Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin differ substantially in the languages they use; their writings can both be considered as Feminist Writing. Especially, Burak's writing style might be categorized and



interpreted under the title of *Écriture Feminine*. Ann Rosalind Jones defines *Écriture feminine*; "to the extent that the female body is seen as a direct source of female writing, a powerful alternative discourse seems possible: to write from the body is to recreate the world." (366) *Écriture feminine* can also be defined as "writing located in and authorized by fundamental female experience" (Allen-Randolph 48). Helene Cixous's "The Laugh of Medusa" can be considered as a main text for Feminine writing and feminist theory. It is like a set of doctrines for women. The main concern is women's body as a metaphor for women writing. Cixous suggests that women were stuck into their bodies because of men's power. She indicates if they accept this situation, they will never realize their power and remain trapped in their bodies. On the other hand, if they see their own beauties and are aware of their strength, they will be able to express their opinions freely. Throughout "The Laugh of Medusa" Cixous has two aims: to tear down the phallogocentric system and advocate a new system, in which women write with the "white ink". Throughout the work, "white ink" is used as a metaphor for women's writing about their bodies, their sexualities, namely, their own experiences. Cixous asserts that writing is the dark continent for women and claims "the 'Dark Continent' is neither dark nor unexplorable: It is still unexplored only because we have been made to believe that it was too dark to be explored" (884-5) She also states, writing is believed to be the work of man, an idea that comes as a result of man's *superior position* in most societies. In "Coming to Writing" Cixous asserts that "Writing: a way of leaving no space for death, a pushing back forgetfulness, of never letting oneself be surprised by the abyss." (3) and "writing is God", but unfortunately "it is not your God." (11).

In "The Laugh of Medusa" Cixous mentions about the beginning of a new period, in which women will write about them and build "feminine writing". She

states; "The new history is coming; it is not a dream, though it does extend beyond men's imagination...it's going to deprive them of their conceptual orthopedics, beginning with the destruction of their enticement machine." (Cixous, *Medusa* 883) Consequently, men will not be able to repress women in their writings or in reality, which will cause them to lose power. If women desire this end they should write themselves. Sellers argues that "For French feminists like Irigaray, women will only begin to speak *as women* by refusing the current order altogether, since to adopt this order, which exists to express *men's* perceptions, modes of organization, needs and desires is necessarily to speak *as a man*" (cited in Pekşen 2005, Sellers,1991:96)

Jones, who has a critical eye on the *Écriture Feminine*; its being considered as "an address the forces in the body, in the unconsciousness, in the basic structures that are invisible to empirical eye" (247) admits that; "Symbolic discourse (language in various contexts) is another means through which man objectifies the world, reduces to its terms, speaks in the place of everything and everyone else- including women." (248). As a matter of fact, Burak and Le Guin's writing exactly as a response to man's objectification and reduction of the world and speaking in place of women. By creating their own literature, Burak and Le Guin speak for themselves. Their works not just focus on the body, female sexuality or unconsciousness. Rather, they use *Écriture Feminine* "as a political strategy to further a variety of feminist goals" in a way Ghaussy addresses. (458) Sevim Burak also uses everything related to her own life in her writings; her background, her experiences, her neighborhood and her body, as well. She also builds a feminine writing by breaking the rules of language. Ursula K. Le Guin -even if not in the same way- similarly, develops a feminine writing by breaking the rules of patriarchal society in her works.

Due to the style that Sevim Burak uses in writing her stories, Derrida is also helpful. Derrida uses the term of *Différance*, a word actually derived from the French verb *Différer*, meaning both “to differ” and “to defer”, yet “he explicitly rules out calling it a concept-for the condition of possibility for meaning.” (Buchanan 132) For Derrida, there is no fixed meaning; it always flows in time with possible readers and as a result, traces and grafts are indecipherable for him. Derrida believes the presence of absence or vice versa. At an interview with Julia Kristeva he explains this;

Nothing, neither among the elements nor within the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces. The gram, then, is the most general concept of semiology- which thus becomes grammatology- and it covers not only the field of writing in the restricted sense, but also the field of linguistics.....Nothing - no present and in- different being- thus precedes *difference* and spacing. There is no subject who is agent, author and master of *différance*, who eventually and empirically would be overtaken by *différance*. (1972)

(Derrida, 2004, 24/5)

As a result, it is, in a way, impossible to find the meaning because of the difference of traces and traces of traces, for there is nothing as absent or present. Everything is the text and it has already begun. Derrida does not aim to wipe out meaning but to investigate how meaning is produced and also to show that there are always more meanings. This “dissemination” of the text should not be confused with polysemy which generates meaning within the text but dissemination is something without borders, importing, exporting, including, deferring and more. In *Of Grammatology* Derrida also argues “The truth of writing, that is, (the) nontruth cannot be discovered in ourselves by ourselves.”(1838) Sevim Burak’s fiction, in particular, can be examined through Derrida’s *Différance* theory. Different critics interpret her works in various ways. Her writings can be reread several times and each reading might

reproduce a new meaning. She dismantles the text and creates a possibility of new interpretation and readers' engagement into the text. (Demirtaş 88)

#### IV.

Lennox states that “The investigation of gender relations remains a central concern of feminist scholarship”. (91) Representations of women in patriarchal societies are structured in the assumed gender roles and traits of women. In this paper, representations of women and gender issues are of great significance particularly in the works of Le Guin. Although sex and gender have been defined differently by theorists and authors the general idea is that while sex is related with physical being, gender is socially constructed. This is the old logic which has been questioned. Judith Butler, for example, argues that these definitions show that gender is actually ‘sexed’, adding that “If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way”(10) and “As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or “a natural sex” is produced and established as “prediscursive,” prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.”(11) Thus, Butler tries to deconstruct the binary logic of Sex/Gender. What Butler claims is that in trying to constitute “we”, feminists form a discourse of otherness and accept the superiority of males in the binary logic. According to Butler, gender is an act and “the action of gender requires a performance that is repeated” (178). Consequently, it might be argued that one does not always have the same gender performance and for Butler gender performance is subject to change: not the subject/ the doer is important, but the object. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, in particular, Le Guin tries to create a genderless world, in which she, just like Butler

does years later, tries to dismantle the binary logic of sex/gender. Creating a genderless world, Le Guin resists the cultural norms, and gender which are socially constructed. Instead, she tries to create gender performances which are subject to change according to the object who implements the action. Burak's women characters might also be considered as free form gender prototypes. Readers almost never come across with a protagonist who can be defined by the socially constructed gender roles. Rather, her characters are in a struggle with the traditional women roles.

Despite many advances women were and still are considered *the other*. They have been defined by not's; not a man, not a husband, not a son, not strong, not logical. Simone de Beauvoir, in her famous book *The Second Sex* (1949) focuses on the historic role assigned women where they are stereotyped and considered as the interior, the weak, the passive, the object; *the other*. Man becomes the subject, the intellect and woman is defined as basically one who is not a man, so whereas man is the one, woman becomes the other. In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir criticizes both men and women arguing that while men are the actual reasons of this sense of superiority, most women accept what is assigned for them. In her introduction she notes that "...not every female human being is necessarily a woman; she must take part in this mysterious and endangered reality known as femininity." (Beauvoir 3) She also rejects the biological determinism and believes that "One is not born, but rather becomes woman." (Beauvoir 283). She means that women are raised and trapped into historical domestic roles constructed by the patriarchal society and learn to be a woman; thus, womanhood is not a quality that we are born with, but the society makes us a woman. She does not just mean the people around the woman, but she mentions how she is raised with the idea that man is the one. She writes everything

around a little girl acclaims men and shows the hierarchy to her. She adds that “Her historical and literary culture, the songs and legends she is raised on, are an exaltation of the man.” (Beauvoir 302). As a consequence, a little girl learns to be a woman. Women portrayed as the other can be seen in the works of both Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin.

Throughout the study, representations of women play an important role in that both Le Guin and Burak present that women are stereotyped and considered as the other in the patriarchal societies by being labeled as evil, deadly, hysterical and even monster. In *The Madwoman in the Attic; The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Imagination* (1979) Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar claim that women writers of nineteenth century have a very different relationship with their text when compared the male- writers because of what they call “anxiety of authorship”. They note that the reason why 20<sup>th</sup> century women writers “attempt the pen with energy and authority” is “because their eighteenth and nineteenth century foremothers struggled in isolation that felt like illness, alienation, that felt like madness, obscurity that felt like paralysis to overcome the anxiety of authorship that was endemic to their literary subculture.” (Gilbert and Gubar 1931) The second theory of them is that the fiction of 19<sup>th</sup> century included women characters who can be classified under two groups; angels and monsters. The former carry the characteristics of virtue, elegance, purity, and so on, the latter carrying of the opposite characteristics. They, on the other hand, argue that both ways are flawed because in this way “...the woman writer feels herself to be literally or figuratively crippled by the debilitating alternatives her culture offers her”. (Gilbert and Gubar 1936) In the works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin, we see the examples of evil, deadly and monstrous characters created deliberately in order to show how

women are portrayed by phallogocentric language and criticize that kind of portrayal. By adding their own experiences, real women experiences and their own envisions, Burak and Le Guin create their own language which criticize the male-discourse and writing. Instead of using the same phallogocentric language, they create their own languages which present the problems by making them visible and offer a new form of writing.

Following Gilbert and Gubar, Berna Moran classifies women characters in Turkish literature into two groups; *victims* and *deadly women*. Victims, like Gilbert and Gubar's angels are the ones who are innocent, honored, soft- mannered, submissive and who try to please their "men", on the other hand, deadly women represent independent women who do not accept men's authority in a patriarchal society. That is why, Moran asserts, they are portrayed to the reader as evil; not angel. (253) Most of Sevim Burak's characters can be regarded as the second group who cannot cope with the societal norms which repress, oppress and restricts them.

A significant criticism about some women who like to be valued because of their appearance and beauty, and their eagerness to demonstrate them as such is vital while interpreting the works of Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin. Principally; women's internalized submission is detailed by their concern about their bodies, clothes and need to be loved. Wollstonecraft, yet, asserts that it is not women's fault; it is what they are taught. She notes that; "Women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that a little knowledge of human weakness, justly termed cunning, softness of temper, *outward* obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and should they be beautiful, everything else is needless, for at least twenty years of their lives."

(Wollstonecraft 496) For this reason, she is most concerned with the education of women so that they are aware of their secondary position and could achieve a different position in society.

Luce Irigaray is also very significant in the study because of her Marxist feminist interpretation of the world. Following Marx and his theory on commodities she asserts that women are just like the commodities in the capitalism patriarchal society and they are exchanged between men. She writes; “The production of women, signs, and commodities is always referred back to men (when a man buys a girl, he “pays” the father or the brother, not the mother ... ), and they always pass from one man to another, from one group of men to another.” (Irigaray 171). As she also states, women become the products, the objects, the commodities that men would like to have them altogether. Irigaray, thus, claims that the Exchange of women among men is what establishes a patriarchal society (187). This is how I interpret the society in *The Wild Girls* by Ursula K. Le Guin; as a result, this theory of Irigaray helps us to clarify the relations between women and men in the specific society.

Body, beauty and image are also some themes that are used by Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin both trying to dismantle the idea that women must fit the norms of the society and be desirable and recognized. Monique Wittig puts it. “They must wear their yellow star, their constant smile, day and night.” (7) As a body theorist, Susan Bordo believes that bodies are not fixed; rather, they are constructed according to what is “desirable” in the culture. Thus, they are not fixed but “plastic” and they “may operate as a metaphor for culture” (Bordo 2240) Influenced by the works of Michel Foucault, she argues that feminists should give up thinking of



power as something that is possessed by some people, rather we should assume it as a group of “practices, institutions, and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination in a particular domain.” In her work, she focuses on anorexia, hysteria and agoraphobia, arguing that the bodies of disordered women become a text for femininity which “insists, actually demands that it be read as a cultural statement, a statement about gender” (Bordo 2243). In this way, she claims that the body with its disorder might be “liberating, transforming and life-giving” instead of “constraining, enslaving and murderous” (Bordo 2242). In this work, on the other hand, following the Anglo-American view, image and beauty are considered as tools to degrade women, thus, a means for oppression. As Patricia S. Mann asserts “Women have the capacity to be self-conscious social actors now rather than traditional passive objects of the patriarchal gaze.” (434)

## V.

In the following part of this introduction, the structure of the dissertation is fully outlined and arguments of chapters are briefly mentioned.

Chapter 1 points out that although how different Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin are in terms of language they use, they explore on very similar themes. In this part, linguistic differences and components of fiction such as insights-sources, syntax, motifs, symbols and metaphors, and settings of the works of Burak and Le Guin will be discussed. The chapter shows that although Sevim Burak uses unconventional writing style, Ursula Le Guin creates very unusual worlds and characters with rather conventional writing style compared to Burak’s, yet they both are the examples of Feminist Writing. Burak, in particular, shows the characteristics of *Écriture Feminine* in her stories.

Chapter 2, 3 and 4 consist of thematic analysis of Le Guin and Burak's selected works. It must be admitted that both authors, in particular Le Guin have many more works than can be discussed in this study. Given the limitations of a singular study, I have chosen works that best reflect the feminist concerns of each author. Specifically, Sevim Burak's early stories which were published in journals, later compiled under the title *The Big Sin* and stories in *Burnt Palaces* and Ursula K. Le Guin's novella; *The Wild Girls*, and novels; *The Dispossessed*, *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *Tehanu* are analyzed. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 focus on the themes that are specifically chosen by the authors along with the characters by means of whom these themes are processed. Although a complete list of the themes of these works of fiction would be much longer than this one, in accordance with the purpose of this study, it was necessary to limit the themes under one class; themes related to women. More dominant and common themes in these works are determined and they are classified in three chapters which deal with otherness, oppression and internalized submission. Throughout the whole part, by means of a content, character and discourse analyses, all these themes are carefully studied and exemplified using both authors' works and their interviews; furthermore, criticism about the works are included so as to point out the importance of the given themes. Seeing that themes are constructed through the main characters' life, thoughts, utterances and experiences, the main characters of the studied texts are also focused on while studying the themes.

The study finishes with the conclusion part in which the similarities and differences of the works by Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak are explored;

paying special attention to how the similar and different themes are constructed and detailed by the authors trying to focus on how feminist writing is used and presented by the two authors.



## **Chapter 1**

### **Difference Makes “No Difference”**

Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin both experienced their very prolific years in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They focus on the same themes even though they have huge differences in their writing style. The very first difference is indeed the language they work with: Sevim Burak wrote in Turkish while Ursula K. Le Guin writes in English. While they both wrote fiction, Ursula K. Le Guin wrote science fiction which cannot be compared to Sevim Burak’s short story style. This is of great importance in the sense that even though the worlds they create vary and their styles are very much different from each other, they could create themes very similar to each other. Sevim Burak is a writer who claims that her characters reflect herself in many ways; however, for Ursula K. Le Guin and her characters, the situation is different. The authors also differ greatly in the language components and writing styles. Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin’s writings do not resemble in that Ursula K. Le Guin uses traditional language forms in a not very common genre; science fiction with unusual characters, Sevim Burak, on the other hand, creates a language which is unusual, complex, broken with rhythmic structures, repetitions, words and sentences with deferred meanings putting herself into her texts, thus, an example of ‘feminine writing’.

Notwithstanding the fact that language components that are discussed here such as presentation of the themes, insights and sources, syntax, motifs, symbols ,

characterization, setting among others are typical of all Western logocentric writing, both authors try to destroy the conventional components and create their own unique forms. It is therefore very vital to see how Burak and Le Guin use or try to destroy these components in their works in that even though they differ very much in how they deal with language components, the themes that are present in their works are very similar to each other. This proves that no matter what medium(s) Burak and Le Guin use, they both reach the same conclusions; that representation of women as the other either in mind or space, that oppressions imposed on women are nearly the same in most societies in the world just as in the worlds the authors create and that oppressed women internalize submission in time.

Burak and Le Guin are the representatives of feminist writing seeing as they try to destroy phallogocentric writing style and discourse which is based on “a systematic repression of women’s experience.” (Jones 247) Representatives of feminine writing invent new writing forms, kinds, languages, punctuations, characters and meanings as a challenge to this male centered thinking and language. In her article about *Écriture Feminine*, Ann Rosalind Jones mentions about Irigaray’s erudition and plays with speaking voice, Cixous’s punctuations and citations from other languages and Wittig’s revision of traditional genres. Jones states that “They (Cixous, Irigaray and Wittig) are doing so deliberately, on a level of feminist theory and literary self consciousness that goes far beyond the body and the unconscious.” (260) Thus, what Burak and Le Guin achieve in their works also go beyond the unconscious; they challenge to traditional thinking with their works. Their feminine writing does not only include Cixous’s argument how women should write. They improve and personalize feminine writing with their own languages (English and Turkish), genres they use and themes they choose to deal with. Thus they, invent a

new form. "But not 'of' woman, 'about' woman, in the way that man's language speaks 'of' woman. Any woman who wants to use a language that is specifically her own, cannot avoid this extraordinary, urgent task: we must invent woman" (Leclerc 74)

### **1.1. Insights- Sources**

In a literary work, insight and sources of a specific author are the motivational forces behind the themes, plots and characters. Burak and Le Guin's plots are very different from each other. However, when examined in detail, it is clear that they are both fed by the very similar motivations. Consequently, they share a number of similar themes about women issues.

Burak's first published short story book is *Burnt Palaces* (Yanık Saraylar) which was published in 1965. Her amateur stories, on the other hand, were written and published in the 1950s. The time lapse between the first groups and the ones in *Burnt Palaces* is more than a decade and these years changed the author's writing style seriously. Even though her early stories include complex characters as well, *Burnt Palaces* is different in the language and its components. A number of critics argue that it is very challenging to understand her later stories and some claim that in order to understand Sevim Burak's stories one must look into her own life, her background, Jewish lifestyle along with her personality. (Hızlan 256; İleri 176) Doğan Hızlan, for instance, notes that Sevim Burak was an author who wrote what she lived, what she saw so her work resembles her life. (cited in Koçakoğlu 256) He adds that: "... these texts are not directly the products of her literary fiction, they are Sevim Burak's memories, her life, all that Jewish world, Kuzguncuk and the

Bosporus world. Thus, to understand Sevim Burak, you must understand all that Levantine lives.” (cited in Koçakoğlu 157) Burak also states that she writes her stories by digging through her own existence. (İzmirli 58) For example, “O God Jehova”, as a semi-autobiographical work, was dedicated to her mother who was Jewish. Although Burak does not use her mother’s tongue; Hebrew, in her works, she still evokes it using a language full of words that reminds of The Torah. Critics such as Bedia Koçakoğlu and Nilüfer Erdem Güngörmüş claim that in the book *Burnt Palaces* especially in “O God Jehova”, Burak imitates the language of The Torah. It is true that Burak uses a lyrical language just as all holy books and the choice of words, images and especially names such as Nivart, Hayko, Aşer, Levi, Nahum, Rebeka, Esther are reminders of The Torah. Güngörmüş asserts that:

They invade everywhere. They are so real with their names and titles that it is no longer possible to ignore them, to hide them, to deny the daughter’s ancient and say otherwise. The writer discloses her mother’s tacit identity and hidden language clamorously. She is born into literature as her own unique language with the history and language inherited from her mother. (103)

Burak mentions several times in her letters and her interviews that her own life is the main source of her stories. (Letters from Mach I) For instance, in an interview with Asim Bezirci she says: “I am explaining myself in my stories, by pretending to be other people, by igniting all my yearnings, by trying to understand what I am, what I am going to become, by rushing up all my doubts, my fears as if I am running towards a fire.” (*Interview 8*) It is clear that Burak chooses to write on her own experiences, her struggles with “white ink” as suggested by Helene Cixous. Being a metaphor about women’s writing their own bodies, experiences and sexual

awareness, Cixous actually aims to destroy the sign systems which repress women.  
(Juncker 424)

On the other hand, Ursula K. Le Guin has been a much more prolific writer than Sevim Burak. Her sources and insights are much more complicated when considered all her works. However, the ones that are analyzed for the purpose of this study are the ones which include worlds that are more different than the one we have. The world she creates in her fiction is magical in that she is very good at representing the comparison of contrasting worlds. In *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed*, she, makes the comparison between her contrasting worlds. Le Guin mentions in her article “Is Gender Necessary? Redux.” that writing this “feminist” book – meaning *The Left Hand of Darkness*- was an experiment for her. She asserts “The experience is performed, the question is asked, in the mind. Einstein’s elevator, Schrödinger’s cat, my Gethenians, are a simply way of thinking. They are questions, not answers; a process, not a statis.” (159) Le Guin clearly states that creating the Gethenians, she was trying to do an experiment which could show us the possibility of a world without genders. Those were the years when gender was questioned and theorized and Le Guin was doing the same experiment with her imagination. She believes one of the important functions of science fiction is “this kind of question-asking; reversals of a habitual way of thinking.” (159). This is exactly what Le Guin aims to accomplish in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, she presents us a world which destroys all the assumed, usual way of thinking, way of life. One of the goals of feminine writing is “to deconstruct the patriarchy always of conceiving the world, women have to get rid of binary oppositions in language.” (Pekşen 9) Because male/female difference is the most basic binary, the new language must be bisexual and “open to both sexes”. (Pekşen 9) In terms of what Le Guin tries to achieve in



this specific work, it is an important example of feminine writing. While reading the work, as readers, we think about the possibility of a world similar to the one she created. Even though we know that it is science fiction and that world is not possible in reality, we find ourselves uttering sentences starting with “what if?” We desire a world where females and males are equal and not judged by their sexes and there is no gender roles, no sexism, no need to feminism.

In fact, Ursula K. Le Guin has been harshly criticized for not being able to create a genderless society in *The Left Hand of Darkness* despite her attempts. The critics such as Samuel R. Delony claim that she has finally reached a patriarchal society in her attempt to create a genderless society. (1977). Le Guin couldn't help but partly agreed with them. In her 1987 article “Is Gender Necessary? Redux.” She uses the word “failure” for her choice of pronouns and making the Gethenians seem men not “menwomen”. She acknowledges that the problem mostly arises because of her using the pronoun “he” for the Gethenians instead of referring to them “he/she”. In her first article she writes it wouldn't have mattered if she could have been “cleverer” at showing the female parts of Gethenians. However, when she rewrote the article, Redux, she admits that “If I had realized how the pronouns I used shaped, directed, controlled my own thinking, I might have been ‘cleverer’”(Le Guin170). This admission by Le Guin helps us to focus on the sexism in language and how it affects of thinking in general.

One important difference between the authors about presentation of the sources or insights is that unlike Sevim Burak, Le Guin offers analysis and criticism while dealing with feminist themes. They are not hidden in the depth of the stories as in Burak's stories. In her article ‘Revisioning Gender: Inventing Women in Ursula K. Le Guin's Nonfiction’ Lisa Hammond Rashley writes that “One of the most

constant themes in Le Guin's long and respected career has been her ongoing effort to reconceptualize gender, and in that process of redefinition, she has never been afraid to consider and reconsider her positions." (37) Writing science fiction is a chance which gives possibility to explore women issues easily because realism is "grounded in the actual, patriarchal world, only SF, with its embrace of fantasizing and the impossible, can fully sustain a feminist vision of the future." (Roberts 137)

Despite these differences in the two writers, this study shows that they reach same result; to write about what is not written in a phallogocentric literature, to destroy the male-centered discourse on women, to create a literature of their own style. Thus, they "call for a new representations of women's consciousness." (Jones 261)

## **1.2.Syntax**

Sevim Burak has a language including a lot of short sentences, pauses, re-starts. Her fiction includes rhythmic sentences and many repetitions. She uses cut-up techniques in order to create her work. She is said to cut her work into pieces and hang them on her room walls and combine them again in a long time. That's why her writing can be understood differently in each reading. Selim İleri asserts that "...*Burnt Palaces* dragged me in some worlds, some writing situation which are very different from the ones that I knew of with its language and expression, the form of sentences, with capitals, bolds, italics." (175) Her language is challenging and ready to threaten the traditional forms of writing. (see Appendix 1.) Her difference use of syntax is a way to destroy phallogocentric writing style and inventing new writing forms which are not generally used by male authors. Murathan Mungan mentions about Burak's depictions very highly. He asserts that by depicting he

means “something which is unique to literature which can only be achieved by a literature person, picturing-painting with words just like a painter.” (143) As a matter of fact, Burak’s later stories in particular stories in *Ruşen the Clown* and her novel *Ford Mach One* are the very interesting examples of prose writing, including figures, symbols, words in very different fonts along with others. (see Appendix 2)

Unlike Sevim Burak, Le Guin uses traditional prose forms in her writing. Her fiction includes nontraditional themes, yet the prose style is not broken as in Burak’s writing. As a form of expression, she uses notebooks, dialogues or narration, which include motifs, symbols, flashbacks in a traditional prose style, which makes the traditional become *untraditional*. She tries to “save the language and grammar under the pillory of male power as if she wants to show the possibility of another language.” (Koçak 57) She uses punctuation regularly and does not use repetition as a literary art. Her aim is not to break the language, but to break the rules and norms. In this way, she also created a unique feminist writing: creates her own language that explores what, as a woman, she thinks is important. (see Appendix 3.)

Although Burak and Le Guin uses very different syntaxes in their works, which make their writings look very different from each other, they are both the representatives of a feminine writing. It is important that they do not just focus on women’s body or sexuality, but they reinvent the traditional writing forms and create anti-phallogocentric texts.

### **1.3. Motifs- Symbols- Metaphors**

Motifs are basically some objects, ideas, sounds, images or actions used in a literary work to reinforce main themes. By using them, an author makes the theme of

the literary work more apprehensible and clear. Through the repetitions of the same motifs, symbols or metaphors, readers are able to indicate, interpret the themes. Symbols, similarly, can be places, names or even ideas which are also used to reinforce the text's meaning. Those may have different meanings which can change in time for a particular reader or for different readers. In her early stories, Sevim Burak uses symbolic names according to the characters' personalities or she does not name them at all. The thief, for example, has no name; the author by not naming the character, gives a message, too. Similarly, she does not name either the muezzin or the woman in her story "The Big Sin". Not naming characters is very important seeing as Sevim Burak, in her later works, likes to emphasize nothingness, which is a motif in most of her stories. This style of not naming a character indicates that of being nobody/anybody or nothingness. Through these nobodies/anybodies Burak succeeds in explaining everybody and examining the characters efficaciously. That specific nobody/anybody becomes the main character and through that nobody/anybody, the story evolves, expands and sometimes ends, in other times it never ends but the reader is supposed to find his/her way through the end. This is the power of Burak's writing. Furthermore, by not naming the characters, Burak shows a resistance to phallogocentric writing style, in which naming the characters is a basic. Sevim Burak's texts are the ones, the meaning of which may change in a very different way if read again at a different time or with a different mood. As a consequence, her writings may be interpreted by using Derrida's 'deference' theory. As mentioned in the introduction, the term of *Différance* derives from the French verb *Différer* and means both "to differ" and "to defer". In Burak's stories the meaning is slippery and it differs from one reading to another let alone from one reader to another. Ahmet Erdem writes that "The story which the stranger writes in

the given language continues with breaks and from these very breaks arise other hidden truths.”(115) The meaning is open to readers who manages to see those breaks in her stories. As Erdem continues; “The pain of being the other, not existing, being left as cripple, mute and expressionless firstly becomes apparent as a shadow; then the rips widen more and become apparent in silences just like words.” (115). The reader finds *a different* meaning in each act of reading and the meaning is always *deferred*. That is one of the reasons why Burak’s writing is considered complex. Burak also mentions about the meaning’s being slippery in her writings, adding that even while she is writing the meaning is not certain. At an interview she mentions that

I am not a kind of author who can write and reveal the truth writing once; based on my writing experience I can say that the truth that i got at the end of twenty times of writing was a common one. I found out that when a write something for a hundred times; I see that the truth is not that one, by changing it becomes something different and another truth.

(Burak , *BBC Interview* 101)

While writing she finds out different truths and she even finds herself; in a way, writing changes her. She writes that “In the process of writing, time changes, I change- with the objects around.” (Burak, *Hikaye* 301). Selim İleri, in the preface of *Letters from Mach One* (Mach One’dan Mektuplar) which includes Sevim Burak’s personal letters mostly addressed to her son, admits that: “Can I claim that I read Yanık Saraylar? It was a book of mysteries. (...) In fact, I have never solved it; the parts that I knew by heart, characters who appear and disappear, flying words...”(17) Her short story “The Window” is a significant example of the fact that her writing bears images, symbols and plays that make the meaning slippery and changeable from one reader to another. “The Window” is interpreted and analyzed by many critics and their readings differ greatly. (Koçakoğlu 2009; Bezirci 1965; Özkök 2014)

In the story, the female protagonist always looks out of windows and terraces and observes a woman in the next building. Asım Bezirci believes she is an unhappy woman, waiting for husband who is an alcoholic (252). Bedia Koçakoğlu, on the other hand, argues that the woman might be waiting for her father (178). Finally, Seher Özkök claims that he is just a man who “calls her to public space, to society.” which results to her death (58). As a result, Burak’s writing has multi-facets which might be read and interpreted differently by some critics. She does not use direct language, her language is full of motifs, symbols and metaphors in order to makes her writing which makes her writing seem more intricate, yet easily be deciphered when a reader looks into it with the correct tools and her feminist themes in mind.

Just like Sevim Burak, Le Guin has a unique characteristic in her works. Specifically, she is a master of metaphor. She makes use of her observations; hence, her writing is vivid and alive. She once said ““Authors are writing artists, I think people restrict the term ‘artist’ to mean painters and sculptors, but you can practice art in whatever medium you choose. Words are my medium.”(Le Guin, *Salon*) In her writings she explores social structures, social identity, gender, sexuality and also race. In her fantasies she explores “the use of power as art and its misuse as domination” and in her realistic fiction “people on the Yin side of capitalism- housewives, children, waitresses, librarians, owners of dismal little motels.” (Le Guin 28) Her literary oeuvre is mostly circle or spiral; she revisits the same themes and worlds as needed. Yet, “the overall shape of her career has been more organic, tree-like, perhaps, with a trunk firmly rooted in Taoism and Secular Humanism, growing through contemporary intellectual discussion to embrace anti-war activism, civil liberties, feminism, and all human rights.” (Lindow 485) In the selected works

of Le Guin, we see what Lindow suggests clearly. Le Guin uses almost the same themes in *The Dispossessed*, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, *The Wild Girls* and *Tehanu*. She uses feminist themes with different motifs, metaphors and symbols, which is similar to Sevim Burak's writing.

#### **1.4. Characterization**

Feminist writers, while choosing and writing their characters, have different psychologies and even though some feel confident in creating men characters, some others may have hard times to create men characters. For example, In 'The Newly Born Woman' Helene Cixous writes that "I still find embodying or identifying most intense when the character is a man—when the body is absolutely not my own. That reach or leap across gender has an inherent excitement in it (which is probably why it is like falling in love)." (285)

Burak mainly uses women characters who are visible with their inner life as if their souls are on the paper. She also includes women-men relationships in her writings and her women characters generally have problems with the men around them or with patriarchal society in general. Her women characters mostly dream of another world and feel isolated from the real world. They are 'the others' in the society, thus, there is always tension between them and the patriarchal society surrounding them. Most of her characters are lost in this tension which leads them to depression, anxiety and even suicide. In "The Window", for instance, being trapped in houses, the main character loses her identity; she is presented without a name. At the end, she tries to convince her doppelganger to commit suicide. The end of the story is not made clear by the writer. Thus, readers may choose to kill her in the end,

or not. In “O God Jehova”, the main character Zembul is portrayed as the other in the society. As a Jewish woman, she leaves her family in order to marry a Muslim man. She becomes isolated from her family, yet her lover Bilal also abandons her emotionally. After giving birth, she experiences a severe depression. She is then killed by the same man for whom she leaves her family. As illustrated, Burak’s characters are her tools to defy the conventional writing; she creates a feminist writing by creating such characters.

In her essay titled “Old Body Not Writing” Le Guin writes that it is insufficient to “sit and think hard, forcefully, powerfully, and make up interesting people and interesting situations.” She says “the physical side of storytelling,” is only possible when “mind and body an imaginary person whom I could embody myself in, with whom I could identify strongly, deeply, bodily.” (284) In his work, “Creating the Second Self: Performance, Gender, and Authorship”, L. Timmel Duchamp makes use of an interview of Le Guin about her writing style and characters. He argues that Le Guin, “often used male protagonists in her fiction. Like Tiptree, like Russ early in her career, she may have needed to imagine herself as a man in order to take possession of her creative power”.(57) As far as we know from Duchamp’s work, Le Guin never thought about writing from the angle of a specific gender, he states that

Le Guin told me that she’d never had to imagine she was a man when writing, even at the beginning, when most of her characters were male. When I asked her what difference her coming to feminism made in how she wrote—a difference that resulted in her creating many interesting female viewpoint characters and that she herself wrote to Tiptree involved learning to “write like a woman” and not as “an honorary man”—she said that what changed for her was her sense of the audience she was writing for. That is to say, instead of writing expressly for boys and men, she began writing for women as well.  
(Duchamp 58)



As a result, it can be claimed that while Sevim Burak chooses to create characters that resemble her, Ursula K. Le Guin tries to create ones she could embody herself in. Unlike the traditional male- writings, which portray women from a patriarchal male gaze, Burak and Le Guin portray characters who resemble them or whom they can embody themselves in. In this way, they break and destroy phallogocentric writing and unearth their conscious.

### **1.5. Settings**

Settings of literary works help us understand the plot, the conditions in which the characters exist and to contextualize and interpret the events and psychologies of the characters. Hence, the settings Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin give us hints how they portray the worlds in which we live in and more importantly how they envision another world in which the existing forms of patriarchy do not exist. Two authors portray and present different settings in their works; yet, they both show the reader how women are oppressed and confined in very different settings. In most works, Ursula K. Le Guin also tries to build better settings, better worlds for her women characters.

The settings of Sevim Burak's stories are not given in detail. They are mostly blurred atmospheres. Women characters feel trapped in houses, in rooms, in workplaces, in cities. Wherever they are they feel bars around them restraining their freedom, making them believe there is no escape. The characters are often isolated from society even though they are surrounded by people. This is because people are not capable of or keen on understanding them. Burak's use of gloomy settings in her works is important in that they reflect the characters' moods, which lead them to become submissive or commit suicide. In "O God Jehova", however, Burak uses

Kuzguncuk as her main setting. In a letter Burak describes the conditions that Jews had to deal with and states that some Jews immigrated to Palestine and those who survived lived in small houses which they called “Jewish Houses” to indicate “they were very small, in a garden and very poor”. She adds many rich Jews left the neighborhood about twenty years ago to this “poor fellows”. She says she considers herself among the people who remained there and they knew her as well. (Burak *Letters* 27) Even though her mother died twenty years ago and her father’s relatives are still there, people still call her “Madam Mari’s Daughter.” Burak explains the reason why she wrote the story as follows;

When I was a little girl I had my nose in the air, now it is not, it is deep down. I was ashamed of Jews, my mother, a feeling mixed with hatred... My mother used to say “you will understand one day” and would cry... Now, a handful of Jews, two small houses are the only remains of my mother... That’s why I wrote Jehova... Because it is real, it is gaining meanings day by day. (Burak *Letters* 27)

Given the importance of the story itself, it is understandable why the author soon changed this story into a play which is called “His Master’s Voice” (Sahibinin Sesi). The story includes references from Kuzguncuk, where she grew up, and her family members and neighbors who were Jewish. Being a Jew in a society in which all people are all believed to be Turkish, means that you are “the other” from the very beginning. Deleuze & Guattari’s “minor literature” theory is helpful to understand Burak’s choice of settings. One of the important conditions of being considered a minority is to write in a language other than one’s mother tongue and as a writer who does not use her mother tongue both in real life and in her works, this story might have implications and hints about the reason why. Burak, who is Jewish, produces a work of art in a dominant culture. According to Deleuze and Guattari, it is “To be as a stranger in one’s own language.” (26) Having been trapped in a society which is actually strange to her, Burak’s language could be interpreted as a work of “minor

literature". As a woman in a male-dominated literature her *strangeness* is doubled. In "O God Jehova" Burak uses both the time and the place very definitely. The reason might be that it is a semi-autographical short story and both the time and place references are also autobiographical. Using time and place references definitely can also be understood as a wish to be witness of the history, the time since this story can be examined as a reference how minorities, in particular Jews, lived and what difficulties they had to deal with not only economically or physically but also emotionally. Burak, in a letter about "O God Jehova", refers to it as a witness of time. She mentions about an exhibition about Hitler and his time; compares it with "O God Jehova". She writes; "If you remember, in my book *Burnt Palaces*, by repeating the names of the Jews, Kuzguncuk's fifty years history was revived; O GOD JEHOVA was the name of the story. My *Jews' Wrath of God* was Jehova and Sarkis's was Hitler of the Second World." (Burak *Letters* 89) It must be added that Burak produced all her works in Turkish and it was her mother who was a real stranger in the society. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari assert that "Minor literature [...] exists in a narrow space, every individual matter is immediately plugged into the political. Thus the question of the individual becomes even more necessary, indispensable, magnified microscopically, because an entirely different story stirs within it." (16). Similarly, in Sevim Burak's stories though everything is political, they seem to be individual matters just like in *Minor Literature*.

In contrast to Burak's blurry and gloomy atmospheres, Le Guin creates mostly utopian spaces and each has a unique characteristic in terms of ruling system, traditions and women's equality. Elizabeth Cummins writes that "in her home-world settings, she breaks through cultural assumptions about gender, society, and literature." (155) Le Guin describes the world she creates meticulously so that the

reader can enter that world and have empathy with the characters. In her book *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin tries to create a genderless world, which leads to a non-patriarchal society. In her utopian planet Gethen in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, everything is beyond one could imagine especially gender issues. The book is multi-layered and there are different points of view in it besides the main character. We read the story from the protagonist Genly Ai's point of view, from his comrade Estraven's point of view and we learn about life on Gethen from the observational field notes of earlier investigators. Chapter 7- The Problem of Sex is reserved for the sex matters and the note below the title shows us that it was written by "Ong Tot Oppong, Investigator, of the first Ekumenical landing party on Gethen/ Winter, Cycle 93 E.Y. 1448." It is also important that the chapter is written by a female investigator. We learn that;

The sexual cycle averages 26 to 28 days (...). For 21 or 22 days the individual is somer, sexually inactive, latent. On about the 18th day hormonal changes are initiated by the pituitary control and on the 22nd or 23rd day the individual enters kemmer, estrus. In this first phase of kemmer (...) he remains completely androgynous. Gender, and potency, are not attained in isolation. A Gethenian in first-phase kemmer, if kept alone or with others not in kemmer, remains incapable of coitus. (...)When the individual finds a partner in kemmer, hormonal secretion is further stimulated (...) until in one partner either a male or female hormonal dominance is established. The genitals engorge or shrink accordingly, foreplay intensifies, and the partner, triggered by the change, takes on the other sexual role (...). This second phase of kemmer (...), the mutual process of establishing sexuality and potency, apparently occurs within a time-span of two to twenty hours. If (...) Once the sex is determined it cannot change during the kemmer-period. The culminant phase of kemmer (...) lasts from two to five days, during which sexual drive and capacity are at maximum.

*(The Left Hand of Darkness 118-9)*

That is, there is no pre-determined sex for individuals; rather, they become male or female in their kemmer period. Hence, there is no predisposition to sexual roles and

gender roles because they do not even know which one they will be when they are in kemmer period. We can say that creating a society of hermaphrodites, Le Guin tries to destroy the patriarchal society. There is no dominant or dominator, powerful or weak, protector or protégé and owner and possession. Le Guin tried to abolish all gender roles. Genly Ai explains this very well; “You're isolated, and undivided. Perhaps you are as obsessed with wholeness as we are with dualism.” (284) In Gethen, people are free to perform whatever they want in their kemmer period. They are not forced to work so that they could experience sexuality as they wish. Genly Ai confesses that it is very hard for them to understand “four-fifths of the time, these people are not sexually motivated at all” (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 121) It is understandable that Genly Ai, who represents men from our planet, finds it surprising because in the world that we live in everything revolves around sex and sexuality. As Jim Jose notes “The novel's [*The Left Hand of Darkness*'s ] "success" lies in Le Guin's willingness to explore this in as direct a manner as possible.” (181)

As a result, though Burak's fiction does not give details about the settings but the reader is to picture the atmosphere according to the mood of the story, Le Guin gives specific details about her settings because they are unbreakable parts of her fiction, just like the characters.

**Conclusion:** Despite the fact that Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin share a number of similar themes about how women are portrayed in the society, what forms of oppression women experience and how women internalize submission, they use very different writing styles; the language components that they use differ in many ways to create a unique, non-phallogocentric writing style. This proves my point that no matter what medium(s), they use, their writing take them to the same conclusion; they break the rules of conventional phallogocentric language. While Burak destroys

and reshapes traditional writing style by changing the syntax, punctuation and spelling, Le Guin invents new portrayals, new contexts and settings which are not common in the traditional male writing. By so doing, both Burak and Le Guin becomes the representatives of feminist writing with their unique ways. As Wenzel clearly puts it for the women writers under the rubric of *écriture féminine* “by dismantling patriarchal language, (they) dismantle the patriarchy” (266).



## Chapter 2

### Otherness

In works of art as in the real life “Traditionally, male maturity represents the freedom to wield power, female maturity a regressive acceptance of dependency and lack of power” (Nodelman 186). How women are portrayed, judged and stereotyped has been studied by a number of scholars and writers. Some works focused on how women writers have portrayed women while some others have concentrated on men’s writings. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar who worked on the nineteenth century women writers, claimed that women were portrayed as either angels or monsters. Simone de Beauvoir, on the other hand, mostly focused on the works of men and she concluded that “... humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being.....” Therefore, she is defined as a relation to him because “He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other.” (Beauvoir 255) Feminist cinema critics focused on the male gaze, a term which coined by Laure Mulvey claiming that women are presented and viewed from a masculine point of view. However, in the article “Is the gaze male?” E. Ann Kaplan notes that “The gaze is not necessarily male (literally), but to own and activate the gaze, given our language and the structure of the unconscious, is to be in the ‘masculine’ position.” (336) The patriarchal gaze that is discussed in this study is the wider form of male gaze theory, including all the figures and elements of patriarchal society. It is not only women who are regarded as inferior

and ‘the other’ but also homosexuals or people of different ethnicities who are also “womanized” through the same forms of oppression. Burak and Le Guin often exemplify how these groups; the others around women are also portrayed as such.

Sevim Burak was one of the forerunners of the authors who dealt with otherness as a woman in Turkish literature. This does not mean that her contemporaries did not include women’s situation in the society or the problems they face; rather, they mention them to a certain extent but not as openly as Sevim Burak. Burak herself experienced otherness in society; hence, her reflection of otherness was a step ahead of other women writers of the period. In her stories, likewise, the representation of being a woman in the society along with the problems and inner dilemmas was extremely well pointed. The women in her stories are estranged from the society firstly because of their gender: being women means that they often do not have the right to choose, their lives take place indoors and they must obey the rules society assigns them. The women characters are the ones who must be submissive to the men around them; if not to the male-centered society around them. Burak does not always depict women who accept their fate; on the contrary, her characters are mostly the ones outside the norms and try to be different than the other women; which makes them “the other” in a patriarchal society.

Ursula K. Le Guin, on the other hand, experienced otherness in the genre she chose to write within. Science fiction was a genre which was commonly associated with male writers only. Furthermore, she dealt with issues that were not common among her contemporaries. The works of Ursula K. Le Guin included in this study deal primarily with gender, womanhood and otherness in different ways. Le Guin not only expresses women’s secondary position in society; she also shows



the possibility of other worlds where men and women are equal. In this way, her representations are different when compared to Sevim Burak's.

Although Burak and Le Guin have different angles in their works, their representations of otherness can be studied under three main headings; otherness in mind, otherness in space and 'womanization'.

### **2.1. In Mind**

Otherness in mind means that women are looked at through a patriarchal male gaze which oppresses them in life and diminishes their value in a given society. It is done through the depiction of these characters as the monsters of the era. Otherness in mind not only means that men regard women as the other in the society, it also takes the form of women internalizing their own submission. Although both Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin use feminist themes in their works, similar to the 19<sup>th</sup> century women writers that Gilbert and Gubar mention, Burak and Le Guin create women characters, who can be depicted as the monsters of the era with regard to their personalities. However, in their works the characterization of women as such is a means to criticize the patriarchal male gaze that women are subject to. As a result, while 19<sup>th</sup> century women writers looked for a way to be accepted and appreciated in male-dominated literary circles, Burak and Le Guin just wanted the issue to be visible. To this end, while Burak's characters are depicted as impotent, evil, and delusional people who suffer from mental disorders such as hysteria, Le Guin's women characters in her earth-like worlds are portrayed as possessive, delicate, mentally inferior and even dangerous especially by the male characters.

In the works of Sevim Burak, in particular, we come across examples of these hysteric women, or to put it correctly; men's portrayal of women as *hysteric*. In "The House of Mother-of-Pearl" (Sedef Kakmalı Ev) by Sevim Burak, the protagonist of the story Nurperi can be read as a delusional, hysteric woman; the whole story might be her delusion. The story starts with a one-word sentence. "GELDİLER (THEY CAME)" Sevim Burak notes that she always starts her stories with one sentence which may defer meaning by itself, saying that the meaning is not fixed. (Burak *Hikaye* 303) In this story, similarly, she starts with one sentence with ambiguous meaning. Burak shows women's impotence and their dependence to men. Her portrayal of women as impotent and dependent is a way of making women's situation visible to the readers. The author's use of capital letters points out that the portrayal of women as such is not approval, but a criticism. It helps the reader understand women's condition in the society and build empathy.

GELDİLER... (THEY CAME)

They were very tired.

They got in line at the beginning of the street.

They were about eight to ten

Then the women appeared.

They were walking very slowly so it took time to get in line.

They were barefoot.

They bent down in front of men.

Suddenly their hands and arms were paralyzed. (*Burnt Palaces* 7)

The same beginning is repeated throughout the story and each time the people coming changes, the story continues in a different way. This is also a proof that the stories are not real but they might be Ms. Nurperi's dreams or delusions. As we read the text, first men arrive because in the society men are regarded the superior sex and even while walking it is traditional for men to walk in front of women in a way to guide, to lead them. Burak also implies that women commit their lives to men whom

they follow and she demonstrates this with the last line above ‘their hands and arms were paralyzed.’ After they arrive at the place where men have already been, they bend down, showing respect to them and all of a sudden they cannot move their hands as if they were handcuffed by men’s power; the power which is able to make women their maids. In short, their independence is taken by men; by their invisible powers. There are different ways that male power manifests itself in women’s lives. As Adrienne Rich points out women “confront not a simple maintenance of inequality and property possession, but a pervasive cluster of forces, ranging from physical brutality to control of consciousness.” (136)

After this first delusion, Ms. Nurperi tells another story beginning with GELDILER (THEY CAME.) This time Mr. Ziya’s brothers who were once commanders in the military arrive. The next time, Ms. Nurperi’s friends arrive and this goes on until the last arrival. These arrivals which might be delusions or partly memories show us that reality is mixed with delusions and our unhappy, lonely, miserable even hysteric character lives in her delusions. We never know what actually happens; whether Ziya dies or not.

In an interview with Asım Bezirci about *Burnt Palaces* (Yanık Saraylar), Burak points out that: “In the story, Ms. Nurperi always distorted reality in her four session dreams.” and she adds that: “Ms. Nurperi took Mr. Ziya, whose death she has been looking for, out in coffin before he died and she masqueraded as an ostrich.” (260) As far as the author of the text’s comment is considered, these are just Nurperi’s dreams so we may conclude that she feels like a convict and wants her freedom back, a freedom that can only be achieved by Ziya’s death. While she is

depicted as hysteric and delusional, the reason for the woman's situation is the very existence of her oppressor. Thus, she has become the other in mind by her oppressor. Otherness in mind eventually leads to otherness in space; thus, she is confined in her house with her dreams and delusions. The power of such a narration must not be ignored; it is through this portrayal the author achieves to show the woman's otherness.

Gilbert and Gubar write about diseases which are thought to be women's illnesses. They believe that "Such diseases are caused by Patriarchal socialization in several ways. ... Learning to become a beautiful object, the girl learns about anxiety-perhaps even loathing of- her own flesh." In so doing, they become a hysteric or an anorexic. They also argue that "[T]he "female diseases" from which Victorian Women suffered were not always byproducts of their training in femininity; they were the goals of such training." (Gilbert and Gubar 1933) Nurperi is a character who was once given to Mr. Ziya as a beautiful object. Her delusions, her mental instability are the direct outcome of this patriarchal society which at the very beginning puts the little girl into an old man's house, into his bed.

Another story in which otherness in mind is clearly demonstrated is Burak's "O God Jehova". In the story Burak makes use of diaries to enrich the meaning and the style alike. In so doing, she shows unmistakably how the woman character is portrayed as the other in mind and in the writings of the male character because the diaries are written by the main male character, which means we do not follow the storyline from the female character's perspective. Her otherness in the mind of the male character is proved by the very writings of the male. Using diaries in a work of

literature is a functional way to reveal character's inner life; desires, wishes, regrets, ambitions and hatred and so on. As a result, they help us identify with the character better, communicate with and feel empathy for him/her. Moreover, by means of the diary Burak makes a critique of phallogocentric writing. Instead of feeling empathy for the male character, she makes the reader observe the woman's captivity and how she is regarded as the other in the mind of the male character. She is not free to tell how she feels, what actually happens but we have to observe and decide from a male gaze. From that point of view she is depicted as delusional, aggressive and problematic. In her article *Feminist Aesthetics* Carolyn Korsmeyer writes that;

Theories of the male gaze come in several varieties...For psychoanalytic theorists, one must understand the operation of the unconscious over visual imagination to account for the presence of desire in objects of visual art. For others, historical and cultural conditioning is sufficient to direct appreciation of art in ways that privilege masculine points of view. Despite many significant theoretical differences, analyses of the gaze converge in their conclusion that much of the art produced in the Euro-American traditions situate the ideal appreciator in a masculine subject-position. There is debate over the dominance of the male-position in gaze, though most feminists avoid such over-simplification. (20)

Burak's writing style changes at some point in the story: instead of third person point of view, we start to read from the first person point of view through a diary.

However, the first person is not Zembul but her husband Bilal. Thus, we learn what happens according to the male character, see the events through the male gaze. The author does not name this part as a diary but as a notebook. It seems indeed a notebook because it rarely unearths the feelings of Bilal, but plainly summarizes what happens. My argument is that Burak wants to show how men treat life and how everything about women is relatively simple for them. However, when Bilal has a health problem, his notebook becomes more detailed and emotional which might be indicate his selfishness.

MR. BİLAL'S NOTEBOOK

Birth: 22 February 1885

Death: 07 July 1931

Where he lives: Kuzguncuk

This is where readers grasp that Zembul and Bilal die on the same day, which brings curiosity to the text. Readers knowing that Zembul couldn't get better after giving birth might assume she dies as a result of her condition, but Bilal's death is left unexplained. His death might be as a result of a needle that walks in his body as he believes that a needle comes into his body from his dead father's bed or we might think that Zembul kills him because at the very end: "ZEMBUL RAN TO THE DOOR. SHE ALSO HAD FIRE ON HER HAND" (82). To put it clearly, she might have killed Bilal by burning him.

Burak chooses to start the notebook as of 5 September 1930, when she becomes pregnant and we read about and become the third eye on what happens until their death. The diary is not kept daily and as mentioned earlier it is not very detailed but it is adequate to show that Bilal did not love Zembul as much as she loved him. For instance, on 6th October 1930 he writes that he spent the night before in İstanbul and came back home by 11 o'clock ferry. He adds that he went straight to bed because he did not feel well. Then he gives details about the guests at home and then writes two sentences about Zembul; "Zembul put on a sour face at me. The reason is my spending the night out." (63) That is it. He does not give more details about it. He does not even make a remark about her behavior, which implies the insignificance of the situation for him. The dates actually matter a lot because these are the times when Zembul is really ill and she mostly stays in bed. Even so, Bilal goes to İstanbul almost every day, eats out, drinks alcohol- generally alone-, and spends the nights out of his house. He mentions all of these acts in his diaries but these are just notes for

him. He does not even try to understand why Zembul is mad at him. This is how he looks at her; without considering anything about her. He does not really see her or try to understand her. By creating a male character as such Burak takes her pen in her hand and writes what *Écriture* feminine urges to do; to write with ‘the white ink’; showing the cruelty that women experience in their lives both because of and in the hands of men.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> October, Bilal learns about Zembul’s pregnancy. He writes;

Yesterday, after I left home midwife the madam Sultana came to us and examined Zembul and told us that she has been pregnant for two months. Zembul has been told that I am opposed to the baby’s birth. Zembul opened the “wedding” issue again and waited for an answer from me, said unless an answer was given, she had some plans and she knew what to do and her usual madness aroused and she started yelling and tearing her clothes, she was left there .... (63)

As he calmly and coldheartedly writes that even the baby issue is on the table, he does not care about Zembul, how she feels; instead, he just says that he opposes the ideas of the baby’s birth. Bilal’s manner shows that he never cares about noone but himself. Equally important is that Bilal views Zembul as a mad woman. He also claims that this is her “usual” attitude. Such a cliché and gender biased idea that has been used for ages whenever men want to hide what is really happening. Bilal, just like most men, no matter when he needs a justification to what happens, uses the same expressions referring to her madness. On 14<sup>th</sup> November, he mentions an argument about the baby, he writes that “...instead of giving an answer to his questions she yelled and tore her clothes apart.” (65) It is important to examine Bilal as a representation seeing as it shows us Burak’s representation of a man, her idea of a man. Bilal is represented as selfish, individualistic, unemotional and obsessive character. He is also shown as the person holding the pen in his hand; thus, the

writing body. In his diaries his depicting Nurperi as delusional and hysteric is an example of typical patriarchal, phallogocentric writing. Cixous gives examples of those patriarchal minds that are either male and female and phallogocentric writing. By creating such a character, Burak criticizes the traditional, patriarchal writing style because as the readers of the story, we know that Bilal's writing is biased and subjective.

Kari Weil asserts that "Hysterics have long been associated with imitation and especially imitation of traditional signs of femininity which might allow them to hide or disavow their unacceptable aggressive or erotic impulses." (162/3) We see the examples of aggressive behavior of women and the male characters in the texts are ready to diagnose them disorders. To put it clearly, in Burak's stories women are portrayed by the male characters as delusional, weak, problematic, unreliable and even hysteric from a male gaze. The gaze does not have to be literally male (Kaplan, 336). The important thing is how women are presented in the text either by a male or female writer. Burak's gaze is not patriarchal; rather she uses the patriarchal gaze to criticize it. Burak's using these characters might be understood as a manifestation of the obvious; these characters exist in her texts because she believes they exist in real life, they are not idealized neither in the texts nor by the author. While reflecting on the texts, readers are not assumed to empathy with the characters who see through "the eyes", but the ones who are seen through those biased eyes.

Otherness in mind is also exemplified by the representations of women as evil, deadly, monster. Religious sources are the very first foundations that present women as evil in general. For example in the Old Testament, a lot of women are



portrayed as evil such as Eve, Jezebel, Delilah, Salome and Lot's Wife. There are many parts in the bible that claims women are the very first reasons of wickedness and sins. For instance; in Eccles 25:13, we see

"Give me any plague, but the plague of the heart: and any wickedness, but the wickedness of a woman."

Or in Eccles. 25:22 we read;

"Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die."

The portrayal of women as evil and sources of all bad experiences is a common theme in the novels or stories of many authors; the works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin are no exception. In their works, we find examples of how women are portrayed as 'evil' by men and see what leads men to have this presumption about women, what conditions and social factors are at work to present women as the sources of evilness, which can be characterized as the manifestation of otherness in mind.

In "The Thief", for instance, Burak makes use of the famous characterization that women are evil; nonetheless, she deconstructs it. As the title suggests there is a thief in the story as the main character. The thief is male and we understand that this specific instance is his first theft. He believes that if he acts as a thief and gets expensive clothes, his girlfriend will be pleased. The second character of the story is that girl; Sıdıka. However, the woman for whom the boyfriend becomes a thief surprises him by not becoming the reason of the bad experience. Instead she looks for the solution and becomes the character that actually solves the problem. After the man partly steals partly takes a new suit from Nusret's house

(‘partly takes’ because the landlord wakes up during the theft and he gives his new suit to young man who says he needs new clothes to impress his girlfriend, Sıdıka), he wears them to look better to his girlfriend. Yet, on seeing him with the new, expensive clothes she says;

“I have loved you with your patchy jacket. This is not you in these clothes. It does not suit you. Go, give it back to place where you have taken from.” (*The Big Sin* 51)

As shown above, the main woman character is content with what she has and is not greedy, thus, she prepares a solution to the thief man’s problem. She is also the moral authority who rescues the man and civilizes him, which is a very classic idea. Even in her very first stories, Burak tries to destroy the perception of women in the society; the view that women care about money a lot, concern outfit more than anything and become the sources of evil. Even though the lover, the thief, thinks that she will be impressed by his wealth, she is not, what is more; she wants his own identity back. As a consequence, we can maintain that Burak destroys the conventional image of ‘monster’ or “deadly women” and creates a modest, proud and content woman figure in this story. Inasmuch as this story of Burak belongs to earlier works, she puts forward a conventional idea of woman, which in her later stories does not exist.

In another story, “Puss-in-the-Corner” (Köşe Kapmaca), Burak proves that the patriarchal gaze does not have to be male. Cavidan is a reasonable woman, who wants a new job but she is also portrayed as ‘monster’ or “deadly woman” because she gets a job through tricks. Indeed, Burak also describes her eyes as ‘evil’ in Gönül’s letter. Gönül, mentioning the day she loses her job, writes: “I saw a devilish

light in your eyes that I have not seen earlier. This was something more than being justly conceited. Feeling as an adversary for the first time, proudly I said....” (63)

Here, the letter is written from one woman to another. However, she uses the same discourse that any man representing male- centered society could use. It is interesting but very common for women to be the real “enemy” to each other. By using the same discourse that stereotypes women, some women also support it, which in any case becomes their own problem in the long run. This example proves that the gaze is not literally male; rather, it is the patriarchal gaze which looks at women in the same humiliating or degrading way even when employed by women.

In another Burak story, “The Engaged Girl” (Nişanlı Kız) when the male character, Adnan understands that a young girl he is attracted to and stalks, is actually engaged to his friend, he describes the young girl as evil. The male character, Adnan feels so ashamed and blushes when he learns the truth about the girl. Burak finishes the story here with Adnan’s point of view writing that: “When Adnan goes out to deck, he felt as if the girl’s smiling ‘evil’ face was written in his mind more clearly, never to be forgotten again.” (73) Burak uses evil, devilish face image for a woman once more but we know that this is written from Adnan’s perspective, who cannot accomplish what he aims; to get the attention of the female. This is a victory for the girl but certainly a failure for Adnan.

As discussed earlier, religion is very effective in the portrayal of women as evil. In the same way, in the story “The Big Sin”, Sevim Burak’s use of religion is of great significance. It is not just a straightforward way of showing that woman are

accepted as the sources of evil and sin, she undermines religious status quos, as well. In the story, a muezzin sees a woman while undressing several times and he lusts for her. Despite the fact that the muezzin sees the woman involuntarily, he feels guilty. We can argue that Burak's choice of adjective 'BIG' in the title also signifies that the author is making an irony here inasmuch as it is not even a voluntary action of muezzin that makes his life miserable and leads to his death. In a conversation between an old man whom the muezzin talks about the occasion, the old man says that he is guilty and he has sinned. After this conversation, the muezzin does not feel well enough to go to the mosque or issue the call to prayer. However, when it is the time for the call to prayer he goes up the minaret again, and sees the woman in the same way.

He opened his eyes and felt as if he was going to faint. Woman! That woman! She was getting undressed again." While he cannot help himself looking at the woman, he remembers those words "You cannot go up that minaret again. (79)

Feeling desperate, the muezzin does not find a solution to his problem other than to commit suicide. He jumps off of the minaret and dies instantly. We can state that even though the main character of the story is the muezzin, the more important character is the widow woman and what she represents for the society; a woman who is source of evil and sin and thus, she is portrayed as the other in the minds of the society. What is more important is what the story says about masculinity. As can be understood, it is men who have prejudiced ideas about the widow woman, so the patriarchal male gaze is always in the texts. When the muezzin accepts that he has looked at and desires the woman, he is condemned by the old man and is excluded from the mosque. This condemnation and exclusion mean that he loses his power and

authority which lead him to commit suicide. In this story, with the help of irony Burak shows how women are wrongly accused of being the sources of evil and sin.

Otherness in mind can also be seen in the works of Ursula K. Le Guin. In Le Guin's two major works; *The Dispossessed* and *The Left Hand of Darkness*, there are two worlds and the point of view is on the idealized ones instead of the earth-like planets. However, the patriarchal gaze which depicts women as mentally the other shows itself in Le Guin's representation of the real world rather than in her utopian worlds. These women are represented as possessive, delicate, mentally inferior and even dangerous.

Most of Le Guin's characters are men in the fantastic worlds she creates; hence, readers get information about how women are treated in the society through male characters which can literally be called the "male gaze". For example, in her book, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin's main character is a man Genly Ai who travels to another planet from Earth and observes the people in this entirely new planet. Since the people are ambisexual on this planet, Gethen, the protagonist Genly Ai describes people according to their acts; womanly or manly. The main problem about the book, indeed, arises from this very fact that despite trying to create a non-gendered society, Le Guin's work reflects men in the society much more than it reflects women, that is, it seems that the people are all men when they have no gender but they become women only when they are in their special kemmer period, when they are sexually active. For example, while he writes about Gaum, he says;

He ordered us not ale, but lifewater. He meant to waste no time. After one glass he put his hand on mine and shoved his face up close, whispering, "We did not meet by chance, I waited for you: I crave you for my kemmering tonight," and he called me by my given name. I didn't cut his tongue out, because since I left Estre I don't carry a knife. I told him that I intended to abstain while in exile. He cooed and

muttered and held on to my hands. He was going very rapidly into full phase as a woman.

*(The Left Hand of Darkness 193)*

This observation reveals that Genly Ai accepts Gaum as a man and when Gaum sexually admires him and makes a move towards him, Genly Ai thinks that he goes into “a full phase as a woman”. Estraven, in fact, does not turn into a woman physically; it is Genly Ai’s description of him just because Estraven seems to be attracted to him. Le Guin’ using masculine pronouns also directs us to this idea.

Furthermore, the characteristics that Genly Ai sees fit to women are highly sexist and sanction gender roles. During their long and knotty journey, Estraven tells Genly Ai to rest for a while for the reason that he does not have enough power to go on. However, Genly Ai does not like the tone Estraven uses towards him. He describes the dialog as such; “I was galled by his patronizing. He was a head shorter than I, and built more like a woman than a man, more fat than muscle; when we hauled together I had to shorten my pace to his, hold in my strength so as not to out-pull him: a stallion in harness with a mule—“ (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 266) This statement of Genly Ai implies that he believes women cannot patronize men; they should know their place, they should care about their manners towards men. This is because women are shorter than men, they have more fat and less muscle than men, which -for him- means they are more powerless than men; if men want they can hurt them, beat them and even kill them. This sexist idea in mind, Ai is disturbed by Estraven’s alleged patronizing. The idea is clear; an androgyny who looks like a woman cannot patronize a man like Genly Ai.

Estraven wonders about women in the world, yet as a man from Earth, Genly Ai does not know how to handle the question. This part of the book is of great importance in the sense that the question is raised in such a way that it reminds us Simone de Beauvoir's famous question "What is a woman?" In point of fact, Ursula K. Le Guin admits that she was impressed by the feminist movements of 1960 and especially French Feminism attracted her those days. It must be added that it was undeniably this feminist movement that urged her to write *The Left Hand of Darkness*. In her article "Is gender necessary?" Le Guin writes about how her interest in feminism grew bigger in time while she mentions about Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millet and Betty Friedan and their aim to create a new feminism. She openly explains that she was not a theoretician, sociologist or a political activist but a novelist. She did whatever she could do with the same aim in mind. She writes; "The way I did my thinking was to write a novel. That novel, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, is the record of my consciousness, the process of my thinking." (Le Guin)<sup>1</sup> As a result, we can claim that the question directed to Genly Ai is actually the very question that feminist women try to answer in their works. Le Guin, by asking and answering the question, achieves two things; first, she summarizes how women are portrayed by the male gaze as mentally the other. Second, she tries to show the contrast between our world Earth and an idealized, fantastic world. Estraven, Genly's comrade simply asks; "Tell me, how does the other sex of your race differ from yours?" Genly is surprised to hear a question like that and he admits that he has never thought about it. Estraven goes on asking; "Do they differ much from your sex in mind behavior? Are they like a different species?"

Genly Ai plainly answers;

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<sup>1</sup> The article can be read here  
<https://americanfuturesiup.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/is-gender-necessary.pdf>

No. Yes. No, of course not, not really. But the difference is very important. I suppose the most important thing, the heaviest single factor in one's life, is whether one's born male or female. In most societies it determines one's expectations, activities, outlook, ethics, manners—almost everything. Vocabulary. Semiotic usages. Clothing. Even food. Women... women tend to eat less... It's extremely hard to separate the innate differences from the learned ones. Even where women participate equally with men in the society, they still after all do all the childbearing, and so most of the child-rearing...

*(The Left Hand of Darkness 284)*

Genly Ai's answer, correspondingly, is of great importance inasmuch as his speech is a statement about the differences between women and men and if interpreted word by word it can give us an idea of where women are taught to stand in the minds of people in any patriarchal society. First of all, Genly Ai confesses that one's life is determined by his/her sex. The words Le Guin chooses are also vital. He mentions expectations; that is, whether you are born female or male constraints or enlarges even your expectations of life and also expectations about you. If you are born female, you have to lower all those expectations seeing as there are boundaries that you cannot cross over. It may also mean the expectations about you. If you are born female you are to be compatible with gender roles that are reserved for you. You are to be kind, beautiful, emotional, motherly etc. If you are a woman you are not expected to be a president, an executive, an advocate or even a doctor; you are more suitable to become a nurse or a teacher. If you are a woman you are not expected to have higher education. It is enough for you to have basic knowledge to be a perfect mother because you are a mother and that's all that matters. Genly's statement, indeed, goes on with childrearing proving my reflections. He is actually right; being born female or male means everything, changes everything and Le Guin states all these very candidly from the main character's point of view. It is like an answer to the question "What is a woman?" Hereby, she challenges the stereotypes of



womanhood and gender roles. This is her way of destroying phallogocentric writing. Through the worlds she creates, she questions and destroys the very idea of womanhood in her writings.

In the very same work, we read a clear example of how women are regarded as mentally the other, the inferior of the two sexes. Estraven interrupts Genly Ai to ask about equality of the sexes. He asks;

"Equality is not the general rule, then? Are they mentally inferior?" Genly Ai's answer to this question can also be the general perception of women in male-centered societies. He does not give the answer "no" to the question but chooses to avoid it. Yet, he implies that women are mentally inferior by referring to the jobs they are engaged. He says; "They don't often seem to turn up mathematicians, or composers of music, or inventors, or abstract thinkers. But it isn't that they're stupid. Physically they're less muscular, but a little more durable than men.

Psychologically—" (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 285) He does not mention the chances that are given to boys and not girls, limitations that religion or traditions impose on women or disparities between men and women's earnings. Even though he does not honestly answer the question with "yes", he, in fact, implies that women are mentally inferior. In his journey to space, Genly Ai discovers himself; it is his conscience that is talking about woman because when he is asked about woman, he firstly states he has never thought about it but later, without thinking he expresses his ideas about woman. Le Guin gives us the perfect example of how women are portrayed by men even when they seemingly believe women and men should be treated equally.

It is noteworthy that though the writer's intent was to create a non-gendered society, which is idealized through the text, the gaze from which the readers are to see and observe is sometimes a patriarchal one. This might be because of the writer's also internalization of some gender roles. However, at the same time, the texts bear a number of instances that can be read and interpreted as an article about the importance of and call for equality of genders.

In *The Dispossessed*, we find more examples of how women are portrayed and defined as mentally the other by male gaze through the dialogues between Kimoe, a representative of an earthlike planet, Urras and a representative of a non-patriarchal society, Shevek. After a conversation about the professions that women can have in Urras and Anarres and the differences regarding to it between two societies, Kimoe reveals how he defines women with "delicacy" and emotions:

But the loss of—of everything feminine— of delicacy—and the loss of masculine self-respect— You can't pretend, surely, in your work, that women are your equals? In physics, in mathematics, in the intellect? You can't pretend to lower yourself constantly to their level?

(*The Dispossessed* 29)

In the quote, the nouns used for women and men by Kimoe show us how women are portrayed and stereotyped by men. Le Guin, once more uses the delicacy for women—in *The Left Hand of Darkness* Genly Ai uses the word- and this time men are described to have self-respect as if women cannot have self-respect. Here Le Guin also shows us how men regard themselves at a higher level than women. The phrase Kimoe uses is, therefore, very explanatory. It could not be more short-cut and certain than the phrase "lowering yourself to their level". There is a level of women's intellect according to him and if you consider yourself equal to them, you just lower yourself from the higher level of men's intellect. One more thing to mention is that

Kimoe believes that even if men and women have equal social status in Anarres, it must be just a pretention. It cannot be even true. When Shevek says he does not pretend as Kimoe thinks, Kimoe tries to makes himself clear, maybe smoothing the conversation only to show him more sexist;

“Of course, I have known highly intelligent women, women who could think just like a man,” (*The Dispossessed* 29-30) In an effort to give “some” women credit, he puts men in a position superior to women; even when he thinks that some women are “highly intelligent”, he compares them to men saying that they “could think like a man.” As a result, men represent intelligence, reason and idea; on the other hand, women represent delicacy for Kimoe, just like for most men in our world.

The idea that women engage in jobs that are ‘suitable’ for them is not an acceptable idea for Shevek, for he comes from a place where women have very important jobs, which proves their intelligence and superiority. It is not their genitals for Shevek which shows their aptitude but their brainpower. For example, in Anarres “The senior physicist at the Institute was named Mitis.” because she “had the best mind among them.” (*The Dispossessed* 79). In his world, the statuses are determined and people are assigned to jobs in accordance with their abilities and interests not with their sex. It can also be claimed that in Anarres, where relationships are not shaped in line with physical factors such as sex or age, one can get the respect s/he deserves from the other without any prejudice. We know that Midis is a woman and she is the senior physicist at the institute. Moreover, though she is very experienced - 55 years old, she has a very close relationship with Shevek when he is just 19. Moreover, she respects and supports him at any case. In the real world, such a relationship is not always possible. If we assume both to be males, then the senior

wouldn't consider a 19 year old "kid" to be a good colleague, there would be problems about power. The senior would think that the "kid" is not and cannot be ahead of him. Consequently, this is a very different world for Shevek in many ways so he changes the subject in his dialogue with Kimoe, but he does not finish thinking about it. He thinks; "This matter of superiority and inferiority must be a central one in Urrasti social life. If to respect himself Kimoe had to consider half the human race as inferior to him, how then did women manage to respect themselves—did they consider men inferior?" (*The Dispossessed* 30) Here, the writer of the novel explicitly criticizes the presumption that men are superior to women through an idealized male protagonist and asks a reasonable question about women. How can women have self respect while they are constantly felt inferior, not just by men but also some women who have internalized submission? Le Guin's double worlds enable her to criticize the patriarchal gaze and shows the examples, burdens and inequalities of the real world in the very same text. In Urras, the patriarchal 'male' gaze exists in contrast to Anarres. Shevek, as a man from Anarres observes this patriarchal gaze in Urras and criticizes it. For Shevek "Kimoe's ideas never seemed to be able to go in a straight line; they had to walk around this and avoid that, and then they ended up smack against a wall. There were walls around all his thoughts, and he seemed utterly unaware of them, though he was perpetually hiding behind them." (*The Dispossessed* 27). Those walls are the signs of a patriarchal society in which most men believe that they are superior to women, and never desire or dare to see what happens behind the walls. Seeing that they are not aware of these barriers, they continue to believe in their supremacy.

Unlike earth-like planets, where women are constantly shown as mentally the other, in *The Dispossessed* and *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin also creates the worlds in which women live as freely and independently as men. She deliberately shows us what is not true in the real world. All the same, she wants us to see what the reality is and to compare the imagined and the idealized with the lived, the experienced. In *The Dispossessed*, the idealized world is Anarres, yet the readers come across with a man who is sexist unlike the common sexual politics on the planet. Here, Le Guin illustrates that even in an idealized society, where sexual equality exists and formal and informal conventions of heteronormativity are not present, there are exceptions, and it is the others' duty to challenge them. Vokep who is the exception in the society believes that women cannot truly be Odonian because, for him, women "think they own you." As can be seen Vokep resonates the impulse to dominate with women by saying that "... their only relationship to a man is *having*. Either owning or being owned" (*The Dispossessed* 67). In *The Wild Girls* by Le Guin, women are commodified by men and they are seen as the sole sources of benefit and even profit. However, Vokep claims that it is women's preference to be owned by men as if they would like to commodify themselves. It must be mentioned and acknowledged that there are, in fact, some women who would like to feel a sense of attachment which can occasionally be interpreted as what Vokep means here. Yet, this overgeneralization about women is an example of patriarchal 'male' gaze. Fortunately, Vokep is presented in an interaction with Shevek, who is the protagonist of the story, accepting the equality of genders as true and compulsory. He asks Vokep whether he thinks women are different from men. Vokep claims it is not just a thought but definite knowledge, exemplifying a dominant, sexist man behavior he says:

“I know it. What a man wants is freedom. What a woman wants is property. She’ll only let you go if she can trade you for something else. All women are proprietarians.” (*The Dispossessed* 68)

Le Guin here criticizes male behavior and value. All that Vokep claims can be rewritten by changing “men” to “women” in order to summarize the relationship between men and women in the world we live in.

In *Tehanu*, we can also find the examples of women portrayed as the other in mind. Tenar, who is the protagonist of the story, is depicted as a female character who internalizes submission. However, it does not alter the way she feels when she is confronted by odious looks. “She didn’t know whether he had known or had just now learned that she was Tenar of the Ring. It didn’t matter. He could not hate her more. To be a woman was her fault. Nothing could worsen or amend it, in his eyes; no punishment was enough.” (*Tehanu* 81) Le Guin’s use of womanhood as a fault resembles Burak’s characters who are born to be “the other” just because of their sex. As Le Guin also emphasizes, there is no more reason to be hated if you are a woman.

To conclude, as Tyson asserts “Traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive” (83). Similarly, in the works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin, we come across with a patriarchal ‘male’ gaze, which is not always literally ‘male’; rather, it is a patriarchal look that represents women as the other in mind or mentally the other; evil, deadly, delusional, hysteric, weak, inept, unsuccessful and mentally inferior. Characters looking through this patriarchal ‘male’ gaze do not try to see or understand women; instead, they stereotype women

consistent with their own biased ideas. It is through these representations Burak and Le Guin question the gaze towards women in real world which defines women as the other in mind.

## **2.2. In Space**

*Conventional wisdom indicates that 'male' or 'female' are adequate labels and that any bodies which do not 'fit' just need to be 'correctly' assigned to one or the other, and maybe reassigned later if 'wrong'.(Mary Holmes 27)*

Stereotyping women as mentally the other in the society, which has been explained in the previous section, results in women being defined as the other in space as well. Space is a very chief concept in this part; it has both literal and metaphorical meaning. It expresses not only houses, offices, factories but also the roles in those spaces reserved for women such as gender biased professions, responsibilities. For instance, houses and schools are reserved for women, but factories and laboratories are reserved for men. Even if women exist in those places, they are given the roles of secretaries or assistants. That is, women are not only considered as the other in mind with assigned descriptions of being deadly, evil, weak, delusional and hysterical, they also experience otherness in space both literally and metaphorically. This portrayal of otherness manifests itself not only in emotions, feelings, presumptions but in acts and movements, as well. As a result, the effects of otherness in space are more visible, touchable and understandable when compared to otherness in mind.

In Burak's story "The Big Bird", otherness manifests itself in space much more than in mind. Despite the fact that the woman in the story is also depicted as mentally the other, she is left alone in the society because of that; thus, it is an

example of otherness in space, as well. Her dialogue and actions with and within the city also point out the woman's otherness in space. Burak shows that most women are born to be "the other". In the story, the main character is born virtually dead, but then a bird comes and she comes back to life and shares life with her. "Being born dead" is an important allegory used by Burak. It has both symbolic meaning and literal meaning. The symbolic meaning tells us that any girl being born is dead. This is a fate that quite a lot of girls experience in life. Traditionally, a girl's birth is not welcomed in a family until a boy arrives. As a baby girl, "the baby was born still". My contention is that the hawk that she constantly looks for in the story is not a man, but her stronger self. The hawk's representing her stronger self is more understandable when we consider that the hawk comes next to the still-born girl and does not leave her until the very day our story begins. Thus, we might argue that Burak's adding the last part; "FEARS, LONELINESS, CAME BACK" is a foreshadowing about her real confrontation with the City, in our case male-centered society without the hawk, her stronger part. The problem is that her stronger part, the one that makes her alive and happy leaves her just because she wants to get in touch with the male-centered society because she says;

"People live in the City I also live in the city"

"Yet, It, does not want to understand that" (*Burnt Palaces* 45)

And this might be the reason why the hawk leaves her; it does not understand that she wishes for going out to the restricted area, to public space and now that her stronger part gives her up, she feels lonely and afraid but she goes out in any case. Thus, she chooses to be in public space which is thought to be 'dangerous' for women. She goes into the city which makes her feel as the other in space.

YOU BEAUTIFUL GIRL  
YOU LITTLE GIRL



I SEE YOU THERE- YOU ARE VERY LITTLE, BEHIND THE  
BREAST-YOU ARE CRYING- THE LITTLE BOY NEXT TO YOU  
ALWAYS ADDS VODKA IN YOUR WATER- YOU ALWAYS  
CRY- YOU WANT TO DRINK WATER-YOU ARE A VERY  
ANGRY CHILD-YOU ARE THERE- IN YOUR OWN COUNTRY  
WHERE THERE IS NO SALVATION  
THEY SHOW YOU THE WAY AND OPEN THE DOOR  
ONLY YOU CAN GO THERE  
THERE IS A SIGN OF SIN ON YOUR SINCIPUT (47)

This part of the story reveals that her fate was sealed when she was just a little girl just as most women in real life. Being a woman means that there is a sign of sin on your face even when you are a little child. The sign of sin on sinciput reminds of the woman in the novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, who is punished because of adultery and stigmatized with a letter “A” revealing her sin. Our main character feels the stigmata on her face even if she physically does not have it. It is a sign that is not seen but which makes men believe that they can do whatever they want just like the little boy’s putting vodka in her water even though she wants to drink only water.

In “O God Jehova”, similarly, Burak creates a character that is regarded as the other in both ways; in mind and in space. By being a woman, she is considered to be inferior to men, so first of all she is the other in mind. Secondly, she is a member of a minority. When her family forces her to marry to a Jewish man, she leaves them. Moreover, she gives up her family to be with a Muslim man, yet she becomes an unmarried pregnant woman seeing as the Muslim man does not want to get married. We also see the woman’s otherness by herself; trying to fit in a Muslim society but in a wrong way. As if being a woman is not enough, as a member of a minority group which is not generally welcomed in the society, her otherness is always doubled. It becomes more visible and touchable in space. She is seen as guilty because of her ethnicity, her gender and her actions alike. Her otherness in space plays in both ways;

in her own community she is not welcomed because she gets involved with a Muslim man and is pregnant out of marriage. She is also not welcomed by the man's society because of the same situation as if she was alone doing it and becoming pregnant is a fault, and what's more, it is only her fault; not theirs. As a result, the main character in the story, Zembul is the scapegoat of the story and she is punished by Jehova or Allah.

In "The House with Mother-of-Pearl" (Sedef Kakmalı Ev), also, we know the main character is a minority. Being a woman, she is the other in the society by birth and also being a Jew, she is also the other in space, specifically in Turkish society. "When Nurperi came to the house they (meaning Mr Ziya's brothers) were all alive. She was a fifteen year old girl with hair as thick as an arm, speaking Turkish mixed with Yanya language. The masters of the house were old even then..." (*Burnt Palaces* 12)

With this comment we learn that Nurperi is not a Turkish girl and this fact is further detailed by some of her friends' names. She mentions Hayko and Nivart, for instance, which are usually Jewish names. Given that Burak's mother was actually a Jewish, her use of Jewish society in her stories is reasonable. As Burak also reveals these stories are parts of her own story several times. In the book *Letters from Mach I*, he writes to his son that: "My writing depends on locking myself in a cell, maybe in a cell inside me. I cannot try to be happy like everybody else, the things that are against me, happiness, hopes, wealth and what it brings... they are not included in my literature. ... My literature is one whose subject matter is me." (Burak 121) Similarly, Nurperi is depicted as a miserable, completely alone woman. Though she has a life partner, she believes that she will be alive after his death. She feels trapped

in her destiny. She is the other even in the house she lives. Her otherness in space is doubled because of her being a minority and a woman. As a consequence, most of the women characters in *The Burnt Palaces* and Burak's early stories are regarded as the other in space. They are reminded of this otherness by everybody around them in some cases. In others, the women characters become lonely, wretched, miserable and desperate because of their otherness. They feel this isolation literally in space such as houses in which they are left alone even if they are surrounded with people as well as metaphorically in the societies which they do not actually belong, but felt obliged to be a part of. In both cases, they are punished as a result of being the other in space.

Ursula K. Le Guin also exemplifies the worlds where women are regarded as *the other in space*. Her characters, unlike Sevim Burak's, differ according to the world which they inhabit; she shows us woman as the other in one world and she destroys that otherness in a parallel world. In this way, she shows what is lived and what is desirable and promising. Thus, we read women as equals of men in her idealized worlds while in earth-like worlds the otherness in space is visible. Le Guin indicates that she was trying to construct a new feminism like her contemporary feminist scholars, theoreticians, sociologists and political activists while she was writing *The Left Hand of Darkness*. She tried to accomplish what others were doing with her tools available in novel writing. As a result, in her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, we read some observations about Gethen, which actually reminds us feminist criticism. *The Left Hand of Darkness* can be read as an article in feminist classes as to how to create an equal world. Le Guin criticizes binary opposition and dualism applied on sexes, too. Because there is no sex, there is no split-up. No one is stronger or weaker as a result of his/her sex, no one owns the other. "There is no

division of humanity into strong and weak halves, protective/protected, dominant/submissive, owner/chattel, active/passive.” (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 122) The writer explains what she means by this in her article about the novel. She writes that “If we were socially ambisexual, if men and women completely and genuinely equal in their social roles, equal legally and economically, equal in freedom, in responsibility, and in self-esteem, then the society would be a different thing.” She adds that if it was the condition then the problem wouldn’t be “the exploitation of the women”.(Le Guin, 1987, 172)<sup>2</sup> Further, Le Guin criticizes casting people in the role of Man or Woman and “adopting towards him a corresponding role dependent on your expectations of the patterned or possible interactions between persons of the same or the opposite sex.” (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 122) Mentioning expected gender roles for women and men as an issue, she criticizes the “socio-sexual interaction” between sexes. The female investigator considers this interaction as “the game” and notes that “They cannot play the game. They do not see one another as men or women. This is almost impossible for our imagination to accept. What is the first question we ask about a newborn baby?” (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 123)Referring to gender biased traits and roles on women, she shows that this starts even before the birth of the baby.

In her novel *The Dispossessed*, Ursula K. Le Guin also creates a utopian world, Anarres. Given that it is a utopian world, Le Guin is free to equip women with every characteristic she desires and change the society into one she wants to see in the real world. However, the author uses the word “Ambiguous” in order to define utopia, which shows that Anarres is not the idealized, utopian society as it was meant

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<sup>2</sup> To see the full article, visit <https://americanfuturesiup.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/is-gender-necessary.pdf>

to be. Even so, when we compare these two worlds in terms of women issues, we can claim that Anarres is a utopia. After *The Left Hand of Darkness*, in which readers experience a world of ambisexual people, in *The Dispossessed*, Le Guin compares how gender roles are different in two different worlds, one is the utopian Anarres; the other Urras which represents the Earth. In the storyline, anarchist people from Urras leave the earthlike planet with a woman leader Odo so as to establish a new life and they move to the moon Anarres; thus, their life must be something that they couldn't experience in the Earthlike Urras. The protagonist of the novel is a male, as in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. However, because he comes from the anarchist Anarres, his definition of women differs from Genly Ai. The point of view is not presented by a man from a patriarchal society but by a man from a society where people consider themselves free and independent, having been separated from the old world, they have escaped from their chains and women and men are equal. Though Le Guin is criticized for having a male protagonist; it is true that "it is especially revealing to have these values reflected through a masculine consciousness." ( Brians ) Given that Anarres women are not considered as the other; they are the halves of the whole, an equal half. Women and men are not stereotyped by their gender roles because gender roles do not exist in Anarres. It is more a world where women and men are treated and differentiated according to their talents and interests rather than their genders. This kind of otherness is more specific and touchable than the otherness in space seeing as otherness in mind is mostly about the presumptions about women's personalities. However, otherness in space takes form, evolves and creates sexist behaviors and regulates how women and men exist in social life rather than just creating biased ideas about women.

In *The Dispossessed* there is a journey from one world to the other as in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. At the very beginning of the journey, on the spaceship, we start to learn how women are portrayed as “the other” which clearly manifests itself in space by Urras people. “He had asked why there were no women on the ship, and Kimoe had replied that running a space freighter was not women’s work. History courses and his knowledge of Odo’s writings gave Shevek a context in which to understand this tautological answer, and he said no more.” (*The Dispossessed* 28)

Women are stereotyped and shown as the other in space by the gender roles in Urras, identical to our world. Seeing as it is a spaceship, which is related with science, which is dangerous and sometimes requires power and courage, the answer given to Shevek is that it’s not women’s work. He does not even need to explore why it is not women work; the belief is so certain, fixed and definite that it does not require explanation. Shevek does not comment about it because of the pre – knowledge about the situation. However, Kimoe wonders about how women are treated in Anarres. The dialogue between them is of great significance;

“Is it true, Dr. Shevek, that women in your society are treated exactly like men?”

[...]“Is there really no distinction between men’s work and women’s work?”

“Well, no, it seems a very mechanical basis for the division of labor, does not it? A person chooses work according to interest, talent, strength— what has the sex to do with that?”

“Men are physically stronger,” the doctor asserted with professional finality.

“Yes, often, and larger, but what does that matter when we have machines? And even when we don’t have machines, when we must dig with the shovel or carry on the back, the men maybe work faster—the big ones— but the women work longer. . . . Often I have wished I was as tough as a woman.”

(*The Dispossessed* 28/9)

As can be seen in the dialog above, Le Guin shows us how women are treated as lower than men in the world just because men are physically more advantaged than women. It is a fact that power relations play a very important role in the social status that women have in our world, whether you live in the U.SA or in Turkey. That's why, both Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak use power relations as an important factor in human relations and women's social status. The assumption that women are less strong than men as a result of which, they can handle some jobs and not the others manifests itself as a gender biased society. Nevertheless, we see that in Anarres, women are engaged in any job they like, they have talent in and they wish. This is also explained by Shevek very logically referring to machinery and technology that we use today instead of wo/man power. Shevek also expresses his own idea about women's durability and power. When he says he wishes to be as tough as a woman, Kimoe is taken aback to hear that because the roles are reversed in Anarres. In Urras, identical to the world, it is the women who wish to be born as men, never the opposite.

In a dialogue, Shevek asks about whereabouts of all women? He is misunderstood by the two and offered a woman to fulfill his sexual desires. Seeing that Pae and Oiie refer to women in a way that Shevek does not understand what they mean, Shevek rephrases his question, making it more specific. This time he specifically asks where the women scientists are. Upon hearing the word scientists, they are both surprised but managing to hide this feeling; they try to answer his questions. The dialogue between them is worth fully quoting here;

*“Scientists?”* Oiie asked, incredulous.

Pae coughed. “Scientists. Oh, yes, certainly, they're all men. There are some female teachers in the girls' schools, of course. But they never get past Certificate level.”

“Why not?”

“can’t do the math; no head for abstract thought; do not belong. You know how it is, what women call thinking is done with the uterus! Of course, there’s always a few exceptions, God awful brainy women with vaginal atrophy.”

“You Odonians let women study science?” Oiie inquired.

“Well, they are in the sciences, yes.”

“Not many, I hope.”

“Well, about half.”

“I’ve always said,” said Pae, “that girl technicians properly handled could take a good deal of the load off the men in any laboratory situation. They’re actually defter and quicker than men at repetitive tasks, and more docileless easily bored. We could free men for original work much sooner, if we used women.”

“Not in my lab, you won’t,” said Oiie. “Keep ’em in their place.”

“Do you find any women capable of original intellectual work, Dr. Shevek?”

“Well, it was more that they found me. Mitis, in Northsetting, was my teacher. Also Gvarab; “you know of her, I think.”

“Gvarab was a woman?” Pae said in genuine surprise, and laughed.

Oiie looked unconvinced and offended.

“can’t tell from your names, of course,” he said coldly. “You make a point, I suppose, of drawing no distinction between the sexes.”

Shevek said mildly, “Odo was a woman.”

*(The Dispossessed 95/6)*

Both Pae and Oiie believe that women have less intellect than men and the otherwise is possible as exceptions. Their discourse is very much signifying. Here is we see how the presumptions about women’s mentally otherness affect them in space, in the workplace. According to Pae and Oiie, women are not capable of doing men’s work and even if they perform some work in their laboratories with the condition that girls are “properly handled”, it is just repetitive works so that the men in the laboratories can focus on the intellectual/original work. The women’s existence in laboratories is to help and make men’s jobs done easily. It is not even women work in the laboratories but they “let women” in laboratories because it is their place, they own the laboratories just as they do own “science” itself. That is so, according to Pae and Oiie, because women “do not belong”. It is so because women have “no head for abstract thought”, and further “what women call thinking is done with the uterus!”



As a result, when they learn Gvarab, a well-known and respected scientist in Urras is a woman, they feel disappointed because a woman takes up their space.

In *Tehanu* by Le Guin, women also represented as the other in space. Tenar, who finally internalizes women's secondary place in society, questions the place reserved for women.

“When you had a man, Moss, did you have to give up your power?”

“Not a bit of it,” the witch said, complacent.

“But you said you don't get unless you give. Is it different, then, for men and for women?”

“What isn't, dearie?”

“I don't know,” Tenar said. “It seems to me we make up most of the differences, and then complain about 'em. I don't see why the Art Magic, why power, should be different for a man witch and a woman witch. Unless the power itself is different. Or the art.” ( 69)

Despite the fact that she questions the situation, she becomes a dependent woman by disregarding the power she could have as a wizard. In *Tehanu*, Le Guin uses a female protagonist for a difference from her previous three novels of the series. The author gives her power to be a wizard, gives her wings; yet, she does not fly.

All in all, in the selected works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin, we see the examples of women's secondary position in life as the other both in the mind of men and some women and in space; at homes, in workplaces, in the very world they try to fit in. Some of Burak's characters, in particular, experience a double state of otherness in that they are the members of a minority in their societies. Their otherness causes them to lead a depressed life and they end being lonely, which in some cases lead to their death. Le Guin's characters, correspondingly, are stereotyped through gender roles and hence have the secondary positions in society,

at home or at the workplace. While men are considered to be the one, the intellect, the mentally powerful women are considered to be the other.

### 2.3. Womanization

Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin's works are full of representations of women who are regarded as the other either in mind or in space. However, the exclusion of some characters as well as inclusion of them is of great importance. In this section of the study, *womanized* characters in Burak and Le Guin's works will be examined to point out that even though these characters are not necessarily women, they are marginalized, stereotyped and regarded as the other either mentally or physically if not both.

In real life, as in the works of art, some identities other than women are also degraded, oppressed and limited through the forms of male oppression in patriarchal society. These characters are depicted as weak, unusual, upset because of their choices or lacking in one way. The inclusion of these characters into the texts, sometimes the otherwise, is of great importance seeing that it shows us how these characters are *womanized* by means of the very forces that make woman the other in the society. To be precise, they are portrayed in a similar way as women. These characters are not in particular women, but they are devalued, considered inferior to the majority in the society in the same ways as women. That's the reason they are called *womanized* characters. Similarly, Pat Mainardi notes that:

Jews, immigrants, black men, and all women have employed the same psychological mechanisms to survive: admiring the oppressor, glorifying the oppressor, wanting to be like the oppressor, wanting the oppressor to like them, mostly because the oppressor held all the power. (293)

The oppressor is the one who labels, defines, accuses and at the end punishes the other whether a Jew or a woman. Burak and Le Guin also create some characters who are literally “the others” in a dominant culture and they are *womanized* in this sense. We see them as the main characters or subordinate characters; we learn their names, their relationships, their traditions. Burak likes to add these details to her stories if they are not the focal point. This choice of the author shows us that these characters do not become the one in the stories; they have to remain as the other in the stories, just as their situation in the real life. Even if the protagonist is a member of minority, there is not a positive representation of the person. In a way, whether they are in reality women or men does not matter; they are *womanized* by the very society in which they breath, work, settle, have family and die. They are visible but not acceptable in these societies.

Ursula K. Le Guin also makes deliberate choices of using minorities in her works. Since Genly Ai is a stranger in the society, he is almost always a reason of fear and curiosity in the society and as the unknown stranger in Gethen, he represents “the other” in the society, as well. He is also a black person which also makes him “womanized”. Le Guin writes about people of color in such a way to make them be visible in the society. She mentions about his skin color in an interview, admitting that, it was a deliberate choice. She says:

But Genly’s skin color was not a prediction, it was a bit of deliberate activism. Most readers of science fiction (then and now) are white. Science-fictional characters, then, were white (...)  
So, my evil activist plot: Let your hero have a dark skin, but do not say anything about it, until the reader is used to identifying with that person, and then suddenly realizes, Hey, I’m not white!...But what do you know?—I’m still human!”

(Le Guin, *A talk with Ursula K. Le Guin*)

For that reason, Le Guin states that she gets touching letters and comments from the people of color. For not “deliberately and hatefully” excluding them from the science fiction which has traditionally included only white characters. Genly Ai’s womanization manifests itself in a lot of ways; however, Le Guin chooses to use this to demonstrate how a member of a male-centered society sees ambisexual people, how he accepts and categorizes them, which suits the aim of the writer while creating this world; to help form a new feminism.

A feminist study which studies only heterosexual people would be incomplete; it would, whether intentionally or not, seem content with the norms and regulations heteronormativity imposes on people assuming that lesbians or homosexuals do not exist; or their existence is not to be mentioned. In this study, their inclusion or exclusion is also analyzed and it was found out that in the selected works of Sevim Burak, heterosexuality is the only option for people; the only possible relationship is between two sexes; a woman and a man. However, Ursula K. Le Guin tries to include homosexuals in her works even if she does not seem to internalize or accept their existence happily.

In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin disregards both heterosexuals and homosexuals completely and she writes on a non-gendered world, in which the sexual relationship between these ambisexual people is only possible in their “kemmering period”. Moreover, in their special period, their sexual organs grow as a result of hormonal changes. However, the relationship only exists between a female and a male in accordance with heterosexuality. Le Guin’s such exclusion of homosexuals from *The Left Hand of Darkness* and even when she included them in

*The Dispossessed*, the way she portrays them caused a lot of criticism about her works. The representation or *unrepresentation* of these characters proves that like Sevim Burak's characters, they are also *womanized* in their societies; even if they are made visible by the author, they are represented but their otherness causes problems for them; they are not welcomed in the society.

Le Guin has been harshly criticized about not including homosexuals in Gethen. In her article "Is Gender Necessary?" She admits that she has made a mistake showing all Gethenians heterosexuals:

It is a naively pragmatic view of sex that insists that sexual partners must be of opposite sex! In any kemmerhouse homosexual practice would, of course be possible and acceptable and welcomed-but I never thought to explore this option; and the omission, alas, implies that sexuality is heterosexuality. I regret this very much.

(Le Guin, 1987, 169)

The issue of compulsory heterosexuality is studied by a great many of authors, philosophers, academicians and political activists. The very basic view is that men and women are socially forced to be heterosexuals; the normalcy is the sexual partnership of a man and woman; the otherwise is accepted as a flaw, a deviancy. If one is not heterosexual then she/he tends to hide his/her homosexuality in order not to be punished by the society. Writers such as Adrienne Rich wrote about compulsory heterosexuality. In her work which was written from a lesbian point of view Rich asserts that:

The assumption that 'most women are innately heterosexual' stands as theoretical and political stumbling block for feminism. It remains tenable assumption partly because lesbian existence has been written out of history or catalogued under disease, partly because it has been treated as exceptional rather than intrinsic, partly because to acknowledge that for women heterosexuality may not be 'preference' at all but something that has had to be imposed, managed, organized,

propagandized, and maintained by force is an immense step to take if you consider yourself freely and 'innately' heterosexual. (135)

It is a fact that people are taught to be heterosexuals in male-dominated societies in order to keep the “norms” going on as they please the majority. As a result, the ones crossing the lines, being homosexuals are considered as defected and they have been banned to express their way of life without restraint in most societies. Hence, in such a novel which reflects non-gendered society should have included lesbians, gays and/or queers in general, too.

Finally, Le Guin adds that she has created a novel which men could safely experience androgyny and come back to their idealized world safely. However, women readers would have expected her to have more courage to show how a female could experience androgyny and she expresses her regrets about this. To sum up, from the very beginning, in varied interviews Le Guin writes and insists that *The Left Hand of Darkness* was an experiment and I should add that even though it has some flaws, I believe it has been a success. The experiment might have some flaws to be corrected and that is why we perform experiments; to make them perfect in time. As a matter of fact, Le Guin did the same thing and went on writing about Gethenians to make them less flawed.

After *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Ursula K. Le Guin creates a utopia where she welcomes otherness in the society in many ways; *The Dispossessed*. After her mistake about not involving homosexuality in Gethen, in her utopian world Anarres she includes heterosexuals along with homosexuals. We learn that all children of Anarres have “sexual experience freely with both boys and girls.” (66)

For example, one of the main characters Bedap is presented as a homosexual. Ursula K. Le Guin also inserts bisexuality into her novel by Shevek's and Bedap's short term relationship. After sleeping side by side on the rug one night, they decide to talk about "whether or not they should pair for a while" and we learn that "they had when they were adolescent." Their being a pair again is an important issue to talk about "because Shevek was pretty definitely heterosexual and Bedap pretty definitely homosexual; the pleasure of it would be mostly for Bedap." They decide to spend some time together which finally ends after a decade.

However, this time, Le Guin has been criticized about not being open minded about it; being "conservative" and endorsing "traditional family values". (Delony 152) "Bedap, never very energetic sexually, accepted the homage of a younger boy who had a homosexual-idealistic crush on him, and let that suffice him." (*The Dispossessed* 71) When Shevek's homosexual experience is revealed to reader, we learn that he had sex freely with boys and girls but "he and they had been children; he had never got further than the pleasure he assumed was all there was to it." (*The Dispossessed* 66) As can be seen, even though Ursula K. Le Guin seems to welcome homosexuality, she does not seem to approve of it just like what the critics argued. It seems to me that in this quotation, she shows homosexuality as something that can freely be experienced but not lived with. She also openly writes that these were all a part of "adolescent sexual experimentation" which can be tried before "a mature relationship" in which they may have babies, implying that homosexuality or bisexuality is not "mature". (*The Dispossessed* 70) She also mentions about their ages, "he and they had been children"; as if homosexual experience is a mistake that

every child can make without restraint. One more flaw with the judgment is that Le Guin describes the pleasure as “assumed”, which suggests that there are considerations more important than pleasure.

All things considered, although Ursula K. Le Guin tries to create a better world in terms of sexuality and freedom than the one in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, the language she uses shows us that she does not accept and internalize the homosexuality or bisexuality, which makes her less credible when she tries to be open minded and unbiased. In short, while including homosexuals to her texts, she womanizes the characters and does not actually welcome them in her worlds.

***Conclusion:***

Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin point out otherness in society in many ways. Their representations of otherness in their societies are similar even though their settings, plots and characters are very different from each other. In their themes, they both stick to the idea of otherness in mind and in space which clearly exemplify women’s secondary position. Such representations of otherness are the direct result of the patriarchal male gaze. In a way, they try to combat with phallogocentric language by using the very same means; writing. Helene Cixous states that “Writing is reserved for the chosen” and urges women to change this assumption by writing her own experience in writing. Further, in “The Laugh of Medusa” she proposes that "It is by writing, from and toward women, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm women in a place other than that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is, in a place other than silence" (1947). As a result, what Le Guin and Burak do is a resistance to male’s



writing. They create characters, just like their male counterparts do, however, in their texts the reader does not accept the otherness assigned to the women. These representations of otherness exist in Burak and Le Guin's texts not because the authors believe in the otherness, but because they want to show the present conditions and make women's secondary position visible. In so doing, they criticize the given situation and create an area of empathy and sympathy for women. Womanization, on the other hand, is considered as a way of degrading the value of any person or people as a result of their color, ethnicity or sex and is used in this study to analyze both authors' position regarding the others except from women. Through the analysis of the selected of works of the authors, it is found out that as a minority herself Sevim Burak deals with the otherness regarding the ethnicity and points out the difficulties that minorities experience in life; however, she never includes homosexuals or other womanized characters in her works. Ursula K. Le Guin, on the other hand, reserves place for minorities and homosexuals, too. Yet, her language while dealing with homosexuals is questionable and seems to be biased.

## Chapter 3

### Oppression

Pat Mainardi declares that "...the oldest form of oppression in history has been the oppression of 50 percent of the population by the other 50 percent." (293) As she lucidly suggests the oldest and the most important oppression form is women's oppression by men. It does not mean that merely men by themselves oppress women. It is also patriarchal institutions as well as society itself. For ages, women have experienced the real life practice of the idea "biology is destiny". For this reason, they have been regarded as weak and thought to be suitable for some jobs and not the others. Due to their supposed biological differences, they have been regarded as the nurturers of the family, the care taker of house along with the members of it. The idea that it is women's job to generate the future has made the house the only place where she belongs. The house, in this way, becomes a cell for married and also unmarried woman. Following Elizabeth Stanko, in a recent study Sara Ahmed discusses narratives of women's vulnerability as a factor that makes women stay at home. Ahmed adds that: "They not only construct 'the outside' as inherently dangerous, but they also posit home as being safe. So women, if they are to have access to feminine respectability, must either stay at home (femininity as domestication), or be careful in how they move and appear in public (femininity as a constrained mobility)"(70) As a result, women still have to stay in their houses to be

respectful and even if they leave their safe places they have to be careful about their manners.

The oppression that many women suffer from originates mainly in family and it further develops in patriarchal society. Therefore, we can analyze forms of oppression in Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin's selected works under two categories; individual forms of oppression and collective forms of oppression.

Le Guin and Burak explore themes how their women characters are oppressed by these individual or collective forces. Even though both writers have examples of similar representations of these forms, there are differences. For example, while the characters of Burak are often restrained by some forms of collective forms of oppression such as religion, these same restrictions are not applied to women in the selected works of Ursula K. Le Guin. Similarly, parental pressure as a form of individual oppression is not a focus in Le Guin's work. These two forms, on the other hand, are very vital themes in Burak's work. By analyzing the differences among the themes along with similarities, it is possible to see where each author stands and how they personally analyze and interpret the oppression of women.

### **3.1. Individual Forms of Oppression**

Individual forms of oppression are the ones that most women experience in their own houses behind closed doors. In this form, the oppressors that exist in women's lives are generally their family members, relatives or partners. Oppression in this way comes from an immediate person or people especially for the individual and it is more personal. The individual is firstly oppressed by other individual/s close to her,

becomes the victim of collective forms of oppression when integrated into the society. Individual forms of oppression in the works of Burak and Le Guin can be observed in the examples of representations of daughters and wives.

### **3.1.1. “Daughters in Boxes”**

According to Kishida Toshiko “daughters in boxes” is a popular term in Kyoto and Osaka, which is used for the situation of daughters of the middle-class or upper-class. (100) She explains why this expression is used as follows; “They may have hands and feet and a voice—but all to no avail, because their freedom is restricted. Unable to move, their hands and feet are useless. Unable to speak, their voice has no purpose. Hence the expression” (Toshiko 100) These parents do not restrict their daughter’s life, allegedly, to make their lives miserable. Rather, they aim to present them a better life by forcing them to have ‘womanly virtues’. Toshiko asks about the reality of their love; is it really ‘love’ towards their daughters? Cultural differences play an immense role in family traditions. Many Turkish people have a parallel attitude towards their daughters. They restrict their daughters’ life but not their sons’. They try to justify this discrimination referring to boy’s physical power and girls’ powerlessness. More conservative parents oppress their daughters by means of religious codes and rules; a woman cannot talk to a man who is not a close relative to her. Whatever reason they put forward, daughters are oppressed by their parents in several ways. When these daughters grow up, they become submissive, dependent characters who are confined to their homes; they become the others in public space, women ‘in cages’.

As the first form of individual oppression, parental oppression is a theme where Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak take different directions. Even though Ursula K. Le Guin does not use it as a theme in her works, we see that Sevim Burak uses family pressure as a form of oppression in most of her stories; it is the oppression of family that makes women obey patriarchal society's norms and traditions. That's the reason why most women characters experience family pressure. The issue of honor is commonly related with the same theme seeing as it is the patriarchal family that makes honor as an issue and punishes women if they do *stain the family's honor*. For this reason, these two terms are related to each other; as a matter of fact, they are attached to each other very firmly.

In an early work of Burak, "Suicide" (İntihar), family pressure and the issue of honor is explicitly studied as a theme and it was explicitly stated by the author. The story is about a love relationship which is not approved of by the male character's family. Orhan, who is a rather rich man, is in love with Nermin, whose social status is lower than his. This fact does not mean anything to Orhan, still; his mother Feride does not accept Nermin as a prospective bride. Without a solution to his inner dilemmas, Orhan wants to commit suicide but he is afraid to actually perform it. Unlike Orhan, Nermin kills herself at the end of the story. We find out that Nermin commits suicide because of both Orhan's mother and her own father. Orhan's mother Feride talks to Nermin earlier and simply warns her and Feride's father is also a very strict man, who plays a part in Nermin's death. We understand her fear of her father very well with the help of Nermin's comments about her father: "Oh my God, My father mustn't see us." (The Big Sin, 55)

After Feride and Nermin's conversation and Feride's threat about telling her father and finishing her social life, Nermin does not meet Orhan for ten days and at the end of these days Orhan goes to Nermin's neighborhood. When she sees him, the first thing she can think of is her father because he is very cruel. We know this because Nermin implies this all the time saying that "You do not know my father." Burak also emphasizes 'honor' and reminds us about 'honor killings', which was and has been a big problem in Turkish society. Nermin says that: "This has been an issue of honor know. If they see us together, first my father kills us, both of us" (*The Big Sin* 57)

It is clear that Nermin really believes in the impossibility of their relationship and is greatly scared of his father and what he is capable of doing. Here, Burak exemplifies most young girls' fate in Nermin's simple love story. In this story, the woman characters are much stronger than the male ones, especially than Orhan because from the very beginning of the story till the end, he wants to kill himself, but does not have courage to do so; thus, he always finds a reason to justify his non-action. On the other hand, we learn that Nermin jumps into a well and dies. The family pressure causes Nermin's death in the end. Instead of accepting what awaits her, she commits suicide. Burak presents here that an example of individual forms of oppression which starts in the nuclear family and leads to the character's death. Nermin's death is presented by Burak as the direct result of individual forms of oppression. The character chooses to die rather than leading an unwanted life.

In "O God Jehova" (Ah ya Rab Yehova) oppression from family is also an important and visible theme. The female character Zembul, leaves her family

because her family wants her to marry a man whom she does not love. Unlike Feride, who commits suicide, Zembul chooses not to die but to live freely and escapes from home. However, bad fate along with her family does not let her alone. She becomes seriously ill after she gives birth to a baby.

While Zembul is on her death-bed, there is a knock at the door and somebody with red hair comes in. The color of the hair is especially emphasized since red represents sin in most religion. Red may represent sin, fire or blood, on the other hand, it represents life, energy and joy. Actually these two parts of the equilibrium - though seeming opposites – are related to each other especially when gender discrimination in the public sphere is considered. If a woman has energy and life is a joy for her, people start to find some problems regarding her life style. If a woman tries to be a traditional woman who accepts all the gender roles given to her, it is not possible to be happy, thus, there will sure be blood and fire and sins.

Hands were covered with red hair  
Eyes were full of fear  
And all his ancestors' eyes were also full of fear  
His name was Israil Allahanati (60)

Burak uses the color red to also indicate shame. We learn that Israil is Zembul's elder brother and he is ashamed of his sister's having left with a Muslim man and being pregnant out of marriage. Not only her brother but also all her ancestors are full of fear and shame as a result of her situation.

“It is true that I have committed a crime, I have done this and that...” (60)

Leaving her own religion and her family and getting pregnant from a Muslim man is “a crime” for her. Even though she defends herself by saying that she

loved the man very much and when she saw his face she thought she saw the RAB's face, her confession proves that she feels ashamed of what she has done. It must also be added that RAB is a word used by Muslims and she says her brother that because she is about to confront with RAB, he must make peace with her. (60) However, Israel goes on accusing her because of what she has done and implies that she will be punished because of her actions, not anyone else's. Israel's words are of great significance here, he says:

“What did you do to us?...” (60) Using the pronoun ‘us’ instead of ‘you’ is very important and tells us that though her own situation is going worse and she is the one who will probably die, the brother thinks about only himself and his family. This is not unanticipated given that many women are killed in the name of ‘honor’. Families especially men in families believe their family's name, the perception of their surname is more important than women's life. If a woman has done something which is not approved by the society, her life does not matter; the only thing that matters is the family's reputation. The brother says “Your ending will be ‘burning’ and ‘fire’. Oh, my sister how will I save you?” (60) He believes, even wants his sister to be punished accordingly. Israel also condemns Zembul for giving birth to a child out of marriage. His language shows that he never forgives his sister and does not believe that the god will excuse her. He says:

That man slept with you, but he is not your husband. You gave birth to a baby, the baby is not yours, he cannot say “my mother” to you, will not know your name, he will be hidden on this ground, he will be an outcast and a fugitive. What shall I do now? Shall I consider my sister a ‘whore’? You are my father's daughter; I am my father's son. You are my sister, I am your brother. Why did you turn away from us? Why did you leave your mother, father, siblings, home, ark, bronze and iron stuff, everything you own? Why did you leave my father's home? (60)



Following tradition, if a child's mother is Jewish, that means the child is also Jewish. However, Zembul's son is born into a Muslim family that's why Israil is very critical of her child. The child will be an "outcast" and "fugitive" seeing that he will not feel himself Jewish or Muslim, he will stand in the purgatory. Another important point emphasized by Israil is that the child cannot say "my mother" to her because the child will be born into a Muslim family and will speak Turkish as a result. However, Zembul is a Jew and her mother tongue will not be spoken in the family. She used to hide her ethnicity and Zembul's son will also experience the same. Zembul justifies the situation claiming that she had a conversation with Rab. Rab said to her "You are a Jew but your son will be a Muslim." (60)

It is the oppression from her family that puts Zembul in a difficult situation in the first place. We learn from Zembul's dialog with her brother that she was engaged to another Jewish man by force but she did not want to marry him and she loved Bilal very much and as a consequence, she left everything behind. This is a very well-known theme in Turkish society and literature alike. In Turkey, along with many other countries in the world, arranged marriages were very common in the 1950s and 1960s. Burak's choice of this theme shows that the tradition was also common in Jewish society which makes us think that it is a woman's destiny to live the life arranged for her by society. Moreover, those years were the times most unmarried women did not have economic freedom to support themselves which forced them to live with their nuclear family or get married to someone who they think is suitable for you. We learn from this account that Jewish society was not different from Turkish society when it comes to women. Even so, when Israil visits Zembul on her death-bed, he accuses her; not himself or the family because of what

they have done to her. What is more startling is that Zembul does not show any signs of hatred or anger but she wants even begs her to let her body stay in Muslim cemetery not a Jewish one. This clearly shows that even when a woman dies, there is a chance that her desires will not be fulfilled; the men around her will decide what is best for her, the oppression continues. After hearing this, Israil sees “her face dead, her hands burnt”(61), which might mean that he thinks she will die and go to hell as a consequence of her sins. Then he leaves. As a result, in “O God Jehova” individual forms of oppression are presented by Burak in the form of nuclear family oppression. This kind of oppression is known as “the daughters in boxes” as a reference to the popular term in Japan, which clearly shows that this kind of oppression is a result of fathers, brothers or in some cases mothers, as well.

Ursula K. Le Guin’s selected works do not include family pressure as a theme. There is a difference between American family structure and Turkish family structure. It can be argued that many Turkish families are much more restrictive than American families when it comes to their children’s life choices. It is a fact that literature cannot be read so literally and works of fiction are not historical documents; nevertheless, in the works of literature we see how authors see and perceive life and portray what they perceive in their works. As a result, Le Guin does not show parental oppression as a force on daughters. There are, indeed, manifestations of oppression by showing that parental responsibilities and ownership of families do not exist in Le Guin’s idealized worlds; nonetheless, these are not as firm as the ones in Burak’s stories. In Sevim Burak’s stories we see the examples of arranged marriages and the inner problems that result from them. We see that the decision makers of the families are most commonly fathers of the families and their

daughters have no choice but to obey their decisions. If they do not, they are represented as punished by their families and/or the societies around them.

However, in the works of Le Guin we observe that daughters have a choice in their lives such as Tudju in *The Wild Girls* who does not want to marry the man whom her family thinks is suitable for her. Tudju leaves her family and lives in the Great Temple, no one punishes her and she keeps being a decision maker of the family. Unlike Tudju, Zembul who does not want to get married to the man that her family wants, she has to leave the family but she becomes the black sheep of the family and she is punished by the family and by Gods as well. These different representations show that women who are not dependent on their families and try to be the only decision maker of their lives are punished by their families in Burak's fiction. However, in the worlds that Le Guin creates daughters are respected even when they are not supported.

For instance, in *The Dispossessed* by Ursula K. Le Guin, we look into a very different world when compared to ours. In it, marriage is not a legal and traditional institution and thus, it does not give family members such responsibilities or status as fatherhood and motherhood which in turn makes these people the decision makers. Being a decision maker in a family is thought to mean limiting the other's lives and choices of the family members particularly in patriarchal societies. As matter of fact, fathers are the "accepted" family members of Turkish families which is a fact that puts women in a disadvantaged situation because as a male, a father tends to give freedom to his sons, but not daughters, which, in the long term, generates patriarchal society again and again. In this sense, Ursula K. Le Guin does not portray parents as

oppressors. For example, in Anarres, because of the lack of legal marriages, people are free to do whatever they want without any pressure from families. Destroying the nuclear family means wiping out all the pressure and rejecting familial limitations. Nonetheless, destroying the nuclear family does not mean that the children are not cared for by anyone. They get the affection and care they need from people who do not have to be their biological fathers or mothers; they have *tadde* and *mamme*; the former is used for the male and the latter for the female version of caretakers. Le Guin explains that system;

A small child may call any adult *mamme* or *tadde*. Gimar's *tadde* may have been her father, an uncle, or an unrelated adult who showed her parental or grandparental responsibility and affection. She may have called several people *tadde* or *mamme*, but the word has a more specific use than *ammarr* (brother/sister), which may be used to anybody. (*The Dispossessed* 61)

Given that, daughters are not restricted by a conventional family structure where the father is assumed to be the leader of the household as a decision maker.

Consequently, daughters do not experience the restrictions resulting from parental pressure. They are not kept in “boxes”, rather, they are as free and mobile as they would like to be.

To sum up, in the selected works of Sevim Burak, oppression from the nuclear family as a form of individual oppression is an important theme. Families mainly the male members of families are shown to be the decision makers of women's own lives. Daughters are grown up in the “boxes” so that they may honor their families. It is this oppression that makes women's life miserable; they are punished by their families or they choose to die as a result of this oppression. In Ursula K. Le Guin's works, on the other hand, parental pressure is not explored as a

theme. Women are shown to be guided by their parents but they seem more independent in terms of their life choices.

### **3.1.2 .Women ‘In Cages’**

The second form of individual oppression is the one that a woman experiences after she has a second family; after she gets married. Despite the fact that Burak and Le Guin differ in representing the parental pressure as a form of individual oppression, they both consider marriage as a form of individual oppression and show the very similar ways marriage oppresses women in their works.

Sevim Burak uses the cage metaphor so often in order to demonstrate that women are trapped in their houses or small environments as a result of marriages and that kind of relationships and the women characters are the ones who suffer from them. It can be claimed that for Burak being married turns out to be some sort of slavery in the end. In a story by Burak, “Puss-in-the-Corner” (Köşe Kapmaca), we read letters of two women to each other. After complex relations, Cavidan starts to work at the position that previously held by Gönül and Gönül becomes a lover to Cavidan’s ex-boyfriend Mümtaz. In the letter we understand that this has been the plan of Cavidan from the very beginning. The author makes a criticism about marriage and being a housewife using Cavidan’s letter as a tool. “You are a creature living in dreams and who was born to love and be loved. You might be a tender housewife. Do not get me wrong, other housewives, indeed, have less qualifications than you do.” (67)

This comment of Burak unearths that she criticizes housewives who rely on their husbands and become their loyal, willing *slaves*. We also understand this criticism of being just a house-wife at the end of Cavidan's letter to Gönül. Cavidan makes it clear that Gönül can get married to Mûmtaz, her ex-boyfriend seeing as she has no intention to get married. The word choice that Burak uses also shows us that she is against being married, as well. Cavidan writes Gönül that: "Yes, your golden is ready and do not hesitate to go inside! God bless you and make you happy. Dear child." (68)

Burak uses the cage metaphor in this context; marriage is being in a cage, she means, which limits and furthermore ends one's freedom. In the real life, similarly, when most women get married, they lose control of their life and do not decide what to do, where to go. Everything is decided by the one who holds the key of their cages and in this context; the husband. Burak describes the cage as "golden" inasmuch as couples, or more exactly young girls, expect that marriage will be as perfect as a dream; they will always love and respect each other. For this reason, the author describes it as "a golden cage". However, in practice, when these young women get married, they see that even if it is made of gold, they are in a cage. Sevim Burak does not clearly write about her own ideas about marriage but the cage metaphor is enough for the readers. As a result, Cavidan is portrayed as an independent and clever woman who achieves her goal; starts working at a place where she wants and actually gets rid of the boyfriend she does not actually want to marry. She is as free as a bird, unlike Gönül is confined in a cage by a marriage.

In other works of Burak, we also see characters that are in golden cages and these characters are mostly unhappy, unstable individuals who often experience mental problems because of their confinement. The society oppresses them with its most popular institution; marriage. It might be that in her early career Sevim Burak chooses a path and she carries on the same path during her entire writing career. As characters evolve and experience different ways of lives, the general issues she dealt with remain the same. Using a different surname after marriage is another way of making women lose identity. When they get married they legally become another person. Whether they are called by their husband's surname or not, they become the wife of a man, so their names do not matter as of that moment. In "The Engaged Girl" (Nişanlı Kız) Burak avoids using the girl's name at the beginning and she just uses 'young girl' and we know that this young girl has a fiancée, an owner and this owner uses her name for the first time, not the writer, not the girl herself. It is as if she is not complete without her fiancée, actually she is nothing without him, not even an individual with a name. Burak's not naming the girl is also functional to say that this could be anybody and it is the experience of many girls. We can argue that while criticizing men and their certain attitudes and prejudices, Burak also criticizes what marriage means for most people including some women.

Even the end of marriage is a form of oppression for women. In another story, "The Big Sin" Sevim Burak does not name the woman just as the woman in the story "The Engaged Girl". Not naming the woman, but describing them with their marital status (married, widow, engaged) is a habit of Burak and doing this, she actually blasts the importance given to these statuses and implies that women lose their identity by getting into a marriage and it also means that this could happen to

anyone, it is the experience that matters not the individual. Along with many other forms of oppressions inflicted by marriage, ending of a marriage opens another era a woman's life which is generally not easier than her previous status.

Burak's way of including marriage as a form of individual oppression into her stories changes in time. While she writes about unmarried women who hope to get married and familial oppressions about marriage in her previous works, in her first published story book *Burnt Palaces*, readers come across married women who are oppressed by the practice of marriage. We see that young women, who have hoped to lead a happy life after marriage, feel trapped in their houses and want to escape from everything that is reserved for a married woman. They become the others both in mind and in space and being the other makes their life unbearable.

Even though the main characters in "The House with Mother-of-Pearl" (Sedef Kakmalı Ev) are not married, the relationship between the main characters Nurperi and Ziya can be considered a marriage seeing that Nurperi has lived with Mr.Ziya since her childhood and she becomes everything for him. Her life is depicted as a lonely one and Mr. Ziya is portrayed as the only master at home. He even castrates the male cat. Nurperi becomes a delusional woman whose life and dreams cannot be separated. Her only chance to be liberated is the death of Mr. Ziya, so it is difficult to understand whether he really dies or whether she only dreams about it. Burak uses a kite as a symbol in the story after mentioning that with Ziya's death, Nurperi feels happy so that she may finally get the life she longs for. While looking at the coffin, she draws an analogy between the coffin and a kite. She thinks that the coffin would make children happy by crashing here and there. Then, she



draws a much better analogy between herself and the kite; that is, the coffin becomes a kite for her. A kite, as we know it, might represent freedom because it flies, but it also represents dependence inasmuch as it has a strip that is held by someone. As a result, even though she feels free owing to the death of Ziya, she still feels confined because she remembers her past and memories hurt her despite the fact that all those bad experiences will never be repeated. Burak writes: “She thought about the resemblance between coffin and kite, kite and herself and other things that resemble each other; finally she could draw resemblance between everything. Thinking and thinking, she reached at the most obsolete parts of her life.” (*Burnt Palaces* 11)

Rıza Soylu asserts that in Burak’s stories one important theme is “...the oppressed, unhappy woman. She always writes about unhappy woman.” He gives Nurperi as an example of a woman whose life “starts and ends in the kitchen” (187). At the end of the story, or at the end of her dreams, Nurperi cannot get the house and she cuts her hair and sticks to the dark bottom of a pan in the kitchen, where she has spent her forty years, being a slave to Ziya. This ending might also be considered Nurperi’s illumination inasmuch as she finally knows that there is no gain in this painful path. The story of Nurperi does not end here; we see that Sevim Burak uses the same characters in her other stories and sometimes in plays as well.

As mentioned earlier Sevim Burak uses cage as a metaphor for marriage in her stories. In “The Big Bird”, however she writes about a woman and a bird. This bird is identified with the husband for some critics; however, my contention is that the bird represents her second identity. Her opening the doors and leaving the house represents her challenging way to freedom.

I SEE YOU IT IS YOU IT IS ALSO APPARENT FROM THE  
WAY YOU STAND  
YOU ARE IN A CLOUD WRAPPED AROUND WITH A LIGHT  
FIRE (41)

The woman calls the bird which is in the sky and in a cloud. However, in the opening section of the story what she actually means using the word “bird” in the title is not certain. We do not understand whether it is a real bird, whether she is looking at or she is using a personification in order to make an allegory. The bird’s being in cloud may represent freedom, yet we have seen the examples of Burak’s using the bird and cage to show the opposite. Moreover, the bird’s being wrapped in fire might mean something deeper such as anger, sadness or even hate.

“She opened the doors of her house  
Untied the braid of her hair” (41)

Burak uses these two lines without any punctuation which may mean that it is just the beginning of everything because we know that full stop means the end of a sentence. She does not end her sentence here; actually she hardly ever uses full stops in general. With just two lines she deepens the ambiguity; opening the doors of her house might mean two opposite things: she might be coming in or going out. Yet, the second line gives us a hint that she is going out as she unties her hair. I think that in this story these two lines are of great importance because the two act; opening the doors and untying the hair are used intentionally so that the reader could see their importance. The house represents captivity so does the hair braid. As a result, opening the doors and untying the braid might allegorically be the first step to freedom. Seher Özkök explains the same two lines as well. She writes that the house is the only place that the woman exists and she leaves this place. Moreover, Özkök

asserts that the hair braid makes the woman again. (80) She claims that the figure of braid shows that she is a woman. It is a way of showing the character's womanhood. Even though I wouldn't agree with her on the hair issue because I believe untidying the hair means freedom and not the braid means confinement, she also makes the conclusion that this is a step to freedom.

One important aspect of the story is that Burak uses the first person point of view at the beginning of the story, with two lines in capital letters but then she passes to the third person point of view and in the original language she uses (Turkish) there is no he/she or it for the third person singular, which means she can mention about the bird when using third person or a woman (this is also an assumption because we just know that the person has long hair). As a consequence, these are all ambiguous and the reader has to decide which direction to choose. It might be just a bird from the very beginning to the end and the main character might be watching it and trying to construe the big bird's actions. My argument is that there is a woman and she is watching the girl and making comparisons between herself and the bird. She is confined unlike the bird and she creates her second self in the bird so that she can escape from all the oppressions she has to handle in the house.

Burak's word choice shows us the main character of the story is in a depression and her world is shattered, all in pieces. In empty swing, broken window, broken pieces and the sound of glass; her world is falling apart. Her loneliness is expressed very well by Burak. She writes "There was no word in her mouth." (42) There might be two different interpretations to this; she might be alone and feel loneliness or she might have nothing to say. In either scenario, she has some special

attention to the rooms. She describes the rooms she is walking in and out of as surly; she feels that they judge her. As the rooms are everything to her, she talks, leaves, threatens, meets up with the rooms, it is always these “surly rooms”. When these rooms are considered the first interpretation seems more convenient; she is lonely and she communicates with herself. She asks and answers by herself.

“Without a word “That’s s/he is not here, is notit?” “No, s/he is not” nodded her.

“No, s/he is not here!” she insisted she was angry to her own as always. (...)” (42).

This monologue goes on and we understand that she is looking for somebody and suddenly she changes what she is looking for, she accuses herself, she denies that and finally crawling she accepts “I have lost him/her” (43). With this recognition the story becomes more understandable now that we can see that she is mourning for her loss; whatever it is. In the following parts of the story we learn that the woman, as a child used to walk with a big bird, with a hawk which everyone was afraid of and thus leaving her. The hawk, as a result, was the only figure with which she shared her fate. That is the very same figure she is looking for everywhere. This big bird, the hawk can be considered as another character in the story given that the title is “The Big Bird”. The species of the bird is of importance. The names of Burak’s characters are always chosen very carefully. In this case, we do not know the name but the species of the character; a hawk. A hawk can be interpreted as the symbol of strength by some because of its meaning in Egyptian history. Seher Özkök and Bedia Koçakoğlu consider the hawk a male figure such as father or husband. I, on the contrary, argue that the hawk is a female figure. It is a rare bird in that female hawks are bigger than their mates. This is called sexual dimorphism. There is a theory suggesting that “a larger female bird of prey is better equipped to protect

herself during contact with the potentially dangerous and certainly well-armed male.” (Haws, Characteristics and Behavior) Only this quality of hawks might be enough for Burak to choose the bird as a main character. The woman who is oppressed by her family members; whether by her husband or father, tries to escape all forms of oppression by becoming a bird.

In “O God Jehova” marriage is also used as a sub theme which exemplifies individual form of oppression. Unlike “The Big Bird” (Büyük Kuş) or “The House with Mother of Pearl” (Sedef Kakmalı Ev), marriage is considered a way out for the main character; Zembul, who is a Jewish woman with a child from a Muslim man. However, the relationship does not bring happiness to the main characters. In this story, the woman wants to get married before she gives birth to the baby. She believes marriage will help her become *an honorable* person again. This is also explained by her family’s attitude towards her seeing as her own brother accuses her of “having sinned” (60). In “O God Jehova”, it is Bilal who does not want to get married and does not care about starting a family; not because he wants his independence but because he does not want to get married to a Jewish woman even though he does not admit it openly.

On the other hand, Ursula K. Le Guin’s women experience marriage in different ways; according to the world she creates, marriage can be frustrating, restrictive and oppressive or in an idealized world, marriage does not exist as a traditionally compulsory institution. Rather, a couple can choose to be together or not. In this way, she shows the possibility of it being something else, which is recognition of the current state of marriage as oppressive for women.

In *The Wild Girls*, for example, Le Guin shows us that the idea of marriage can be oppressive and just like Burak's stories, arranged marriages are common. Tudju, as the daughter of the family, is to get married to someone who can afford to buy her as a commodity. However, Tudju can escape from marriage by leaving her family to live in the Great Temple. Similarly, the slaves in the same house Modh and Mal, are to be expected wives of the men in the house or be sold to other men. The relationship is based on the idea of exchange and their virginity is of great importance in this bargain. As a result, even though the marriage itself is not depicted as oppressive but the traditions surrounding marriage is a way of oppressing women. This exchange relationship is analyzed in the commodification of women section.

Unlike *The Wild Girls*, in *The Left Hand of Darkness*, Le Guin creates a world without sexes in their common meaning. The people are all androgynous and their relationship to each other is mostly non-sexual. However, there is a tradition that can be accepted as one form of marriage. In their kemmering period, a couple can vow to each other and they can always be together in their kemmering period. However, a vow between couples does not oppress women or men; it is just a sign of mutual love.

Ong Tot Oppong, woman Investigator asserts in her notes about the Gethenians that "The furthest extreme from this practice is the custom of vowing kemmering (Karh.oskyommer ), which is to all intents and purposes monogamous marriage. It has no legal status, but socially and ethically is an ancient and vigorous institution." (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 120)

As can be understood from the quotation vowing kemmering is just like a marriage without its legal status. However, because they are androgynous and have a kemmering once a month for a few days, because the couple has a vow of kemmering, they come together in their kemmering period. Except for the kemmering period, they must be free and independent. As a matter of fact, Le Guin does not mention these exceedingly major matters, which is unfortunate. Vowing kemmering must be a mutually arranged tradition and pleases just the couple, not the society or families, as on Earth.

In another novel by Ursula K. Le Guin; *The Dispossessed*, marriage is discussed in two contrasting ways because in the novel two societies are compared and contrasted. On Anarres, which is assumed to be an idealized world, live the Anarchists and in earthlike Urras patriarchy is dominant. As a result, the two worlds differ in many issues, including marriage. For instance, we learn from Shevek, who represents Anarres that they do not have marriage as an institution but there are couples who would like to be together and may have a child together. We also learn that Odo, who is the spiritual leader and reformer of Anarres, condemns marriage as an institution.

He knew from Odo's writings that two hundred years ago the main Urrasti sexual institutions had been "marriage," a partnership authorized and enforced by legal and economic sanctions, and "prostitution," which seemed merely to be a wider term, copulation in the economic mode. Odo had condemned them both, and yet Odo had been "married." And anyhow the institutions might have changed greatly in two hundred years.

*(The Dispossessed 30)*

On Anarres, people's partnership is not an institution, no one owns the other; there is no legal status or social force to be together. When Shevek is asked whether he has a wife in Anarres, he answers "no." When he understands what they mean, he explains that they do not use those terms; husband and wife. He states:

"Oh—yes. A partner, our children. Excuse me, I was thinking of something else. A 'wife,' you see, I think of that as something that exists only on Urras."

"What's a 'partner'?" She glanced up mischievously into his face.

"I think you would say a wife or husband."

*(The Dispossessed 268)*

If they want to be partners, they become partners just like Gethenians in *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Given that they do not institutionalize being partners, marriage is not living in a cage, it does not resemble the ones in Sevim Burak's stories from that point of view. Women do not have to stay in their homes to bring up their children or always live with their partners. There is no bond or signed contract between them which restricts their lives. In this way they are free to choose where to live, where to work, whether to look after the child or not. They are not considered as the other in mind or in space. They are members of the same society having the same opportunities and rights. When Veä asks Shevek why his partner wasn't with him, he answers that she did not want to be and also she had work to do there. It is hard to understand for Veä for the reason that she lives on earth like Urras where women have to go wherever their husbands go as if they were just objects owned by their husbands. They do not have an opportunity to stay or go as they wish. On the other hand, in Anarres women are independent and self-sufficient to choose their life without any limitations. Shevek's biological mother Rulag is also an example of such a woman, who goes away after giving birth to Shevek and works somewhere else without her partner. Shevek's biological father does not have any trouble with the



idea. When he is asked whether they will go together because they are both parents and both engineers, he says “It’s the Central Institute of Engineering that wants her, see. I’m not that good. Rulag has a great work to do.” (*The Dispossessed* 41) What is also worth mentioning is that as a male, Palat accepts the fact that his partner, Rulag, a female, is better at her profession, which is engineering not nursery. It must be added that although Le Guin does not write about the limitations of marriage or other restricting patriarchal institutions openly in Anarres because there are not, by reinventing the very same institutions, she also shows the reader the possibility of another life in which women are not constrained by marriage, do not find themselves confined in cages, and lead their lives without submission, subordination or otherness.

In short, marriage, as an individual form of oppression, is explored in both Le Guin’s and Burak’s fiction but in different ways. Burak mainly shows marriage as an institution which oppresses women. In the stories, this oppression exists in two ways. Before marriage; women struggle to find the ideal husband for them and there is always a tension between themselves and their families. During marriage, women are confined in their houses, become unhappy, miserable, lonely housewives, feel weak under the obligations of marriage and they look for ways to escape it. Cages are also used as a metaphor by Burak to indicate that women’s freedom is restricted by marriage. Even when women get divorced, because of their new social status, they are expected to stay in their cages as a result of the patriarchal society’s oppression on widow women. Otherwise, they become the other in space; in workplace, in the neighborhood, in the society. Le Guin, on the other hand, explores marriage in her fiction with the exclusion of institutionalized marriage. In *The Dispossessed* and *The*

*Left Hand of Darkness*, it is not marriage that brings people together, but it is mutual love and understanding. The commitment is, thus, not to the institution but for the other person. As a consequence, marriage does not exist as an oppressive force for the people inhabiting these idealized worlds. This does not mean that marriage is portrayed as not being an oppressive force; rather, by showing the idealized Le Guin implies the constraints of marriage in earth like planets. In *The Wild Girls*, however, Le Guin also portrays marriage as an oppressive force, which requires virginity and also women are treated as commodities in marriages.

### **3.2. Collective forms of oppression**

Collective forms of oppression are the ones that oppress women and restrain their lives not the individuals around them, but the whole society, institutions and mind sets that they produce. Thus, in this kind of oppression even though there are individuals who perform the specific action, it is not only the person who performs the action but also the mind set which makes the performer perform the action. In the selected works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin, mainly three forms of collective oppression are looked for and analyzed: patriarchy, religion and commodification.

#### **3.2.1. Patriarchy**

When patriarchal society is referenced it means the collective; not only one member's oppression over women, but society's being an oppressor as a whole with its traditions, conceptions, supposed ethical values and biased women perceptions. The patriarchal society, naturally, includes such institutions as marriage which put women in the subordinate position. However, patriarchal society's oppression of

women is systematic and destructive for all women even if they personally are not in the second position in their personal ‘spaces’. That is, even if a woman has equal rights with her husband in her own house and independent or whether she is not regarded as the subordinate in her nuclear family and valued by her parents, living in a patriarchal society, she faces discrimination as a result of the collective, systematic oppression towards all women. In a patriarchal society, there is no escape from oppression even when women establish and lead a personal life which is perfectly unbiased or independent. In the selected works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin, this systematic and collective oppression towards women by the patriarchal society can also be seen and analyzed.

Burak’s story “The Big Bird” (Büyük Kuş) is a fine example of patriarchal oppression. In the story, the woman character is depicted in a relation to the city. As a result, the city can be regarded as the patriarchal society which oppresses the woman character and finally kills her.

She opened the doors of her house

Untied the braid of her hair

the body came in front of the CITY. (41)

Burak’s using “city” in capital letters might mean that she is giving human characters to the city and we can also grasp that her action was towards the outside world when she opens the doors of the house. Throughout the story, the woman is depicted as a lonely and gloomy figure that looks for her other self (the hawk) and tries to console herself by resolving the tension between herself and the patriarchal society. The main character’s loneliness and mental situation is explained in very contrasting views by some authors. Seher Özkök offers an explanation via The Oedipus Complex. She interprets the whole story using Freudian and Lacanian terms. She writes that

“Burak shows us a character who has a tendency towards her father but trying to approach the father via the actions contrasting to the rules of the society which were structured by the same father figure. At this point, the main character takes out her eye lenses as a result of the shame towards her mother”(80).

Interpreting the same story, Koçakoğlu believes that the main character is unhappy because of losing her husband. She even adds that the main character feels guilty about it; she might even have killed him. She cannot even agree with herself in her thesis. At some point she writes “In Büyük Kuş, a woman’s paying off her sins is told. A young woman kills her husband who sells her. After this murder, she starts to be with everyone she comes across with.”(159) However, in the very same work after about twenty pages she also writes “She is longing for the days with her husband” and “her days have gone dark because of her husband’s death” (Koçakoğlu 184). These are two very contrasting views by the same author about the very same character. How can the character kill her husband because he sells her and feels guilty about it? More interesting and actually worse is that as a woman, Koçakoğlu defines the situation as “paying off sins”, meaning that the woman is wrong, not the husband supposedly selling the wife. This interpretation about women –always wrong whatever they experience- is common among men critics and that’s one of the reasons that feminist criticism must be applied to such texts.

Despite all these different points of views, both Koçakoğlu and Özkök believe that the city is male, which can also be interpreted as the patriarchal society itself. The references made to it all show that there is a dispute between the woman and the city, the city does not try to understand her, it does not even listen to her. We

could argue that this is a classic for Burak seeing that in most of the stories in *Burnt Palaces* (Yanık Saraylar), the main women characters have problems with themselves, with the settings limiting their independence and especially with the men around them. Not being understood well is a common problem of the women Burak creates. As a writer, she also struggles to find the deserved place in a male centered literature circle and unfortunately cannot. In her article about Sevim Burak, Nilüfer Güngörmüş Erdem writes that:

...Nither men do not accept her in the big, central literary circle, nor do women seem to accept her in 'women literature' world. If Sevim Burak is writer who is not accepted in the literary world, thus public memory by women themselves, I believe this is mostly because she does not mention women' issues in a habitual, expected cliché way. (99)

When the woman comes in front of the City, she finds it eyes-closed and thinks that the City is dead, yet it was just night and the city needed to sleep. As mentioned earlier, there is a personification of the city, and it stands for "man"; thus, the subject pronoun "he" is used here for the city in order to show the City's gender and the discourse between a woman and a man from time to time.

The patriarchal society is indifferent to the problems of the woman. After seeing that the City is motionless, she kneels and kisses his "dark mouth" as if she "wanted to resurrect him". (46) Resurrection of the person by kissing the lips is nothing but a fairy tale and Burak's use of this image shows us, when she comes in front of the city all alone, she becomes defenseless like a child and thus believing in fairy tales. She asks whether he also died and not getting a response she gets angry yelling that; "Go to hell, you too. Go to hell all of you." (46) This anger might be the result of her disappointment about men; by saying "go to hell all of you" she means

all men should go to hell, that's the place they deserve. However, the city answers her and wants her to leave him alone. She wants her vodkas. "Give me my vodkas" she says.

Patriarchal society ruins the woman's life in different ways. In her dialogues with the City, she expresses that her life is ruined but the City criticizes her. The remarks the City makes are common male responses. While reading one might think that the conversation is between a husband and wife. The husband threatens the wife to take away what she really likes. In the story, the City always threatens to take her vodka away and this depresses her. The more the woman gets angry and upset, the happier the city becomes and finally the woman punches the city. The city does not like the situation and wants to say "A young woman", "A young mademoiselle" but suddenly he sneezes. Seher Özkök interprets this sneeze as the result of society's allergy to woman. She asserts that "When the symbol of the society, that is city, tries to address her with a reverential, he looks at her and sneezes. This sneeze might be understood as both an absurd item and society's allergy to woman, as the result of society's not accepting the woman in."(89)

It is important to be clear about Sevim Burak's usage of capital letters in different contexts. In this short story, she by and large uses them to mention about her childhood and the past. When the city sneezes she starts using capital letters so that she can separate the present from the past. Her punctuation is also worth studying because that is another way Burak breaks the rules of language.

The city admits wisely that:

"The main problem is TO LIVE" and "This problem must be fixed." (54) Then the city makes it clear that he is going to leave her, but she will find someone else. This

assumption, along with his idea that the main problem is to live and it must be fixed, the city makes up his mind and he starts to choke her with a scarf. During his performance, he tries to hide that he is killing her, he says he will sing her a song: “YOU ARE A BIRD, GO FLY TO THE SKY” This time the city’s speech gets broken, Burak uses capital letters to emphasize the last words of the city. He asks:

“DID YOU GET IT? DID YOU GET WHO I WAS? DO YOU  
RECOGNIZE THE VOICE?

-HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A MAN WITH TWO VOICES?

-HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A MAN WITH FOUR VOICES?

As the woman is asking for help, the city goes on asking:

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF A MAN WITH ELEVEN VOICES?

A MAN WITH TWELVE VOICES

A MAN WITH THIRTEEN VOICES

A MAN WITH FOURTEEN VOICES. (56)

The woman becomes speechless but the city goes on:

A MAN WITH A HUNDRED VOICES

A MAN WITH A THOUSAND VOICES

A MAN WITH TEN THOUSAND VOICES

A MAN WITH A HUNDRED THOUSAND VOICES (57)

The society restricts the woman, it bores her with rules and prohibitions and tries to pay off her way of life by oppressing her is a way of killing her choking. Bedia Koçakoğlu also believes that the society in the form of the city kills her writing that she must be punished because of her murder and for living outside of the norms of society she adds the way the city kills her is not coincidental. I should add that even

though Koçakoğlu accepts that patriarchal society kills the main character, she insists that the main character's way of life is not right, which shows- one more time- that Koçakoğlu also internalizes a male-dominated, patriarchal society and its norms.

We may propose that the city acknowledges he is not just one man, he represents all the men in her life, the male- centered, patriarchal society, which in the end kills the woman without a doubt. He is satisfied with himself because he knows her end; she will never settle, never become chained by men as they wish. She deserves to die. Moreover, at the end, the city tells her to fly over the sky, which may confirm my suggestion that the big bird represents the woman. At the very end of the story, a new line starts and we read: "I see you. There you are- under the tree- not breathing- your eyes open- lying at full length- next to the big bird- sleeping" (57). The story ends with the victory of the city, which represents the victory of the man and on a larger scale, of patriarchal society. By creating such a character, Burak shows how collective forces of patriarchy oppress women. The woman's desire for freedom and independence becomes the reason for her death at the hands of society.

Similarly, in "The Big Sin" by Sevim Burak, we observe a small community in which the woman character is stereotyped and gossiped about just because she is a widow. The story starts with a usual evening at the neighborhood's cafeteria. We learn that there is a widow woman in the neighborhood, who has recently moved there and the people at the cafeteria have been discussing the rumors about the widow woman. The author makes it visible that women who have been divorced for any reason are always talked about especially in small neighborhoods. Using this widow figure in a story titled "The Big Sin", Burak condemns this point



of view. As mentioned earlier, the oppression does not end when the marriage ends. In fact by ending it, the woman also becomes an object in the hand of patriarchal society instead of a specific person, the husband. Thus, collective form of oppression takes place of the individual forms of oppression.

Patriarchal society finds followers, supporters and protectors that are either male or female. We come across such female supporters of patriarchal society in Burak's other stories, as well. For instance, in the story "The Window", we see that the woman walking on the terrace does not listen to the narrator and the narrator admits that that is the first time she sees her, without lies, without a curtain and adds that:

"Like a puppet played by strips, she came in front of my window. Her mouth distorted, she was saying meaningless things, wanting my help. Two fat women took her between their arms, she couldn't get rid of them" (*Burnt Palaces* 20). Here, Burak uses the puppet image to show that she has no control of her actions and does what is told. The person or the thing directing the puppet is much stronger than herself; in this case, Burak might have chosen these two women deliberately so as to show that women are the reasons of what other women have to endure. Burak shows that some women are guardians of the patriarchal society. The narrator, deconstructing the prose style again, writes:

She was beaten and weak.  
They were shaking the woman, slapping her to make her speak.  
She was always looking at me.  
What did she want from me?  
They took her like that.  
They would make her scream again  
In dining halls,  
In kitchens,  
In lumber-rooms,  
She would go up to the terrace the other day,

Hang the washing on the rope,  
I would see her face again,  
Her freckled arms,  
Her laundry,  
Their ropes.  
Looking at my window, she would say 'I got wiser now.' (20)

Making the other 'she' say 'I got wiser now' Burak wants us to see that the woman, like all the others in the society, surrenders in the end and she gives up her fight with the patriarchal society.

Ursula K. Le Guin portrays patriarchal society as a force which oppresses women mainly through power structures. Walby asserts that "male violence against women has all the characteristics one would expect of a social structure, and that it cannot be understood outside an analysis of patriarchal social structures" (128). Physically stronger men use their power to force women in many ways such as sexual harassment or slavery. In *The Dispossessed* and *The Left Hand of Darkness*, on the other hand, the reader is shown that a society where patriarchy does not exist is possible to imagine. By this means, Le Guin implies the restrictive and oppressive forces of patriarchal society in real life and destroys the phallogocentric thinking.

As Beechey writes "The cause of women's oppression is represented as lying in the timeless male drive for power over women." ("On Patriarchy") Even in modern societies, laws protect men who exert their power over women. Men who sexually assault women or use violence against women can evade punishment easily; they get discounts in their time. This produces and reproduces the oppression from men. Not being as physically powerful as men, a woman may be forced to do anything that she does not consent to, including rape. Le Guin portrays men's using

their physical advantages on women in the forms of harassment or rape generally as examples of showing the oppression towards women.

In *Tehanu*, for example, Therru is a little girl, who is taken care of by the protagonist Tenar. Therru is previously raped and molested by her own family members, by her father. She escapes from them and Tenar who is a widow woman finds and becomes a guardian to her. Even though Tenar is depicted as the guardian of the little girl, she needs a man to protect her when the bad men arrive to get the girl back. It must be added that although Ursula K. Le Guin wants us to see women's difficult situation as a result of men, she uses a male figure to save her from this bad situation. So, nothing changes actually. Men are shown as both the causes of problems and the solutions to these problems.

Susan Brownmiller discusses power relations between females and males through rape. She writes "Women are trained to be rape victims. To simply learn the word "rape" is to take instruction in the power relationship between males and females. To talk about rape, even with nervous laughter, is to acknowledge a woman's special victim status. We hear the whispers when we are children: *girls get raped.*" (313) In *The Wild Girls*, likewise, it is the patriarchal society that enslaves two little girls at the very beginning. The little girls are taken as slaves in the first place as a result of their weakness; they become wives to the men they do not even know as a result of their weakness, they do not dare to escape; they are to obey all the rules their new environment and its traditions force on them as a result of their weakness. Bela, as a powerful male figure has every right to exert his power on these women because he is not punished by the patriarchal society. On the contrary, this is

what he is expected to do as the leader of the house. It is the patriarchal society that treats women as commodities on whom bride-bargains can be negotiated by men. It is the patriarchal society that lets a thirteen year-old little girl get married to someone for profit. It is the patriarchal society that makes women men's slaves, literally or not. It is the patriarchal society that makes Modh think Bela is not guilty of enslaving them. As the narrator suggests "She did not hate Bela ten Belen for leading the raid, killing Dua's Daughter, stealing her and Mal and the others. Men did that, nomads as well as City men. They raided, killed people, took food, took slaves. That was the way men were. It would be as useless to hate them for it as to love them for it" (*The Wild Girls* 12). It is the patriarchal society that makes women accept men as they are and submit.

Notwithstanding the fact that Ursula K. Le Guin does not write about life on Earth in her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*, she puts forward all the problems women experience in a patriarchal society by comparing it to Gethen. The notes on the chapter about sex is a criticism via this comparison of the two societies Gethen and Terra which is an earth-like planet. Ong Tot Opong, a female inspector who has arrived on Gethen earlier than the protagonist, writes: "Consider: There is no non-consensual sex, no rape. As with most mammals other than man, coitus can be performed only by mutual invitation and consent; otherwise it is not possible." (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 122) As can be seen, these lines show us that Le Guin anathematizes rape and non-consensual sex. When women are regarded as men's possessions, it is not surprising to hear stories of non-consensual sex, let alone rape.

All things considered, patriarchal society is a collective force oppressing women with its people and institutions. In both author's works, the patriarchal society exists as a force which determines women's secondary position, submission and dependence. It is the patriarchal society as a subject which defines women's roles. It is the patriarchal society which does not let homosexuals or queers in general live freely, which allow sexual harassment and rape of women and children, which protects abusers, rapists, oppressors. It is a subject which transcends; it is everywhere, it is everybody, it is every institution. For this reason, patriarchal society was evaluated to be a main oppressor which sometimes cannot be seen, cannot be detected, cannot be classified but felt as fully alive in women's lives in the selected works of Burak and Le Guin.

### **3.2. 2. Religion**

Religion is commonly believed to be a "legitimate" means to oppress women. As Estelle B. Freedman states in her introduction to *The Essential Feminist Reader*, "In Western culture, the representation of women as frivolous, evil, or dissipated???" rested in part on the myth of Eve bringing sin into the world, but images of female decadence and ignorance could be found in Chinese and Indian civilizations as well. These beliefs in women's incapacity for virtue and learning helped justify male control over daughters and wives, whether through law or through customs" (Freedman 14)

Most women under religious dogmas are restricted to lead an independent life. In many religions including Islam and Christianity, women are believed to be less important than men; Adam being the one, Eve is "the other". They are

portrayed as the sources of guilt, many sins, disputes and even wars in the history of humanity. When they are valued, it is their wombs to carry their babies, not themselves. Not only the religious codes dictating their behavior, clothing, interaction with other people especially men but also the traditions which religions produced oppress women's lives in many ways.

Sevim Burak, being the child of a Jewish mother and Muslim father, led a life among both Muslims and Jews; consequently, religions and traditions related to them, play a very important role in her stories, whether she mentions them explicitly or not. The rules and norms of societies are generally shaped by the main religions of the people. For that reason, when women characters struggle in society, the unstated reason is mostly religions and the traditions related to it. Yet, in some of Burak's stories she unambiguously mentions restrictions stemming from religion. In contrast, in the selected works of Ursula K. Le Guin religion is not regarded as a means to oppress women. It is mostly the patriarchal society itself that oppresses women in Ursula K. Le Guin's selected works.

The story "The Big Sin" by Sevim Burak is an example of how women are oppressed by religion directly or indirectly. The theme is unequivocally religious oppression and she uses a vocabulary related to it. In the story, we observe that religious ideas oppress women in a way that women historically are seen as the means of sins and evilness. However, in the story, the direct victim of the religion is a male; the woman is presented as the reason for the oppression. The main character is a muezzin (caller of Muslims to mosque for daily praying) who sins because of a widow woman. The woman is new in the neighborhood and just because she is a widow, all the men in the area start rumors about her. She lives somewhere close the

mosque of the area. One day, the muezzin sees the woman getting undressed while he is up on the minaret, about to start calling Ezan (call for prayer). The widow woman gets ready to sleep, that's why, she gets undressed. She is described as a very beautiful woman, wearing a white nightgown. Sevim uses white as the color of the gown which is the symbol of innocence. In the story, we just know that there are rumors about this widow woman but we do not read any details and the author does not want us to think that these rumors are indeed true. The woman does not get undressed to lure the Muezzin. She does not even know that he can see her.

When the Muezzin sees the woman, he loses his concentration and cannot call the ezan properly. When he goes back to his house, he feels very guilty and believes that he has sinned. Thinking that it is a big sin, he wants to be consoled and opens himself to one of his old, religious friends. Even though he seeks some consolidation, he regrets it afterwards, saying that "I have sinned.", however, he feels a need to carry on telling for the fear that Feyzi, the old man, would think that it is a much bigger sin than it actually is. The muezzin who looks for understanding and may be a little advice finds a man who accuses him very seriously. He even tells him:

"Shut up! You cannot go up the Minaret again. Go, get another job for yourself. Your ezan is not acceptable from now on" (78).

Trying to make himself clear, the muezzin wants to talk but the old man does not let him speak more.

"Shut up, shut up! Do not argue! You will have a bigger sin!"

In the story, as can be seen, even though the woman is not aware of being watched by the male character, she is considered the source of evil because of the religious constraints and becomes the indirect victim of religious oppression.

A more significant example of religion as a form of collective oppression can be seen in Burak's well-known story; "O God Jehova". The story is mainly about a relationship between a Muslim Turkish man and a Jewish girl, whose relationship is not approved by their parents. Thus, the relationship makes them "the others" in the society.

Sevim Burak starts the story with an epitaph

HERE LIES

MRS ZEMBUL ALLAHANATI

DATE OF DEATH 7 JULY 1931 (59)

1931 is the year Sevim Burak was born and soon we understand that Zembul dies after she gives birth to a boy. The time reference is an important hint that this is a semi-autobiographical story. In the epitaph it is also mentioned that she dies very young and she will be accepted to heaven by the angels. This reference to heaven and angels might show us that Zembul turns into a Muslim woman before her death, or she is assumed to be a Muslim, hence, angels will accept her into heaven. Another importance of the epitaph is that birth date is not indicated there. As we know it, a girl's birth is not considered as good a thing as a boy's birth in the society; as a result, it is not written in the epitaph as well. Another assumption might be that because Zembul was a Jew, her birth date is not important but when she converted to Islam and gave birth to a baby from a Muslim man, she matters, so does her birth date. I would also like to interpret this lack of birth date as a result of men's ignorance. As



the story goes on, we learn that despite the fact that they have a child together, Bilal does not want to get married to Zembul. He is not satisfied with his situation and I can even argue it was not his plan to have a long relationship with this Jew woman. She became pregnant and so a problem arose. As the person who dominates the relationship, Bilal even does not know and does not care when she was born.

As mentioned earlier in this story Burak imitates the language of the Torah; hence, the references of Sevim Burak are as equally important as the use of Jewish characters. Along with the epitaph, Burak uses the number seven repeatedly throughout “O God Jehova”.

And she waited for seven days  
And she waited for another seven days  
Mrs. Zembul Allahanati  
And she waited for another seven days more  
She waited for seven years  
Mrs. Zembul Allahanati  
She waited for another seven years.  
In seventh month of the seventh year  
On the seventeenth day  
At seventh hour  
Mrs. Zembul Allahanati’s days were about to finish.

*(Burnt Palaces 59)*

The number seven is considered the most important symbol in Judaism. It represents creation, good fortune and blessing. Also one of the most important symbols of Judaism along with the Star of David is the menorah with seven branches. Jews also have festivals lasting seven days. Another aspect of the number seven is that at a Jewish wedding ceremony, the bride is led seven times around the groom symbolizing the seven days of creation; thus meaning that the couple is about to create a new life. I would like to argue that ,knowing the importance of the number seven, Burak uses it as a reference to the beginning of the mourning period for Jews; Shivah because “Shivah is a period of mourning. Shivah means “seven”; this refers

to the first seven days of mourning. Shivah Mourners who sit Shivah are the seven closest relatives of the deceased: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister and spouse. (...) This has roots in Genesis 37:34; when Jacob was misled to believe his son Josef had been killed by wild animals he rent his garments.”<sup>3</sup> Zembul’s waiting for seven days, seven years, seven months might, hence, be a reference to this mourning period.

Equally important is that Burak uses names very carefully to show that two people, Bilal and Zembul, have different ethnicities and religions. As a result, using the name Israil is a very significant choice for Zembul’s brother. As we know, in Judaism “Israel is the name of honor for the people when faithful to God.”<sup>4</sup> The name Zembul is also important in that though Zembul is a Jewish name, it is used as Sümbül in Turkish that is Muslims say Sümbül instead of Zembul. Burak also mentions the importance of the name: “She is Jewish woman who couldn’t get married to Mr. Bilal but became a Muslim herself. She was given the name Sümbül but everybody in the neighborhood call her “Madam Zembul” or “Zembul Hanım” as she is used to. She was rarely called “Sümbül Hanım as a joke by Bilal. Zembul means Sümbül (sumbul) as in Turkish.” (İlksavaş 11)

When Zembul gives birth to a son, he is called by two names; one in Jewish Verdul and the other in Turkish Ferdi. This detail is given by Bilal, at his notes about the year. (75) This is an important detail in that even though Zembul voluntarily converts to Islam and believes that her son will be a Muslim, the baby is given a second Jewish name. It can be said that in this way Burak wants to show the

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<sup>3</sup><http://mysticalnumbers.com/number-7-in-judaism/>

<sup>4</sup>[http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin\\_44.html](http://www.come-and-hear.com/sanhedrin/sanhedrin_44.html)

continuity of the traditions and the fact that no matter what happens to the mother, meaning conversion, the baby is still Jewish according to the religious code. To cut it short, you cannot leave your religion, nor your traditions.

Burak uses Jewish names in the story a lot. This can be interpreted as a wish to make the others, the *womanized* characters in the story as much as possible seeing as they are not visible in the public life; despite being an important minority in Istanbul, the literature does not let them in adequately, which is why she uses these characters, names them, restores them and makes them visible to the readers. Their otherness also originates from their religion. In the story, Bilal mentions them in his notebook and we learn that Bilal and Zembul have probably more Jewish friends than Turkish ones. Bilal's mentioning them so often in his notes shows that his life is full of these minorities, which does not make him very happy. Bilal writes about Madam Viktorya(61), Madam Domna, Müsyü İsak, Madam Fortune, Kalika, Avramiçi (62), Kiryaka, Madam Sultana, Ojeni, Madam Anastasiya, Madam Ester (63) and many more Jewish people on almost every page. Some of these are the characters of other stories in *Burnt Palaces* such as Nurperi and Ziya from "The House with Mother-of Pearl" (Sedef Kakmalı Ev). Sevim Burak uses all these names one after another and even repeatedly in order to show us the true nature of Kuzguncuk at that time. Even though she is not writing history, she adds her own experiences into the texts, she writes with her own consciousness and background which is an example of *écriture feminine* Koçakoğlu claims that the number of these people increased in proportion to Bilal's hatred. (248) That is, the more names are written the more Bilal hates them. Even their existence becomes a problem for him. His loneliness and feelings of being trapped in a Jewish society where he does not

belong increase day by day, making him mentally unstable. Bilal's isolation and strangeness resulting from religion makes him a worse person who is indifferent to Zembul's situation. Hence, religion makes Zembul's life miserable not only directly but also indirectly.

Another important religious reference in "O God Jehova" is Bilal's reading The Torah through the end of the story. After taking his father's death bed to his own house, he believes that a needle reaches out his body from the bed and till the end of the story, Bilal mentions where the needle is and how painful it is for him. It is interesting that during this time he starts reading the Torah whenever he feels pain. We understand this by means of his notes. As a person who does not give details about his life and his feelings, he writes the details about reading the Torah many times. One important aspect of reading the Torah is that Bilal always mentions that the midwife Anastasiya brings him the Torah and he gives it back after reading it. This same action is repeated many times. Bilal does not keep the holy book with him and brings it back, yet Anastasiya brings the Torah to Bilal again and again. I would think that this is a sign of how people living in the same neighborhood affect people in one way or another. Bilal's not keeping it might represent Bilal's feeling of guilt; he reads it but he does not feel comfortable about reading it and then gives it back to her. However, she is persistent; always brings it back to him as if she was trying to convert him. Equally important is that Bilal uses the Torah as a medicine to cure his pain. There is a strong relationship between his pain and reading of The Torah. He writes that:

Because of pain and discomfort I have not gone out and have read the Torah in front of the window till the evening- Towards 6 o'clock the pain and discomfort ended. (77)

...

The Torah has been read for an hour.-The pain hasn't been gone- The situation has kept his importance- The pain has gotten worse- (77)

...  
Today is 4<sup>th</sup> July; The Torah has been given to Anastasiya- The pain hasn't stopped-

Today is the 5<sup>th</sup> of July; The pain hasn't stopped. Midwife Anastasiya has brought the Torah back to us.

Today is the 6<sup>th</sup> of July; the Torah has been given back to midwife Anastasiya- the pain hasn't stopped. (78)

In this way, Bilal relates the pain to the reading of the Torah; sometimes it helps to soothe his pain, sometimes not. We can assert that as a person who is estranged in his own community, he becomes closer to the Jewish community and believes that he will find the salvation he needs by reading the Torah. At this point, I cannot help remembering Marx when he considers religion as the “opium of the people”. (Marx 54) As a matter of fact, he uses it in a broader context; even so, Bilal’s reading the Torah as a way to escape from his physical pain can be considered an example of the affect of religion. Bilal’s reading of the Torah makes him escape from his reality and he is estranged from his pregnant partner, he becomes more isolated and introverted. He does not care for Zembul and her needs. As a result, Zembul is also indirectly oppressed by religion.

In general, religion has deep impact throughout the story and it is referred as the source of the problems between Zembul and Bilal, as well as Zembul and her family. Because of the different religions Zembul and Bilal have, she has to leave her family and becomes a “source” of shame for the family. Moreover, this difference in their religions and traditions makes the couple drift apart; they cannot be happy even if it is desired by both of them.

In the works of Ursula K. Le Guin, religion is referred to several times yet it is not put forward as a burden on the characters. This difference between the works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin is vital in that it shows us that in Turkish society where Burak lived, religion plays a much bigger role in people's personal lives. Because the personal is political as argued by second wave feminists, the politics is shaped according to religion as well. On the other hand, Le Guin does not portray religion as a very important oppressive force which indicates her almost exclusion is a sign of either her ignorance or her idea that it is not an oppressive force on women.

### **3.2.3. Commodification**

The final form of collective oppression is the commodification of women. Both Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin portray the commodification of women in various ways. Commodity means that “an object or process produced for the purpose of exchange or sale” (Buchanan 92) Commodification of women is referred to and studied by many scholars from different perspectives. (Acero 2009 ; Widdows 2009 ; De Leon 2000 ; Martin & Hummer 1989). To be clear, what is meant by the commodification of women, however, is the exploitation, subordination and objectification of women. The examples chosen from the text are the very examples of this kind of commodification. In Burak and Le Guin' works, they show that marriage is used as a means of commodification; women are treated as objects that can be bought and sold, as a consequence which the owners, the family gains profit. Apart from marriage, both Burak and Le Guin show how women are commodified

sexually; they are valuable as long as they stay virgin and they can be served to men to please their sexual desires.

Portrayed as the commodities that men own, women are thought to be the mothers of the future generation and as the objects to give pleasure. Luce Irigaray rightly expresses that this is the exploitation of women. She writes:

[A]ll the social regimes of “History” are based upon the exploitation of one “class” of producers, namely, women whose reproductive use value (reproductive of children and of the labor force) and whose constitution as exchange value underwrite the symbolic order as such, without any compensation in kind going to them for that ‘work’.

(Irigaray *The Sex Which is not One*,173)

The commodification of women is mostly achieved through marriage. Being also an individual form of oppression, marriage starts to oppress women even before it becomes a reality because before marriage women are thought to be commodities. For example, the main character of “The Victory of the Squatter House” (Gecekondunun Zaferi) Melike is a woman who is commodified by her parents. Burak depicts her as a very sad, unhappy girl in a gloomy atmosphere; it rains outside, a detail which must have been added to increase the depressive environment. We understand that Melike is a girl who does not work, and is probably uneducated. However, we know that she has a boyfriend who is not wealthy but he is a student and he likes reading a lot. Melike’s mother becomes the oppressor because she cares about money and believes that her daughter is supposed to marry someone who can look after her. Melike’s mother believes marriage will solve all the problems she has. She even tells this openly to her daughter: “You will be saved if you marry Mr. Nazmi.” (82) Nazmi is a building contractor who wants to marry Melike and we understand that is the reason of Melike’s depression. She does not want to marry

him, on the other hand she is in a dilemma about the issue. She loves her boyfriend, Tahir but Tahir does not propose to her, which makes her think that he might have second thoughts about their relationship. Henceforth, it does not matter whether she prefers to live in a squatter house rather than a cozy house. Then we learn that she has actually told him about the contractor and Tahir has told her that he could do nothing if she wants to get married to that man. This brings the conversation to an unexpected end, as well as to their relationship and as a result, Melike does not want to talk about the issue. At the end of the story Tahir calls Melike and proposes to her and this becomes the victory of the squatter house. We see that Burak mocks the idea of happy marriage at the end of the story because Melike starts dreaming about their small but lovely house in the slums and believes that love can manage everything. In this very example, Melike's commodification is desired by her own mother in the form of marriage. Her parents want their daughter to get married to a rich man although she does not love him. Her body and her emotions are to be exchanged for the wealth the contractor, wealthy man offers.

In "The House with Mother-of-Pearl" (Sedef Kakmalı Ev) by Sevim Burak, Nurperi is another example of commodified women. She is given to Mr. Ziya at a very young age. In the text, it is not given clearly but implied that there is a sexual relationship between Mr. Ziya and Nurperi because Mr. Ziya is jealous about other men around and even of the male cat in the house. The beginning of her commodification, the main oppressor is not given, yet in time, Nurperi internalizes submission and her commodification becomes a choice even if it is not voluntarily. She impatiently waits for Mr. Ziya's death so that she might have some money or the



house. As a result, in both examples women's bodies and emotions are exploited, objectified and commodified by the collective forms of oppression.

Le Guin, however, shows the commodification of women more clearly and directly. In *The Wild Girls*, in particular, marriage is portrayed as a principal form of commodification. Women's body and beauty is the most important commodity they have and if they stay virgin until they get married, they can have very important buyers. Throughout the story, we learn that women are considered as a meta and the marriage is the exchange of this specific commodity-the woman- for money, field or precious stones. In Marxist terms, the exchange-value is the capital the owner pays for the woman and the use- value of a woman must be defined in relation to her physical condition such as beauty and virginity. We read that:

"You're going to live in heaven on earth," he said. "A lot of food. Big, rich huts to live in. And you do not have to carry your house around on your back across the world! You'll see. Are you virgins?"

After a while they nodded.

"Stay that way if you can," he said. "Then you can marry gods. Big, rich husbands! These men are gods." (*The Wild Girls* 8)

We learn that if they are virgin, they worth a fortune, they can get married to filthy rich men, "to the Gods".

Luce Irigaray, similarly, asserts that a virgin woman is pure exchange value. She writes:

She is nothing but the possibility, the place, the sign of relations among men. In and of herself, she does not exist: she is a simple envelope veiling what is really at stake in social exchange. In this sense, her natural body disappears into its representative function. Red blood remains on the mother's side, but it has no price, as such, in the social order; woman, for her part, as medium of exchange, is no longer anything but semblance. The ritualized passage from woman to mother is accomplished by the violation of an envelope: the hymen, which has taken on the value of taboo, the taboo of virginity. Once deflowered, woman is relegated to the status of use value, to her

entrapment in private property; she is removed from exchange among men.

(Irigaray 186)

One way of accumulating capital is to go hunting for a new commodity as Bela does in the story. He goes slave hunting to find a girl for himself actually. However, if they can find more girls, they can exchange them for money. That is exactly what Bela does; he gets two girls; Modh and Mal, one becomes his wife and the other is exchanged for profit. It must be added that if the girls are too young to get married, they are brought up according to the owner's needs and desires and when they are fully decorated with the man's desires, they become their own wives. When Modh uses her charm to attract Bela and succeeds, the marriage is happily accepted because "They all liked her, and she would cost the House of Belen nothing." (*The Wild Girls* 15) That night the women in the household kept her safe and "would not let anybody have her virginity, which was her value as a bride." (*The Wild Girls* 15)

The owner families, they may own their own daughters or slaves, wait for the time the exchange comes off. In the novel, Bela looks for the money, he will get from his sister, Tudju's marriage seeing that they have paid a lot of money for another girl, Nata. "They were expecting to make a good profit in food-supply or clothing from Tudju's marriage" (*The Wild Girls* 12). However, Le Guin does not always depict submissive women and in this example, Tudju refuses to be exchanged for money, she chooses to leave her family instead. She says; "They want me to marry that fat Root man, so we can get his shop and looms in Silk Street," she said. "I will not. I am going to live at the Great Temple" (*The Wild Girls* 13). As a member of the family, she could do whatever she desires, but being a slave Mal does not have any choice but to accept the bad fate.

We learn that when Mal becomes thirteen years old, she has a ceremony and in that ceremony Ralo ten Bal, sees the girl. As the narrator suggests; “She was marriageable now, and these Crown men might pay to marry her rather than merely use her. She was very pretty, and might bring back a little wealth to the Belens.” (*The Wild Girls* 15) Le Guin even uses the term “bride- bargain” so as to show women’s position as commodities. As in all marriages, the exchange- value becomes the main problem and as a result of getting an incredibly high offer, Mal is sold as a commodity at the age of thirteen. In *The Wild Girls*, to conclude, Ursula K. Le Guin shows how women are accepted as commodities and exchanged for money. Even though, the atmosphere she creates is not “the earth”, we see a patriarchal society, in which women have almost no words to say about their own lives; marriages are arranged for them; they are exchanged for money as commodities. Rules are the rules wherever you are! By portraying the girls as the commodities, Le Guin makes what women experience in their real life visible to the readers. Readers start to empathize with characters; they question their own conditions and lives.

Another criticism of women’s commodification can be seen in *The Dispossessed*. In a dialog between Shevek and Pae after a party thrown for Shevek, he says that he has seen hundreds of men in the party but only a few women and wants to learn about them and he simply asks where women are. As an answer to Shevek’s naïve question, Pae answers:

“Where are other women?”

“Oh, no difficulty at all there, sir,” Pae said promptly. “Just tell us your preferences, and nothing could be simpler to provide.”

(*The Dispossessed* 94)

This part is of great significance in two ways; firstly, it shows how women are commodified by men and secondly, it exemplifies how women are portrayed as the other. Pae, clearly, understands that Shevek is asking about women because he needs one in order to fulfill his sexual desires. Thus, he answers that it is simple, meaning he can find a woman for his needs, to please him. He asks about Shevek's preferences so as to provide one who suits his selfish desires. He mentions women as if he refers to products and Shevek as the customer, making the women as the women 'in the table' who are ready to be served. Pae's statement that "nothing could be simpler" bears out that this commodification of women for men's sexual desires is very common and even traditional to serve guests some women to entertain and satisfy them.

In *Tehanu*, the commodification of women is performed in another way. We learn that women are forced to beg in the streets to give the money to the men.

I talked with some o' them from up there and they told me they'd all four of 'em been traipsing and camping and vagranting about near Kahedanan, and the woman would come into the village to beg, all beat about and burns and bruises all over her. They'd send her in, the men would, see, like that to beg, and then she'd go back to 'em, and she told people if she went back with nothing they'd beat her more, so they said why go back? But if she didn't they'd come after her, she said, see, and she'd always go with 'em. But then they finally went too far and beat her to death, and they took and left her body in the old shambles there where there's still some o' the stink left, you know, maybe thinking that was hiding what they done.

(127)

They use their power in order to ensure, she would do what they want. These are the same men who rape, beat and burn Therru in the first place. Throughout the novel, Tenar, who looks after the girl like a mother, is afraid of them seeing that they believe she is their own and they try to take her back several times. The reason for

them to get her back is to commodify her as they wish; raping, forcing her to beg just like the other woman mentioned above.

To sum up, Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin points out the commodification of women as a form of oppression. This form of oppression is a collective force on women which makes their life miserable not by some individuals around them but by most of the members of society. Women are considered as objects to be bought and sold for the benefit of the family or for the sake of women themselves. Thus, their virginity becomes an issue. They are objectified to fulfill men's sexual desires; are forced to beg for money in streets. They are assumed to be the stocks, capitals in the hands of men. Patriarchy, as a matter of fact, is a system that protects men, and by so doing, encourages men to commodify women as they wish. This commodification of women as a form of collective oppression is used as an important theme in Burak's and Le Guin's works.

**Conclusion:** This chapter has reviewed the issue of oppression on women in the selected works of Burak and Le Guin. These works have been analyzed with a specific focus on oppression on women characters; the issue has been categorized under two titles; individual forms of oppression and collective forms of oppression. The former title began by dealing with parental pressure and marriage as its main themes; the latter, on the other hand, examined the collective forces of oppression which have been studied under three main themes; patriarchy, religion and commodification. It has been pointed out that though Burak and Le Guin have different backgrounds and writing styles, they both criticize and exemplify individual and collective forms of oppression in similar ways.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Internalized submission**

This chapter is an attempt to address the issue of internalized submission of the women characters in the selected works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin; how some women internalize their submissiveness as a result of systematic and continuous individual and collective forms of oppression they experience. Additionally, it explores on the issue of death; how some women perceive death as a salvation in the end, which I believe another form of internalized submission.

Herbert C. Kelman suggests that “changes in attitudes and actions produced by social influence may occur at different ‘levels’.” In his interesting analysis of internalization, although he presents three processes through which induced behaviors are adopted, the result is almost identical. The three processes listed are compliance, identification and internalization. (Kelman 52-53) He adds that “internalization can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence because the content of the induced behavior (...) is intrinsically rewarding” and it is “congruent with his value system” (53) His study helps us to claim that some women internalize oppression over time as a result of the value system around them.

Submission, on the other hand, can be examined in two ways; conceptually and behaviorally. The terms that are used for otherness can also be used; submission in mind and submission in space. What is meant here by conceptually/in mind vs.

behaviorally/in space nature of submission is simple; if the individual accepts and believes ideologically the other or others' set of norms and beliefs without action, then it is conceptual; however, when the individual submits, obeys and takes action regarding the given norms, beliefs; their behavior or the induced behavior becomes the individual's own behavior, then it becomes submission in space, which is seen, heard, felt or touched.

Despite the fact that internalized submission, as a term, is not studied, a similar term is used in a number of fields; internalized oppression. (Fletcher 1999; Hardiman & Jackson 1997, 2007; Lipski 1987; Williams 2012) In his extensive study on internalized oppression Teeomm K. Williams points out that: "Through a process of internalizing the oppression, members of subordinant groups learn how to behave and function in ways that support and maintain an oppressive status quo, thereby ensuring the maintenance and reproduction of oppression." (27) While focusing on the internalization, different views and ideas are presented according to the type of internalization. Kaufman, for instance, puts forward three facets of the internalization process: (1992)

1. Internalization of specific feelings, beliefs and attitudes about ourselves that come to reside in the core of our sense of self.
2. Internalization of the ways that we are treated by people whom we consider significant.
3. Internalization of identifications (with other people) in the forms of internal guiding images. (cited in Williams 46)

The internalized submission of women, as a consequence, can be defined as women's changing their attitudes or actions according to the set of rules and norms in patriarchal societies and becoming dependent, weak, obedient characters. They acknowledge and internalize the gender roles constructed by the society, they feel

attached to these gender roles and the induced idea becomes their most basic and most powerful chain around their necks. This is not their fault, on the contrary; the society teaches them to become submissive to men and follow their mothers' path. These submissive characters are common in both Turkish and American societies, hence, they are explored and exemplified in Burak and Le Guin's works. At this part of the study, these characters are analyzed under two categories; dependent women and women "in the table", which are relatively different from each other. The examples of these women who have internalized submission in time are not exemplified or used as characters in the texts by the authors to approve their situation; conversely, they are given as examples of women in real life to make their difficult conditions and tragic endings visible to readers. Thus, the last section of this part is reserved for death as a salvation or punishment.

#### **4.1. Dependent Women**

In her influential book, *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan depicts the American housewife writing that:

The American housewife—freed by science and labor-saving appliances from the drudgery, the dangers of childbirth and the illnesses of her grandmother. She was healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, her home. She had found true feminine fulfillment. As a housewife and mother, she was respected as a full and equal partner to man in his world. She was free to choose automobiles, clothes, appliances, supermarkets; she had everything that women ever dreamed of. (272)

It is this dream of some women that make them objects of the society. Most young women dream of such a life when they get married and it is this life's expectations that make them silent, obedient and submissive. Yet, as Friedan also writes, in time they feel dissatisfaction. Friedan calls for action for those women, who internalized submission at some parts of their lives but now question it. On the other hand, in



Turkey, some young women share the same expectations and dreams about their future life and when they have a similar one, they become content. Some, on the other hand, do not ever dream of such a life let alone expectations. They are the ones who have been brought up the idea that a woman's place is behind her men; her father, brother or husband. It is not a choice but an obligation in their very conservative society. They learn to be submissive and dependent on their men from their mothers, grandmothers, neighbors; they do not question their situation. On the contrary, they learn how to behave accordingly as a result of their previous observations. Bandura (1997) believes that most human behaviors are learned by modeling. As a consequence of observing others, one develops an idea of new behavior and this coded information is later used as a guide for future actions. (22) Even if some women try to confront this coded information, they are punished by their immediate family or by the society. If they are lucky, they go on with their lives as "the other". Most of them internalize this submission and become the guardians of the patriarchal society in the long run. Voluntarily or not, most women became submissive in time. They become dependent, weak, obedient, docile people but they feel beautiful, respected, virtuous. These obedient characters are shown to be good examples in the society and thus, women try hard to be one of those good ones at the expense of losing their freedom.

Both Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin include dependent women characters in their works. Some of these characters never question their submissiveness and they do not tend to change their behaviors or thoughts. However, some question their situation in time and try to find a way out. This kind of portrayal is significant inasmuch as these women characters clearly show the reader to what

extent individual and collective forms of oppression shape women's identities, private and social; how oppression shapes personalities, thinking and behavior. By observing the changing behavior of their parents, in our case, their mothers, a new generation develops patterns which are rooted in their ancestors' experiences. (Weiss & Weiss, 2000)

One of the examples of dependent women in Burak's stories is Nurperi in "The House with Mother-of-Pearl" (Sedef Kakmalı Ev). We learn from the story that Nurperi has lived with Mr. Ziya since she was fifteen years old. The relationship between them is not made explicit by the author but it is clear that she is not just a caretaker but they have a sexual relationship despite the huge age difference between them. Burak portrays Nurperi as a woman who has given all her life to a man with the hope of having her house at the end and getting a regular pay when she is old. As Kane and Sanchez also suggest women's economic dependence on men becomes a more brutal form of oppression in some cases and they add that these are "typical components of marriage and family" (1080) It may be said that this commitment is just like a job for Nurperi; neither a relationship nor love. She accepts this dependence and hopes to get profit from this submission. Her submissiveness is both conceptual and behavioral because she believes that Ziya is the one that keeps her life going, that's why, she does all the nurturing and cleaning and no matter what else her suppressor needs. Yet, she sometimes cannot understand why she does all this, she questions all her life.

"Why has she been feeding, cleaning, shaving an old man for forty years? She still does not know why she has been doing some things and not the others." (12)

We know that she has spent all these years alone seeing as she "couldn't talk to Mr. Ziya." (12); he was always talking about himself. "He spoke silently and uttered the

words one by one. As the years passed, he would want whatever he sees outside. He always wanted.” (12) Mr. Ziya is depicted as a selfish person who just cares about his needs, his comfort and his ego. Asim Bezirci also claims that he is an impotent man; this can explain their relationship without a child. (Bezirci 45) Asim Bezirci might be right to claim his impotence considering what Nurperi thinks about his relationship with Nurperi’s cat. Salah Birsal, however, claims that this cat is Nurperi’s secret lover. (Birsal 256)

“He was watching the cat from morning to evening. He wanted that the cat did not climb trees, walk around or pee but sit by the window just like him. Finally, he sent the cat to butcher and had his testicles cut” (13). By having the cat’s testicles cut, Mr. Ziya achieves his goal and the cat becomes a lazy and in a way useless character at home and does not pose any danger to Mr. Ziya, which allows Ziya to stay the only master, the superior at home. In the middle of this old house, we see Nurperi as a lonely character trying to please her master and wasting her entire life. She is dependent on a man who provides with food and shelter. When Mr. Ziya dies, she hopes to become an independent individual who is free to do everything without any constraints. So, Nurperi’s dependence is a temporary one; one that she hopes it will finish one day. She does not internalize this dependence or submission voluntarily, but she has to accept it. Morris states that “Young women are not financially dependent, their whole upbringing incalculates submission and dependence” (306). Through this character, Burak exemplifies a result of economic and interpersonal dependence of women and to what extent a woman’s life become miserable as a result of this dependence. Rather than solely stating that women are economically dependent on men, which is a form of oppression itself, Burak shows this

dependence and how it affects Nurperi's life. In a way, she uses *écriture féminine* doctrines in her writing and shows what's hidden through the character's experience.

In "The Big Bird" Burak criticizes that in a patriarchal society, men tend to feel powerful when they know women around them are dependent on and submit to them. However, the woman is not depicted as a dependent one. On the contrary, she starts as an independent woman, but her independence causes troubles in the patriarchal society, which makes her conceptually submissive towards the end. In the story, the city, which represents the patriarchal society, has an ambiguous relationship with the woman. The dialogue between them has ups and downs. The tension between the city and the woman goes on as the story progresses; first he cuddles her, then he leaves her and dies there. However, after a few days the woman sees the city alive and another communication starts between them. The man believes her way is not right and he criticizes her about being so independent. He says "Today you are here, tomorrow you are there". The woman's mobility in space bothers the city. Yet, he states that she is in fact a good woman. This is a perfect example of men's idea about woman. Despite being "a good woman", her independence is not right. It is something that makes the woman look bad according to the man. But the woman is determined not to lose her sovereignty.

I AM NOT ASKING FOR ANYTHING FROM ANYONE she said  
NOT FROM YOU TOO... I DO NOT LIKE MEN... I AM A  
PASSENGER OF LIFE, I WILL NOT TELL WHERE I AM  
COMING FROM NOR WHERE WILL I GO... I AM JUST  
RUNNING I WILL FIND THE WAY BY MYSELF... she said and  
left the other day. (51/52)

The interaction between men and women never ends until one of them passes away.

As far as I am concerned, Burak makes this idea obvious in the story by never ending

the interaction between them. The main character leaves the city and comes back or vice versa. Even though she tries to be independent in mind, she tries to approach him in space, which is an example of interpersonal dependence. When they come together the woman wants his attention, his love but he refuses to provide them. He even ignores her when she begs “Please, love me.” Despite the fact that the main character is depicted as a dependent woman, she cannot just leave the City. She needs her love as much as she needs her independence. Burak might mean there is natural tendency between them but woman’s need for independence and man’s hate for independence destroys the possible interaction between them. Even so, the woman’s not leaving the City is an example of women’s dependence to men, which brings the woman to death.

It is noteworthy that Sevim Burak’s women characters are mostly extraordinary, incompatible with the gender roles and the society in general. Unlike most of Burak’s women characters, the main character Zembul in “O God Jehova” seems to have a goal to be an acceptable woman in terms of gender roles. It can be claimed that this is because of the biographical concept of the story; that is, Zembul represents Burak’s mother who changed her religion and had a new Turkish name. Zembul is more than that; she also desires to get married to Bilal, wants to be accepted by the society. By picturing Zembul, Burak shows us a submissive and dependent character. It is true that she is *the other* in the society but unlike Burak’s previous woman characters she does not get in a fight with the norms and supposed truths of the traditional woman or family perception. She undeniably has conflicts but she takes the responsibility of her actions. We can understand that she gives up the fight and submits to what society wants her to be; a Muslim married woman.

When we read the dialogue between Zembul and her brother Israil, we learn that she now thinks her choice was wrong. She says: “It is true that I have committed a crime, I have done this and that...” (60)

By picturing this character, Burak emphasizes that not welcoming differences and difficulties in life and dependency bring unhappiness, pain and finally death. She starts the story with the epitaph of Zembul. It may be argued that starting with the epitaph is the way of showing inevitable ending for Zembul who pledges guilty at the very beginning and gives up fight. This is an example of internalized submission because despite the beginning of her situation, in which she leaves her family to be with someone she wants to be with, breaking the rules and traditions of her Jewish society, she becomes a submissive character eventually. While escaping from one form of oppression, which originates in the family, she finds herself at the hands of another form of oppression, which results from a male partner, who is ignorant of her psychological and physical needs and desires. She becomes dependent on her prospected husband instead of her father and her brothers. By portraying this character, Burak also shows us that no matter whom women are dependent on does not matter, the only thing matters is to be independent and free in order not to be oppressed.

Examples of dependent women are ample in the works of Le Guin, as well. In *The Wild Girls*, by Ursula K. Le Guin, the women characters have to submit to the men in general. First of all, we read that two little girls are taken from their own houses and brought to Bela's house as slaves. They are taken in order to serve and if possible be wife to the men of the family or to be sold as a commodity. The girls do

not stand out against what is going on, they have no option but to accept the reality and try to adapt, which shows that before their submissiveness in space starts, they are submissive in mind. When they are in Belen's house, they do not object to anything except for the little sister's marriage, they do not try to escape from the village and furthermore the elder sister Modh becomes Bela ten Belen's wife voluntarily. We later understand that she does that for the sake of her little sister. However, we read that "She (Modh) did not hate Bela ten Belen for leading the raid, killing Dua's Daughter, stealing her and Mal and the others. Men did that, nomads as well as City men. They raided, killed people, took food, took slaves. That was the way men were. It would be as useless to hate them for it as to love them for it." (*The Wild Girls* 12) We can come to a conclusion that though they were referred as "wild", these girls show a complete submission to men which leads to their *internalized submission*.

In her influential book *What is Gender?* Mary Holmes states that "Gender is a product of material conditions but is also a sometimes habituated, sometimes reflexive practice in which people engage in relation with each other." (181) I would agree with her that it is also "habituated" and "reflexive" on the condition that it is imperative that we add gender is "taught" and in time "internalized" and that's the sole reason it can be considered as habituated and reflexive. While portraying such dependent characters into their works Le Guin and Burak shows us that it is through the relations with each other, women learn to internalize submission.

In *The Dispossessed*, we witness two very different life styles illustrated in Anarres and in Urras; hence, the comparison is possible. Living in a patriarchal

society, Urrati women, akin to most women in the real world, are described as dependent on men they share space with; their family members, their husbands, their colleagues etc. Unlike these, women on Anarres have self respect; they do not submit to anyone and they are self-dependent. In a class on the History of the Odonian Movement, Shevek and his friends watch a documentary and through the documentary they discover that in the earth-like Urras “On the beaches of Tius, ... women kept for the sexual use of male members of the *propertied class* (the Iotic words were used, as there was no equivalent for either word in Pravic) lie on the sand all day until dinner is served to them by people of the *unpropertied class*.” (*The Dispossessed* 54) The documentary reveals that women were possessed by men in order to be sexually used by the rich. By portraying these characters, Ursula K. Le Guin shows the reader how the modern life of women on Urras bears the traits of submission and dependence. We learn about this life style through the life and thoughts of Vea, who is the wife of one of Shevek’s hosts during his time on Urras. Having a discussion earlier about women and their sense of inferiority, Shevek wants to discuss the issue with a woman from Urras so as to understand how women feel about their secondary situation. The dialogue between them shows that the internalized submission that I have argued can be observed vividly in Vea, as well.

“I want to know, is an Urrasti woman content to be always inferior?”

“Inferior to whom?”

“To men.”

“Oh—that! What makes you think I am?”

“It seems that everything your society does is done by men. The industry, arts, management, government, decisions. And all your life you bear your father’s name and the husband’s name. The men go to school and you do not go to school; they are all the teachers, and judges, and police, and government, are not they? do you let them control everything? Why do not you do what you like?”

“But we do. Women do exactly as they like. And they don’t have to get their hands dirty, or wear brass helmets, or stand about shouting in the Directorate, to do it.”

“But what is it that you do?”



“Why, run the men, of course! And you know, it’s perfectly safe to tell them that, because they never believe it. They say, ‘Haw haw, funny little woman!’ and pat your head and stalk off with their medals jangling, perfectly self-content.”

“And you too are self-content?”

“Indeed I am.”

“I don’t believe it.”

*(The Dispossessed 280/1)*

The argument Shevek puts forward is very evident and understandable. He summarizes everything that women experience in a male centered society by focusing on issue of professions, adding the very important issue of surname, as well. However, Veia, a perfect representative of internalized submission, defends herself and other women saying that to run the men is their responsibility, in a sense, their profession. She asserts that they do not need to get their hands dirty given that everything is done for them. The dialogue also proves that though Veia is an example of dependence and submission, she claims to be self-content because of her conceptual submissiveness, yet Shevek who has seen and lived with women who are self-content does not believe in her words. Le Guin displays how women have been taught to be happy and consent with the conditions they have to endure.

*Tehanu* is another example that we come across with dependent women. As a matter of fact, Le Guin writes in her article “Earthsea Revisioned” regarding *Tehanu* that she “wrestled with the angels of feminist consciousness” and *Tehanu* is a result of this consciousness. (Le Guin 168) However, in *Tehanu* we see a character who actually has power to do magic, chooses to become a housewife; a submissive, dependent woman. Tenar, who was once the protector of Atuan Tombs, which is a very important title in her world; the most powerful woman, escapes from the tombs with Ged (a powerful male wizard) and she chooses another life. In this life, we learn

that even though she has a chance to learn to be a Wizard, she decides not to choose this path and becomes a housewife.

“As a woman she had chosen and had the powers of a woman, in their time, and the time was past; her wiving and mothering was done. There was nothing in her, no power, for anybody to recognize.” (42) Her becoming what she is results from her idea about womanhood. She believes that her power is her womanhood; being a mother and a wife. Hence, she becomes a common housewife and gives birth to a son who also turns into a sexist man. After she loses her husband and child, on account of her idea of powerful womanhood, she becomes incapable and powerless. Tenar, who is shown to be independent in mind, in fact, experiences submissiveness in space. In a dialogue with Ged, who once helped her to escape from Atuan Tombs and is her partner at present time, Tenar describes her point of view;

When Ogion taught me,” she said, “here-at the hearth there-the words of the Old Speech, they were as easy and as hard in my mouth as in his.” That was like learning the language I spoke before I was born. But the rest-the lore, the runes of power, the spells, the rules, the raising of the forces-that was all dead to me. Somebody else’s language. I used to think, I could be dressed up as a warrior, with a lance and a sword and a plume and all, but it would’t fit, would it? What would I do with the sword? Would it make me a hero? I’d be myself in clothes that didn’t fit, is all, hardly able to walk. ( 59)

Although she mentions that while learning the wizard language she felt she knew it before she was born, she gives up learning the dragon language which a wizard must know in order to do magic. She believes that she does not fit to the roles which are assigned for men in the society. For this reason, she sacrifices everything to become a housewife, a mother. To put it another way, she internalizes submission and dependence although she was meant to be a wizard, a role which is possessed by men. The author creates such a character in order to show the reader how women’s

supposed gender roles change their social identities. Tenar is shaped by what society finds it suitable for her to become; a housewife. Kane and Sanchez note that women's work outside the home is approved only if women continue to handle housework and childrearing. (1081) Tenar chooses to carry the burden instead of being an independent and powerful woman, a witch.

When her husband dies and she remembers her past, all of it when she had power in the tombs of Atuan, she misses the parts when she was married.

She was silent, trying to remember what it was like to have been powerful, to be the Eaten One, the One Priestess of the Tombs of Atuan, and then to lose that, throw it away, become only Tenar, only herself. She thought about how it was to have been a woman in the prime of life, with children and a man, and then to lose all that, becoming old and a widow, powerless. (Tehanu 58)

In the previous novel of *Earthsea* series, Tenar is portrayed as a woman who leaves all her powers in the tombs of Atuan and escapes from there to her independence. However, in the fourth book, *Tehanu*, we learn that instead of becoming a fully independent person who can achieve anything with her gift, she chooses dependence on another man. Her internalized submission is such that after she loses her husband and becomes independent, she looks for a man to depend on yet again. Her choice to settle and lead a life with her previous savior Ged indicates that she becomes a fully dependent woman one that cannot survive without a man's protection.

To conclude, we see the examples of dependent women in the works of Le Guin and Burak. These women are taught to be submissive by the very people around them, education, songs, tales and everything. As a result of individual and

collective forms of oppression, women either internalize submission and become content with who they are or they stay lonely, lead a miserable life which leads to their death. This portrayal of women shows that as Kaufman (1992) also believes some women internalize submission as a result of their specific feelings and attitudes about themselves like Tenar, or their oppressors' treatments of them become significant to them as a result of their given situations like Zembul. Some women, on the other hand, have no option but to submit as a consequence of their economic dependence on women like Nurperi. These portrayals show that women are in a way forced to be submissive and dependent because of the reasons which are not their choices, but their realities.

#### **4.2. Women “In the Table”**

As of the Victorian period, women are taught to be virtuous, pure, moral and of course beautiful. They learned to believe that if they behave accordingly to what is taught to them, they deserve and earn respect. They wanted to be respected in some way. Another important result was to be desired by men who held the power. Some women still desire to be desired by those who have power and thus, they try to please them in any way possible: they submit to them, they try to behave as men wish, they ornate themselves in order to look cute, beautiful and desirable. In this way, they feel that they are powerful. As W.E.B Du Bois writes “The world still wants to ask that a woman primarily be pretty and if she is not, the mob pouts and asks querulously, ‘What else are women for?’” (208)

Both Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak create women characters who voluntarily if not happily accept the situation and in a way, become the puppets of

the patriarchal society; they act consistent with the norms of the patriarchal society. Therefore, they are by and large the examples of conceptual submissiveness, which makes them “in the table”. Women “in the table” is an expression used in Le Guin’s novel *The Dispossessed* to express some women who voluntarily become submissive and objectify themselves in order to gain some forms of power. In this sense, it is very different from the previous section of dependent women who are taught and mostly forced to be submissive so as to lead their lives.

In the early stories of Sevim Burak, body and beauty is used as a theme to depict women who accept gender identities that are reserved for them. Burak uses body and beauty not because she wants to eulogize the character but because she wants to criticize the women who try to be in the form that the society thinks is suitable for them. In her later stories, however, she does not even mention about characters’ physical appearances at all. The women in her stories exist with their ideas, experiences and struggles. In some stories of Burak we also come across with women who crave for love; whose loneliness makes them needy. Burak uses these needy characters in order to criticize them just as the women who care about beauty more than their ideas and who present themselves to men as if they were “in the table”.

One of the stories that Burak uses body and beauty as a main theme is “Puss –in-the- Corner” (Köşe Kapmaca) which was published in 1950. In this story, we have two female characters who change places at the end of the story. Gönül is a model working at a model house and Cavidan is a regular customer who looks very sophisticated and rich, especially to Gönül who looks up to and even is jealous of

her. We learn all these through letters which were written by them to each other. The first letter was written by Gönül. It is a confession letter declaring all her jealousy and informing that Mümtaz, once Cavidan's boyfriend, wants to marry Gönül, but she does not want to do that; leaving him to his former girlfriend Cavidan. Gönül acknowledges her admiration to Cavidan many times throughout the letter:

"You were the first gracious woman I had seen at the model house." "When you first entered in the saloon an illustrious, expensive fragrance entered with you."

*(The Big Sin 60)*

We understand that Gönül is struck with her charm and wealth alike. She writes that the surname of Cavidan is very suitable for her, Güvenli, which means 'confident' and adds "... it might be your self- confidence that makes you look so marvelous." (61) In the letter to Cavidan, Gönül describes what happened from her point of view and how she managed to get her boyfriend, as well. Now, after all these events, she feels confident and thinks that she beats her opponent. The story goes on with Cavidan's letter in which we learn everything from her point of view and understand that Cavidan had a tricky game in order to get Gönül's job; her each action was planned in detail and at the end she achieved her goal. She explains that all the clothes she wore were very cheap and bought from bazaar, not from Paris and she is not a wealthy woman she just played with them and finally made Gönül leave job and became the model to the place. With this little game of hers, she is the one who wins, not Gönül. When the details of the story are considered, it can well be understood that Burak criticizes women thinking that money, beauty or expensive clothes are much more important than everything else. These women objectify their bodies, their thoughts to be approved by the society, which they think yields power.

Gönül, who favors all these image related things, loses her job at the end. She does not acquire power; on the contrary, she loses the only power she has; her job.

Burak also criticizes some women's need to love and be loved with her words about Gönül. She makes Cavidan write to her that: "You are a creature living in dreams and who was born to love and be loved. You might be a tender housewife. Do not get me wrong, other housewives, indeed, have less qualifications than you do." (67) Burak notably criticizes housewives who are dependent on their husbands, as well. In her letter to Gönül, Cavidan in a way tries to encourage Gönül not to be a dependent woman.

The story "After Five O'clock" (Beşten Sonra) by Sevim Burak has two main characters; a male and a female. The story is written according to the male's point of view. As the title suggests, the event takes place after five o'clock, when the working hours finish. The main characters work in the same building. As we understand the man likes the girl because "she works next to a lawyer and she combs her hair better than the other girls". The man compares the woman with other women in the building and chooses her because of her status and appearance. We do not know the name of the male character simply because he tells the story to us. On the other hand, Rezan is told from the male's gaze and with the comment about her working with a lawyer and her hair may show us that he concerns both intelligence and appearance. After eating together, the man invites her to his house and she agrees. When they finish their tea, Rezan is ready to talk about her feelings, saying that she loves him. It is difficult to understand how she reaches that moment all of a sudden and we know that the man is not ready for the comment, either. The man, surprised, describes this moment adding his own thoughts, as well. He says:

...she said she loved me ... and I answered 'yes' in order to respond quickly, it was impossible for my thoughts to be in compliant with hers at a moment when my body and my nerves were longing for a rest. This time Rezan asked "whether I loved her or not". I said "yes" again. This word 'yes' did not mean anything; because I wasn't sure that the word "love" was something real or not. It might be that love had a part in people's desire to make love or not. (*The Big Sin* 88)

We can state that these thoughts are not emotional as Burak argues. On the contrary, these are very traditional about ideas concerning love and sex in general. The girl becomes extremely sensitive and starts asking questions about his feelings. She says they have known each other for six months; in the mean time, they have gone out several times and she further states they have no expectations about the future. She adds that he could give her the very expectation and finally she can believe in him. (89) As the main character also argues this is a kind of begging for love and indeed emotional. That is, even though Rezan claims to be a rational person and accuses him of being emotional, she is the emotional one and proves all the clichés about women which are claimed by men. Hence, she is a perfect example of internalized submission in mind and presented as the woman "in the table". In the story Burak actually mocks the clichés; she achieves this by trying to reverse roles. Her real ideas about marriage is hidden behind the story teller's words. He says:

I told her (...) I respected my own independence and hers as well, I didn't want to be attached to someone and didn't want anyone to attach to me, actually I didn't have a right to do so; finally that if we came together from time to time, I would very happy, and that me loving her or her loving me was a personal things and that I doubted that if we used this it would be something nasty. (89)

Having said all these things honestly, he knows he will lose Rezan but keeps talking. He says they would live more comfortably "without sharing ideas". His honesty does not bring him any good and she insults him and leaves.



It is interesting to see that after all those years, most people still shares ideas with Rezan. To illustrate, Bedia Koçakoglu who compiles Burak's these earlier stories states that: "This young man who has these kinds of ideas actually know that he thinks differently and no one would accept such a situation. This thought, which is against Turkish traditions, might be acceptable in the West; however, it is unacceptable for a young Turkish girl" (Koçakoğlu 38). Adding Turkish society and Turkish traditions to her comment twice, Koçakoğlu also shows that she is very nationalist, which makes the case more interesting because she studies Burak. As we know it, Sevim Burak tries to destroy all the borders and boundaries with her writing and thus becoming a representative of feminine writing because *écriture féminine* cannot and should not be reduced to a form of writing which focuses on women's own sexuality or inner capacities or consciousness. It is a challenge to destroy phallogocentric thinking as well as misguided perceptions about women.

Women's desire to be loved and desired by men, desire to be "in the table" is also illustrated and criticized in the story "The Big Bird" by Sevim Burak. After the main character remembers her past, we read that she wants to cuddle the city, to take care of the city, which means she needs him. It can be argued that the real thing she needs is to trust someone and that person is the city. Dealing with the man, her thoughts begin to scatter, so does her language. She starts using hyphens between her sentences, her memories which followed by capital letters again.

I SAY WHATEVER I WANT TO SAY- IF YOU STILL DO NOT BELIEVE- THEN WE WOULD SET ON AT THE FUSK- DRINKS ARE WITH ME- I WOULD GET READY GET DRESSED I WOULD HIDE IN A COFFIN- WE WOULD STOP BY THE CEMETERY- WE WOULD DRIVE- NEITHER THEY WOULD KNOW ME, NOR WOULD I KNOW THEM- (When she arrives at this point in her mind, a bit doubtful) – THIS IS A VERY BAD REALITY- BUT WE HAVE TO GO- said loudly –I HAVE TO GO-

said once again... He pushed the man. The man stopped. He wasn't walking.

*(Burnt Palaces 50)*

Hence, Burak creates her own writing, using her consciousness to portray the character's feelings, emotions and suffering, showing the abnormalities that the character experiences when she begins to scatter. She loses her consciousness about reality. She asks: "Is this moment happening now or have I lived it earlier?" (*Burnt Palaces 50*) Towards the end of the story, the woman becomes needier and thinks that the city knows about her end. This is one of the rare examples of the city's being understanding and thoughtful. He even tries to console her just because she admits his strength. This is the case when women are not strong and seems needy. We can conclude that men like to see women powerless so that they may feel more powerful. When they do feel powerful, they start to listen and give advises.

In the works of Ursula K. Le Guin, we also observe characters either men or women who identify women with beauty, delicacy and pleasure. Women are portrayed to be "in the table" and they are shown to be happy with it. Like Sevim Burak, Ursula K. Le Guin criticizes these women by making them visible to the reader.

In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, we read about a society of androgynous people; yet, Le Guin has been criticized for creating a manly world. Indeed, her work shows men rather than androgynous people and the protagonist Genly Ai represents a character whose adherence to gender roles is implied. At the very beginning of the book Genly Ai writes that;

“The soundest fact may fail or prevail in the style of its telling: like that singular organic jewel of our seas, which grows brighter as one woman wears it and, worn by another, dulls and goes to dust. Facts are no more solid, coherent, round, and real than pearls are. But both are sensitive.” (*The Left Hand of Darkness* 15) Although he starts his reports with women and pearls and jewels, I mean, things that represent women according to his belief, in the following parts when women – are portrayed, they are portrayed as less powerful, so lower than him and in fact “stupid” according to his cultural bias. When he mentions a man, he gives “manly” attitudes and manners to him and sometimes compares him to a girl. For example; “In an hour or so the boy (he had a girl's quick delicacy in his looks and movements, but no girl could keep so grim a silence as he did) came to tell me that the Lord of Estre would receive me if it pleased me to come” (358). As can be seen the girl must be delicate but cannot be silent for Genly Ai. Another representation of women is one that he mentions about a girl in kemmering period. He writes; “I saw a girl, a filthy, pretty, stupid, weary girl looking up into my face as she talked, smiling timidly, looking for solace. The young Orgota was in kemmer, and had been drawn to me.” There are two issues that must be focused on about this quote; firstly, the way he describes the girl as “filthy, pretty, stupid, weary”. Genly Ai uses these adjectives to describe the girl, which shows us that the body and beauty are valued and judged by Genly Ai. This is hardly surprising when we consider that he represents men from the Earth, where we live. He is just like the men we are used to seeing, spending time with. Secondly, he decides that “she had been drawn to” him, which is also an idea that we are familiar with. Without any explanation, he implies that she wanted to have sex with him just because she is in kemmering period. Genly Ai is indeed a perfect representation of man from the Earth and what he does is to leave the place and not to come back for a

long time. (210) Here, the woman character is depicted as “the woman in the table” who is ready to have sex with him. Genly Ai’s depiction of the woman character shows us that women are regarded to be easy-to-get by most men. By portraying the woman character as such, Ursula K. Le Guin makes the reader to empathize with the woman in the text and exemplifies how women are mostly stereotyped in the real world.

In *The Dispossessed*, Ursula K. Le Guin makes a harsh criticism on women who in their power struggle with men use and benefit from men’s sexist expectations by means of presenting their bodies, themselves as an art form to be enjoyed. By showing the otherwise on Anarres, she also makes sure the reader that women can also be worthy and admired without being an object and are valued in the society. In the novel, self-objectification of women is portrayed by Vea and discussed between Vea and Shevek. Let us start with how the narrator describes Shevek and Vea’s position:

He sat down by her. A phrase Takver used came into his mind as he looked at Vea’s slender feet, decorated with little white shoes on very high heels. “A body profiteer,” Takver called women who used their sexuality as a weapon in a power struggle with men. To look at her, Vea was the body profiteer to end them all. Shoes, clothes, cosmetics, jewels, gestures, everything about her asserted provocation. She was so elaborately and ostentatiously a female body that she seemed scarcely to be a human being. She incarnated all the sexuality the Ioti repressed into their dreams, their novels and poetry, their endless paintings of female nudes, their music, their architecture with its curves and domes, their candies, their baths, their mattresses. She was the woman in the table. (*The Dispossessed* 279)

Vea represents some women in the real world, who try to impress men and benefit from their bodies as an instrument in order to reach their aims. She is the one who wears jewels, nice shoes, puts on too much cosmetics and behaves in a manner that the men around admires her. It is possible to write that women who use their

femininity so as to provoke men make themselves as commodities voluntarily; trying to 'sell' themselves to the best price which might be having a good and luxury life, being spoilt by men, being the most looked at, being the admired and desired to be owned. Men around them want to "own" these kinds of women in order to show off. It is most men's choice and wish to have objects to show off with and women use their bodies in a way that men, their owners, can show off with them and their impulse to dominate, in this way, leads to women. They feel that they have to dominate, conquer and finally "have" the body, the art form, admired by everyone. When they do, it is their success. Le Guin, using the Takver's phrase "a body profiteer", criticizes women using their body as weapons; as a matter of fact, who voluntarily become a tool for men to dominate them. They become, absolutely, the women "in the table" who are ready to be served.

As a representative of commodified body, Vea despises even disgusts Anarresti women when she hears that they do not shave at all. She pictures women from Anarres just like men with muscles just because they do not resemble her. She wonders, though:

"Am I so different from Anarresti women, really?"

"Oh, yes, really."

"Are they all terribly strong, with muscles? Do they wear boots, and have big flat feet, and sensible clothing, and shave once a month?"

"They do not shave at all."

"Never? Not anywhere? Oh, Lord! Let's talk about something else."

*(The Dispossessed 280)*

Worse than being "in the table" must be enjoying to be in the table. From the dialog between Shevek and Vea, we understand that Vea is very satisfied with her life and her objectification. Her self-objectification manifests itself in her words about Anarresti women. When Shevek claims that she is not content with herself and

in fact restless and dangerous, she becomes aggressive and in a sense of comparison she says:

No, no. How can you understand, coming from the Moon? And you're only a man, anyway. . . I'll tell you something, though. If you took one of your 'sisters' up there on the Moon, and gave her a chance to take off her boots, and have an oil bath and a depilation, and put on a pair of pretty sandals, and a belly jewel, and perfume, she'd love it. And you'd love it too! Oh, you would! But you won't, you poor things with your theories. All brothers and sisters and no fun!

*(The Dispossessed 282)*

In *Tehanu*, likewise, we see that Tenar, who is in love with Ged and wants to start a life with him, uses her body as a tool to achieve her aim. Ged, a former wizard, loses all his power, which causes him to wish to leave everybody so that he can make peace with his current 'powerless' situation. He leaves Tenar and Therru, who is a little girl taken care of by Tenar, several times. When he comes back, Tenar uses her womanhood as if that is the power she has to keep him close by.

"Well," she said, "which bed shall I sleep in, Ged? The child's, or yours?"

He drew breath. He spoke low. "Mine, if you will."

"I will."

The silence held him. She could see the effort he made to break from it. "If you'll be patient with me," he said.

"I have been patient with you for twenty-five years," she said. She looked at him and began to laugh. "Come-come on, my dear-better late than never!"

*(Tehanu 135)*

She acts as if she were literally some food in the table, she only asks about his preference. She is ready to use her body to get him, to unite with him, to be a housewife again. This is her power. We learn that she manages it, too. "They lay that night on the hearthstones, and there she taught Ged the mystery that the wisest man could not teach him." (135)

On the whole, both Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin use women characters who try to be powerful and balance the relationship by making use of their bodies.

However, it must be added that this set of behaviors are taught to women; to be acceptable, to be admirable and finally to be powerful, women use their bodies and present themselves as something “in the table” waiting to be consumed by men.

### **4.3. Death; Final Submission**

Death is explored as a theme in both Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak’s fiction as a result of oppression in patriarchal society. My contention is that even if it is the oppression that they cannot deal with and leads women to commit suicide, it is a form of internalized oppression seeing that by killing themselves instead of their oppressors, they accept their destiny. Not having courage or wish to start a fight with the oppressor, individual or collective, they choose the worst; death. As an inescapable reality in human’s life, both authors use death in their works; however, the deaths of main characters are not caused by natural reasons. Generally, these characters who are oppressed in their lives, become vulnerable, miserable, hysteric, pessimist and depressive. They mostly desire to die as a way of salvation, or they are killed as a form of punishment. This punishment comes generally from the patriarchal society and sometimes from Gods. Thus, death, for the characters, is a deep problem or a solution. In either way, death is portrayed as a direct result of oppression coming from family, marriage or patriarchal society itself.

Most of Burak’s characters, all in *Burnt Palaces*, pass away either by their own choice or by oppressive forces around them. In an interview Burak describes these

characters as people “figures that merge with death instead of life”. (İlksavaş 10) In one of Burak’s early stories, “Suicide”, as the title also suggests we come across one of those figures. The oppression originates in family becomes the reason for the woman character’s death. Nermin, who experiences a strong family pressure about her relationship and future marriage, kills herself. We see that instead of accepting the painful reality, she chooses death, which can be interpreted as a way of protesting what to do with her own life. However, it also exemplifies internalized oppression. Even in Burak’s very amateur stories, we see women who resist unfair conditions that they have to tolerate or accept. We can also claim that the death of Nermin has significance; she does not kill herself with a gun or does not take pills but she chooses to jump into a well. The well can be seen as a metaphor for deadlock. It is dark and deep just as her problems.

“The Window” (Pencere) is another Burak story in which the main character cannot deal with the oppression and desires to die, which I argue is the result of internalized submission. The story can also be considered as an example of Sevim Burak’s style of manipulation. Just as “The House with the Mother-of-Pearl” (Sedef Kakmalı Ev), the reader cannot decide what really happens in the text and s/he is asked to give meaning to the author’s characters, actions, as well as the specific writing style. In this story, Burak starts with a narrator who watches a woman from her window and waits for her suicide. The narrator believes that she is suicidal by observing her all the day long.

I have been waiting for the suicide of the woman in the next block.  
Maybe she won’t;  
I do not know what she thinks.  
She might have a hidden agenda.  
It has been exactly two days.



When a window ends, I pass to the other one, I will be saved if I give up staying next to the windows.  
I wander from one window to the other;  
The woman, also, walks on the high terrace with quick and slippery steps.  
She goes to the dangerous edges of the terrace. (17)

The language used at this part is verse form which Burak uses in her stories quite commonly. It can be claimed that her giving up traditional writing format, in this case prose, is a sign that she is drifting apart reality in the text. If we apply this theory, we can come to a simple explanation that the narrator of the text is not observing another person, on the contrary, there is no one else there and she is talking about herself. She is the one 'walking on the dangerous edges'. The terrace is the place where she dreams to die. The technique used is interior monologue which is very common in Burak's writing.

There is a doppelganger in the story, another technique which is used by Burak very well; a reader who does not engage in the text closely might just think that there is another character who is simply suicidal. However, Burak is much more creative than regular writers, who like to start a story with an introduction or end it with a conclusion. As a consequence, the reader has to be very careful while reading the text. The narrator herself might be the doppelganger as she is the suicidal one and wants to see herself dead. She desires this death and looks for the day death becomes their end. The narrator interprets the other woman's character and she says 'I get that she does not want to die.' (17) The doppelganger narrator is not sure whether the woman wants to die or not, so this becomes a paradox. Of the two characters of the same body, one wants to die and the other wants to live. The doppelganger admits

saying that “ I have not become hopeful for years.” (17); a perfect sign that she is the suicidal of the two.

I sometimes raise my head and look at her as if I have started a new dairy.  
She looks me back, too.  
She reads my mind.  
That’s why she is offended.  
Very anxious. (17)

As we know, the narrator is the one looking for death, the other ‘she’ is anxious because she can read her mind, the mind they actually share and the mind, which cannot decide what to do. If the other ‘she’ surrenders, that will be her end, she knows it. As the story progresses, we understand that the characters change places from time to time, the bad character becomes the hopeful one and vice versa. But there is always a suicidal and a hopeful even if they reverse their roles. The narrator cuts a little hole on her curtains and watches her from that little hole in order not to be seen. This little hole may be considered a metaphor in that she can only see her, the other ‘she’ from a limited angle. With the little hole she tries to understand what she really thinks or wants. The narrator cannot decide whether the other ‘she’ wants death as much as she does because of her limited access to her. The doppelganger defines death as ‘a happy ending’ and dreams of seeing her on the tram way. While thinking about this happy ending, she believes the other ‘she’ also thinks the same way because “she looks at the tram way and smiles.” (18) The narrator also pictures other random people’s, animals’ death; she imagines empty buses running around and she pictures death:

I place people I know in front of them [the buses] one by one- I push a man whom I don’t know in front of it- he looks at right and then left with a black coat long enough to cover his legs- he becomes taller and shorter- then I push a sheep-headed woman who has just gone out of a hairdresser- I push a lot of goat, cow and fox headed people in front of the bus- they all get surprised, become artificial; they haven’t

considered such an ending for themselves, for sure... They become  
thousands of feet and escape. Cat feet- rabbit feet- cockfeet- my feet...  
(18/9)

The doppelganger narrator does not just dream of her own death, but of random people's death. It is a life that gives her no happiness and the people she knows or she does not know do not give a hand to her; for that reason, they are all unimportant and they deserve to die. She sees that other 'she' is hesitant about jumping out of the terrace or the window, she dreams other ways of death: she pushes people in front of buses, she pushes herself in front of buses.

In her book about Sevim Burak's stories, Seher Özkök claims that the narrator's desire to show her death to everybody is a rebellion to the society. She wants to show that with death, she protests social codes with her death. Özkök writes: "The punishment to the society which defines women with its own codes might be the death of the woman" (50). Although I do not fully agree with Özkök, especially on the punishment part, I also think that this whole thing, the narrator and her real identity is struggling in the society and its norms. The gender roles for women force her to create another identity which drives her to death. As for punishment part, I wouldn't agree with Özkök inasmuch as with this particular character's death, social norms do not fade or lose importance. The characters, in real life and in fiction as well, should stay alive and fight for the changes. Death of a woman can just be an award for the patriarchal society, showing their success. As the story goes on we see the other "she", walking on the terrace and the doppelganger watching her closely. She opens her arms as if she wants to die, but she does not jump. Here we see the doppelganger narrator's revelation. Out of blue, she says:

“What if all these things are just dreams, all my integrity would destroy, I would collapse.” (19) This might be the moment the Narrator understands there is another character in her body, the other ‘she’ and she is trying to talk her in killing them both. Nevertheless, the other ‘she’, -as if hearing her- looks at her window and proudly says: “I exist”(19). This acceptance of the self is significant in that the narrator does not think that she has a self identity; hence, this acceptance and confirmation so to speak, might be her way out. We learn that “the wall uses all its strength to keep the woman’s feet still.” The wall does not let her die. It is probable that the wall is a double metaphor; this is the same wall that keeps her confined in a house, which makes her do the household chores, all the cleaning, looking after, cooking but nothing more. On the other hand, it is the wall that keeps her alive just as the double characters of the same body, just as herself. The narrator thinks that she should have died and she knew better how and when. Consequently, she steps in front of the window and she says “Come on, jump!”(20) This phrase “Come on, jump!” reminds us “The House with the Mother-of-Pearl” and the woman character of the story, Nurperi. In that story, Burak uses another character that invites the protagonist to die. Given that, it is possible that Burak uses imaginary characters as the people who want those women to die and these characters’ being imaginary might mean that those women are actually suicidal and live behind the cliffs.

By the same token, in “O God Jehova” death is a central theme along with others. Both of the main characters die at the end of the story. Burak mostly uses death as a salvation, yet in this story death is used as a means of punishment. Zembul is punished by Jehova as a result of her sins. This interpretation is also slippery and subjects to change, to differ because on reading the whole story, the reader may have

different endings to the story. One can conclude that the woman is punished by Jehova, another might read the ending as a suicide of the woman. According to her brother Zembuls's punishment by Jehova is what she deserves seeing as she has left her family behind, converted to Islam and had a child out of marriage; thus, she is punished by gods. Bilal, on the other hand, has a different story. His death results from the fire from which actually he is responsible. Nevertheless, we also know he had a problem with the needle walking in his body and was finally about to reach his heart, which would kill him anyway. This needle can be imaginary; he accuses himself for not being a good son his father; thus, he believes a needle from his father's death-bed goes into his body and moves there. Bilal's death can be seen as a punishment because of his own actions; as a matter of fact; because of his not fulfilling his responsibilities such as being a 'good' husband and father, joining to army and being a source of pride for his father. We learn from Bilal's note that one day before his father's death, policemen arrive at his father's house and look for him. (76)The reason of his physical suffer is the needle that his father's bed. He takes his father's death bed and a needle reaches his body from that same bed. Sevim Burak might use this needle as a symbol of punishment. I mean, Bilal does not accept his responsibilities and makes his father ashamed and disappoints him, which leads to his father's death and the Bilal's father's bed becomes the probable reason of his death.

Bilal is portrayed as an unemotional and insensitive person; however, the death of his father has a deep impact on him and that's why he feels those physical pains. I argue that the needle that Bilal mentions in his diary is not actually real but with his father's death he goes in to a period of mourning which results in the wrong

belief that there is a needle in his body, moving. Another sign of his mental problem is that he starts to buy kerosene cans when he goes back to his house in Kuzguncuk and he puts them in his basement. Saving these kerosene cans brings death to whole family. As a result, Burak shows the destructive effects of death and mourning period; one death becomes the reason of all other deaths. At the very end of the story Bilal loses all his control over his thoughts. He cannot get rid of the pain which the needle provides and on the seventh of July, he believes the needle goes into his heart and will kill him. With the belief that he will die, he carries all the kerosene cans and fires them. When he understands that they get fired, he prays for his father. At the same point, people come home one after another to see Zembul who hasn't recovered since the birth. All the visitors are Jews either their neighbors or Zembul's relatives. Bilal makes sure that Ziya and his wife, who have been a supporter of Zembul from the very beginning, are in the house. We come across quite a lot of new names here; İda, Ketura, Lusi, Anna, Lea, Dora, Janet, Naftali, Udi, Luiza, Sofiya, Kalo, Duşa, Yeruşalmi etc. Bilal tries to kill all Jewish people around him because he describes their coming to house one by one. He writes down all the Jewish people's name as if he prepares his kill list. He also adds that "They had the Torah on their hands." (79-81) When people understand that the house is on fire they all run to the door.

However,

The one who came was O GOD JEHOVA  
HE had fire in his hand  
A crowd went up the ramp  
They had FIRE in their hands.  
They tore their clothes and shouted  
FIRE  
FIRE  
FIRE  
ZEMBUL RAN TOWARDS THE DOOR  
SHE ALSO HAD FIRE IN HER HAND (82)

Burak chooses to finish the story with death of a people not just some people but all the people in the neighborhood. While dying, Bilal wants to take his revenge and kills all the Jewish people, punishing them because of their existence. We can claim that Burak wants to show how Jewish people are destroyed at the hands of some sick people such as Bilal. However, at the end of the story we see that Jehova comes to the house with fire in his hand which might also be considered as the reason of the fire. The result is that they are punished either by Bilal or by the Wrath of God; Jehova or simply by Zembul who has fire in her hand, too.

The story titled “Time of Death” (Ölüm Saati) is another example that Burak uses death as a central theme. In the story, we witness the death of a woman, called Sevim and her dialogues with her doctor and also another woman who can be interpreted as the older Sevim. The main character always asks for the time and never gets an exact answer.

I beg you sir, what is the time?  
Do we have time?  
You have just arrived. – Why is this rush?  
I cannot stand even one minute  
Time is coming  
Time has come  
I am leaving tonight  
What time is it?

*(Burnt Palaces 85)*

As can be seen the character is obsessed with time and wants to learn how much time she has left. Burak uses a lyrical language while the main character is asking about the details about time, stop, destination etc. However, when she writes about her inner life, the language gets broken and we see hyphens between sentences. This technique is often used by the author to indicate that the characters remembers about her past or reveals the feelings.

“...I am in a mansion surrounded by stone walls- You sit there – I know- It is also obvious from your position- it is you- You are Sevim- You are in darkness- ...”(87)

Burak gives us a hint that there are not just one person, in fact, she sees herself in the mansion sitting, so we might as well read a text with a person with two “self”. In the following sections the main character starts using object pronoun “she/he” a lot and tells the story using both subject pronouns, one sentence with I, the other with “she/he” “Where am I?- Where is she?- Is this her end?- They have taken out my bandages- She has screamed a lot- in that stone walled mansion- I always hear my own words.” (88) We can argue that there is woman with two different voices, thus she always hears herself. She knows, feels that her death is near but she does not want to come to a realization about this fact and she estranges from herself and attributes the pain, the death to her second self. We soon understand that she attributes death to the older Sevim who is 80 years old. I would like to suggest that unlike Burak’s other stories, death is not welcomed by the character. On the contrary, she even distances herself from the idea of death by creating an older version of herself in her mind. However, uncontrollable death arrives and kills them both; “Time is approaching- She is not around- One is here- Where is the other? Both are not here.” (90) This story is the last story of *Burnt Palaces* and I could argue that even though other women characters in the book internalize oppression and commit suicide, Burak wants us to show that death is not a solution for the problems and for the last time the woman character, Sevim, does not want to die.

On the other hand, Ursula K. Le Guin does not portray death as a salvation or solution. Death is shown as a natural ending for Estraven who is a womanized



character in *The Dispossessed*. In *The Wild Girls*, on the other hand, death is a catastrophe.

In *The Wild Girls*, death is constructed as a sign of bad fate for the main characters; Modh and Mal. The girls are enslaved by a man, Bela who gets married to the older one, Modh and Mal has to get married to Ralo at the age of thirteen. Even though Ralo promises not to touch the little girl until she is fifteen, he does not keep his promise just as Nata, another woman character says when she hears the promise “Promises are easy.” (*The Wild Girls* 20) After the wedding night, they learn that Mal kills Ralo on her bed with the “sword hidden under her dress” and she is strangled by the family (*The Wild Girls* 23). As can be seen death of Ralo is because of his not keeping his promise. It is a death resulting from a revenge. Promises are easy, but not keeping them may cost one’s life. Here, Mal is portrayed as a woman who protects herself and kills the oppressor unlike Burak’s characters who commit suicide as a result of oppression; hence, she doesn’t internalize oppression at this point. Nonetheless, Mal’s killing her oppressor becomes the reason she is killed for. Mal’s death is a punishment from the society. The male centered society punishes the girl for a wrongdoing of a man. We see the real examples of the situation in everyday life. The death of Mal is a significant result of her bad fate. Obviously, it is not her choice. Moreover, killing the little girl is not enough for the others; her dead body is also punished by the male centered society. When Modh asks about her little sister’s body, Bela states that; “She was a Dirt woman. She murdered a Crown. They'll throw her body in the butchers’ pit for the wild dogs.” (*The Wild Girls* 23). Here, we see that as in “O God Jehova” by Burak, the woman character is killed as form of punishment. However, in “O God Jehova”, gods are thought to be responsible for the

death of the woman, not the society. Modh, after losing her sister, goes into a deep mourning period. Bela tells everyone that “Modh was mad with grief.” and “They kept her locked in the house, and kept watch over her.” (*The Wild Girls* 24)

However, Modh has been pregnant and she is kept at home all this period. She cannot labor until ten months passes because the baby is too big which leads Modh’s death. At the end, she is depicted as a woman with “a dead god in her womb.” (*The Wild Girls* 24) We can assert that Modh death is the result of bad fate; the baby’s being too old and her own mental situation kills her.

In another words, Ursula K. Le Guin does not demonstrate death as a happy ending, as a salvation for women who struggle in patriarchal societies, neighborhoods or houses. Death is generally portrayed as either a natural end or a catastrophe. The deaths of main characters are constructed in order to show their bad fate again but these characters do not welcome death or choose to die instead of living. It is their destiny that makes them die and if confronted by an oppressor, Le Guin’s character kills the oppressor instead of longing for the death for herself.

**Conclusion:** All things considered, Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin explore internalized submission as a dominant theme in their works. Women characters who internalized being submissive in time are presented as two categories; dependent women and women ‘in the table’. The first groups of characters are the ones who do not any other option except from being submissive to the males around them. Their dependence results from physical conditions such as economic dependence (Nurperi, Zembul) or being literally slaves (Modh, Mal) to their oppressors. The second group of characters is different from the first group given that their submission, even if still internalized, is more voluntarily accepted when compared to the first group. These

characters are shown to be consent with their status because they feel powerful with the profit they gain as a result of self-objectification of their bodies and/or minds. The last section of the chapter deals with death as a form of salvation or punishment. In this section it is argued that when women are oppressed, they simply have two options; to accept it or to fight with it. Sevim Burak's characters, in particular, even when they internalize submissiveness for some time, try to escape from oppression and look for death as a solution. Death becomes a salvation for these characters. On the other hand, Le Guin's characters do not commit suicide; rather, they choose to kill their oppressor.

## Conclusion

Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin are very different women. Burak was born in İstanbul, in 1931. Her mother was originally a Jewish named Anne-Marie Mandil who later changed her name to Aysel Kudret. Because of the religious difference life was not easy for Anne- Maria and thus “she was only accepted into her husband’s family after the birth of their first daughter Nezahat in 1921.” (Erdem, *Bir Usta Bir Dünya* 144) Her Jewish ascendance, her neighbourhood along with her family, influenced Sevim Burak deeply and she made use of her experiences in her writings. Ursula K. Le Guin, on the other hand, was born in Berkeley, California in 1929. She was the daughter of Alfred and Theodora Kroeber. The father being an archeologist, she moved to different territories after she grew up in Berkeley. Just as Sevim Burak, Ursula K. Le Guin was also influenced with the neighborhood and people around. As a child, she spent all her summers in Napa Valley, where her father meet people called ‘informants’ and they spent quite a lot of time together. She mentions having these people from other cultures around as a ‘tremendous gift’ and when asked about the nature of that gift she says that “Maybe simply the experience of the “other”? A lot of people never have it, or don’t take the chance when offered.” (Le Guin *The Paris Review*)

As two authors from very contrasting societies, religions, backgrounds they shared the same experience; the experience of being a woman. This experience was enough for them to explore on very similar feminist themes despite the fact that they

used very different genres and writing styles alike. I wanted to show that although as women we have different lives, we experience similar difficulties and overcome them in similar ways; writing is one of them.

For the purpose of this analysis, Sevim Burak's early stories which were later compiled as *The Big Sin* and the stories in her first published story book *Burnt Palaces* and Ursula K. Le Guin's novels; *The Dispossessed*, *The Left Hand of Darkness*, *Tehanu* and her novella *The Wild Girls* are found to be most suitable among many others. In the selected works of Burak and Le Guin, it was found out that both authors dealt with feminist themes although the works are not called as feminist by themselves. The themes related with assumed gender roles, patriarchy, oppression, power relations and body and more are embedded in the main plots. The characters the authors create are not always heroes or victims, yet both figures can be seen in their works just like our world. Despite the fact that Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin had very different backgrounds, personal experiences, and religious and traditions surrounding them, they both struggled in a male-dominated world at the same times; thus, they have similar feminist themes and as a result of their unique characteristics in their writing which try to dismantle phallogocentric thinking and phallogocentric language, they are both representatives of feminist writing. Their inclusion of some themes and not the others shows that in their cultures some themes are more focused and emphasized than the others, which shapes their experiences as well as their writings. Religion and parental oppression, for instance, are portrayed as main forces to oppress women in Burak's works unlike Ursula K. Le Guin's works. Likewise, heterosexuality is considered as the norm in Burak's writing while Ursula K. Le Guin, though being critical, includes homosexuality in her works.

In Chapter 1, language components that are used in the selected works of Burak and Le Guin have been analyzed and it is pointed out that as a result of their writing styles, inclusion of women experiences, putting themselves into the texts, both authors are the representatives of feminist writing with their unique styles. As to Sevim Burak, I argued that she tried to break down conventional writing style with her unusual syntax, punctuation and capitalization; as a consequence, her works can be considered as a manifesto about what she does not like about traditional forms. She created a unique writing style which included repetitions, broken sentences, inverted sentences. Her use of punctuation marks; that is, using them in a style that a reader can understand the usage only if she goes into the depths of text, capital letters to emphasize some words and not the others in order to show that these parts are different from the others are also her complex style's characteristics. Her writing is almost never linear; instead, she uses any form which is not linear. The meaning is embedded into the texts in a way that one does not grasp the meaning of the whole at the beginning. Only when a reader finishes the texts, the sentences, the words unearth their meanings and become visible to the reader. The meaning is never direct. It is always deferred and differed in each reading. She uses quite a lot of forms of literary arts, which at her time wasn't known by average readers and even by some critics. In that manner, she wasn't understood very well at her time. On the other hand, it was pointed out that Ursula K. Le Guin writes in a conventional style in an unconventional way. She writes science fiction which once thought to be a "man genre". For this reason, her writing science fiction was revolutionary at that time. She is very creative with the worlds and characters that she creates. The settings are very detailed as if they were real world settings and she knew those places. One distinguishing trait of her works is that her fiction does not only please

the reader and make them curious about fictional world; she makes the reader think about it. Her themes are, thus, very important. Since she typically writes science fiction, time is not present. She travels back and forth in time along with different worlds. As a result of the analysis of the selected works of the authors, it was seen that both authors are the representatives of feminist writing. Sevim Burak, in particular, with her unique writing style, creates an example of *Ecriture Feminine*. On the whole, it was emphasized that despite all the difference in the language they use in their works, difference makes ‘no difference’; both authors explore in very similar themes.

The selected texts have been analyzed by means of content, character and discourse analyses with a special attention to representations of women and womanized characters, forms of oppression on women and internalized submission of women.

Various representations of women and forms of oppressions can be seen alike in the works of Burak and Le Guin. The similarities of these representations made it possible to make a comparative analysis of these feminist themes. All the same, it is true that some themes are repeated several times by one author and not the other one. These themes are deliberately included with the aim of showing that cultural differences affect the way writers choose their themes. I tried to answer following questions while analyzing the texts. How are women represented in their works? Are the authors guardians of this stereotyping of women or not? How are characters “womanized” through the ways of degrading them? In what ways are the women oppressed? Are the oppression forces similar or different in both authors’ works? What are the characters’ solutions to these oppressions? Do they fight with

the oppressor or do they accept their destiny? In the main bulk of this study, I tried to answer all these questions choosing the remarkable examples of each.

By means of the analysis of the texts, it was revealed that Burak and Le Guin both used otherness in the society as a theme; accordingly, Chapter 2 aims to present the issue of otherness. The first theme explored under the title of otherness was otherness in mind. From the patriarchal 'male' gaze, I argued that religious sources and discourse are the primary sources that point out women as evil creatures. Philosophy, literature, law and written materials such as journals or newspapers in male dominant world made this idea promoted and even in the nineteenth century women were portrayed as such. Following Gilbert and Gubar's characterization of Monsters or Angels or Berna Moran's characterization of victims or deadly women, I argued that both authors included women characters that are portrayed as evil by the people around them. This portrayal is important in the sense that it is not the reader who defines these women as evil, deadly or monster; rather, they are defined, described and portrayed as evil by the other people in the society. In this way, I argued that it is the society, especially men who want women to be seen as these deadly figures. It was stated that from the patriarchal, male gaze women are believed to be problematic, delusional and even hysteric. The selected works of Sevim Burak and Ursula K. Le Guin were analyzed from this *otherness in mind* perspective and it was argued that especially male characters believe that women are not similar to them; they are weak, unsuccessful, inept and they are mentally ill, delusional and even hysteric. Having this idea in mind, men do not care about women's problems and they do not stand with them when their existence is necessary for them. Ursula K. Le Guin shows the possibility of another world, in which men do not have biased ideas about women and male gaze is not necessarily patriarchal through the male



protagonists such as Shevek. In this respect, both Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak show that it is not only the men around women, but also some other women who stereotype women as *the other in mind*.

The second representation of women is women as *the other in space*. As a result of the content analysis and the discourses of the characters in the main text, it was argued that both Burak and Le Guin created characters who are portrayed as the other; not the mind but the emotion, not the strong but the weak, not the first but the second, not the head but the heart. Most of Sevim Burak's characters are shown to be struggling with being the other in space. They feel a sense of isolation seeing that they do not fit in the roles society assigns to them. They are depicted as being guilty by birth just because of their biological difference; valued according to what they are not. Because of their secondary position, in both authors' works women were taught to be suitable for professions in relation with assumed gender roles; instead of scientists, they are teachers, nurses or other professions requiring caretaking. As mentioned in the previous part, these women's positions are determined and stereotyped by the males and women who are in fact the guardians of male-dominated society. This kind of otherness is not just sensed; it is also seen, touched and measured. It is not conceptual like otherness in mind, it is more behavioral. Ursula K. Le Guin, unlike Sevim Burak, includes twin worlds in which women are equal with men and they are not considered as the other by birth; their value is not determined according to their sex but their talents. It is also argued that despite the fact that Ursula K. Le Guin is criticized due to her using male protagonists, it is through male characters that an idealized world is seen, depicted and told to the reader, which is a deliberate choice of Le Guin. In this way, it is shown to the reader

that it is and must not just women who believe the equality of women and men, but that ‘feminism is for everybody’.

The third representation of otherness is titled as *the womanization*. I argued that some characters, not necessarily women, are devalued and marginalized as a result of their ethnicity, color or sexual preference. I chose to use the term womanization, not feminization because feminization might mean that these characters behave like women. Womanized characters do not behave like women. On the contrary, they are thought to be “woman” by patriarchal society members who believe that woman is *the other*. This part is included in the section even though its special focus was on Le Guin’s writing. It was argued that including these *womanized* characters into their works, both Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak tried to show the biased perception related to them. It is not surprising that while Burak included Jewish characters in her texts, Le Guin included people of color and minorities in her texts. It was stated that this was a deliberate act of Le Guin and she accepted that by making the protagonist of the novel a black person, she wanted to show the readers that they also empathy with black people and accept them happily. As to Sevim Burak, I argued that Burak was a writer who used her own experiences, observations and even her body as a tool in her writings; consequently, as a Jewish woman in Muslim Turkish society it was very understandable for her to include these characters in her texts. In these selected works of both Burak and Le Guin, womanized characters are shown in a way that they are not valued in their societies, degraded and also stereotyped just like women. This kind of depiction of these characters by the authors, on the other hand, is not meant to degrade them; rather, by showing the difficulties they experience, these communities are made visible to the readers thanks to these works. It must also be mentioned that homosexuals or queer

communities in general are not included in the selected works of Sevim Burak. On the other hand, Ursula K. Le Guin included homosexuals and androgen characters in her texts and by this way she tried to show that another way of communication is possible between these groups and heterosexual people. In *The Left Hand of Darkness*, in particular, she created a world where people are ambisexual and have women or men hormones only when they are in kemmer period, a period when they are sexually active. In this world, she showed that equality of sexes is possible. However, she was severely criticized about her use of male pronouns, writing the entire novel from a masculine point of view, using male protagonist and not including homosexual relationship. She later tried to compensate this, by writing her novel *The Dispossessed* in which she included homosexual relationship. Yet, her inclusion of homosexuals was not, for the most part, in a positive way. Despite inclusion of homosexuals into texts, she implies that homosexual relationship is something that can be tried freely but cannot be pursued lifetime. Sevim Burak, on the other hand, did not include homosexuals or queers in her text at all.

In Chapter 3, oppression on women has been analyzed throughout the selected works of Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak. It was put forward that as a result of living in the patriarchal societies in general and trying to get a place in male centered literature circles, both Le Guin and Burak experienced at least one kind of oppression. Oppression in general comes from varied sources such as people, institutions or traditions. I studied these various forms of oppression under two titles; individual forms of oppression and collective forms of oppression.

The first type of oppression that was analyzed throughout the texts was individual forms of oppression which was analyzed in two headings; “daughters in boxes” and women “in cages”. I argued that oppression, at its infancy, comes from

nuclear family; in particular, parents. In the works of Sevim Burak, specifically, family pressure is a quite common and important theme that affects women characters' life choices. This pressure is mostly about unmarried women's marriage decision. These young girls are portrayed to be very dependent to their parents regarding this choice. The parents decide whom they will marry or not. The young women in Burak's works, thus, are not free in terms of their future lives and this constraint affects their lives negatively. They are brought up to be kind, virtuous and honored; they are the "daughters in boxes". As a result of familial pressure, they have to lead a miserable life. Otherwise they either choose to commit suicide in order not to be with the men they do not want to be with or they escape from their families to be with their loved ones. This, sometimes, does not end the problem for women just like Zembul, a Jewish girl leaving her family to get married to a Muslim man, Bilal. Her escape towards a supposed freedom ends tragically and her life is destroyed by the very same man. Ursula K. Le Guin, on the other hand, did not use parental pressure as a theme just as much as Burak did. In her works, families do not generally oppress women, forcing them to do some things and not the others. One reason for this, I argued, might be the difference between American Family structure and Turkish Family structure; individuality is an important characteristic of American people unlike Turkish people. The second type of oppression is the oppression that comes from marriage; hence, women are "in cages". Married women's oppression is different from unmarried ones in that marriage involves a number of responsibilities such as taking care of family and house or reproduction. It was argued that in Burak's fiction, marriage was portrayed as an institution which restricts women's life, taking away their freedom and confining them in limited areas. Women, thus, have to deal with all these difficulties and their life becomes

unbearable for them. The idea of having a happy relationship, making a dream come true was often mocked by Burak. It was also added that the choice of whom to get married is mostly decided by the parents. In Ursula K. Le Guin's works, on the other hand, marriage was portrayed with the exclusion. What I mean is that in Le Guin's idealized twin worlds, marriage does not exist as an institution; rather, people are portrayed to be attached to each other just by commitment which does not necessitate a legal bound. However, while excluding institutionalized marriage in her idealized worlds, Le Guin shows the oppression coming from marriage in the forms of virginity and being a commodity in the worlds that are similar to ours.

The second type of oppression in women's lives was argued to be collective forms of oppression which includes religion, patriarchy and commodification. Collective forms of oppression are systematic. It is almost impossible to get away with this kind of oppression because it is everywhere, producing, reproducing and transcending itself. Along with patriarchy, religion and commodification of women are regarded the sub-themes of collective oppression. Patriarchy is seen as a main force which oppresses women with its institutions, assumed gender roles and behaviors. It includes power relations that let men abuse women physically and mentally. Religion is another collected form of oppression. The selected works of Burak and Le Guin were analyzed and it was argued that unlike Burak, Le Guin's works do not show any kind of oppression resulting from religion. Religion is referred several times but not as a means of oppression; women's life are not shown to be limited by it. This was explained as a possible result of religious differences between societies; in practice Islam's being a more restrictive religion when compared to Christianity. In Burak's works, hence, religion is portrayed as a form of oppression. Women's lives are under direct effects of religion. These women, it was

stated, have to struggle with the traditions related with religion as well. Sevim Burak's being a Jew was also important in the sense that she portrayed the difficulties resulting from love relationship between two people one of them being a Jewish and the other is Muslim. Through the analysis of the selected stories, it was argued that a woman's use of her own body was also restricted by means of religion. Finally, it was stated that in Burak's stories religion plays a bigger role in women's lives, in this way, it becomes a bigger force of oppression when compared to the ones in Le Guin's works. Commodification of women are also seen in the selected works. It was argued both Sevim Burak and Le Guin portray women's commodification as an oppression form on women's lives. Women are mostly commodified through marriages in which women are exchanged for their values; virginity being the exchange value and women's reproductive capabilities being the use-value. Thus, women are shown to be the means of getting more capitals. Commodification of women is also shown as way to please men's sexual desires.

Chapter 4 focuses on internalized submission as a main issue. In the selected works of Burak and Le Guin submission and dependence of women are presented as a main theme. It was stated that some women internalize submission in time and they also become the guardians of the patriarchal society. Internalized submission is studied under two headings; dependent women and women "in the table". Dependent women are mostly dependent because they do not have economic freedom, which forces them to be dependent on someone. They are taught to be content with their dependent lives, their assumed gender roles and moreover, they cannot think of any other way even when they have a choice. Submissiveness is taught to them by not only their mothers, grandmothers but also existing forms of patriarchy. They learn to be submissive by means of male dominated education system, fairy tales, fiction,

songs and of course media. When they learn it and make it their life style, it becomes the easier path to follow and they teach it to their daughters which leads to vicious circle. Some, on the other hand, start to question their submissiveness. However, this questioning does not generate good results on their part. They are punished by the very people around them, if not the patriarchal society itself. The second group is the women “in the table”, a term used by Le Guin, in which I argued that some women self-objectify themselves; they find it easy to use their bodies, their sexual power in order to feel powerful. We see the examples of such representations in the works of Burak and Le Guin. These women are also thought to be ready to self-objectify themselves by means of the tools of patriarchal society. The women, who use their images to get some power, willingly become their husbands’ or fathers’ commodity, a beautiful object to be presented to others and get pleasure. In *The Dispossessed* by Le Guin, Oiie, for instance, argues that her life is much easier than her husband’s. It was also argued that these women also try to use this imagined power on the other women around them; that is, they feel more powerful if they are more beautiful than the others. Being pretty means being powerful for those women. Oiie, similarly, looks down on the women in Anarres, who actually live in a world where gender equality exists. As a result, some women turn out to be women “in the table” by means of internalized submission. I considered death as a final form of internalized oppression. In Sevim Burak’s works, in particular, death plays a very important role. Almost all the characters in her selected works die at the end of her stories; however, death does not come naturally for Burak’s women. It is mostly considered as a way of salvation for these women who are degraded, devalued, oppressed by the hands of male dominated institutions, assumed gender roles and silencing patriarchy. It was analyzed that some of these women commit suicide

because they cannot endure life anymore, some of them dream of the death of their oppressors. The others experience death as a way of punishment which comes directly from the oppressor or the God. On the other hand, in Ursula K. Le Guin's selected works, death may come naturally as a result of difficult life conditions or illness. Unlike the women in Burak's stories, death is not assumed to be a way of salvation or a happy ending. In *The Wild Girls*, for example, a woman kills her oppressor and she is killed as a result. Sevim Burak's women, on the other hand, just dream of killing their oppressor but they commit suicide instead, which is, to me, a form of internalized oppression.

As a conclusion, Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak are two writers who have lots of differences; pursuing very different lives, using different genres, having different writing styles. However, the themes they include in their works show similarities in terms of women issues. This shows that despite the differences, their womanhood has made them aware of the problems that women experience in their lives. Their writing can be viewed as a struggle to make all these kinds stereotyping and oppressions visible. The works and/or the authors are not guardians of these; instead, by making them visible, they criticize all these stereotyped representations and women oppression. While dealing with the issues, Ursula K. Le Guin's works are more straight, direct; they resemble feminist articles which point out the problems to the readers. On the other hand, Sevim Burak's works are more indirect, the issues are not indicated but implied; they are buried under the women characters' experiences. All things considered, in a male-dominated world both Ursula K. Le Guin and Sevim Burak can be considered as the fighters, warriors whose swords are their words, their words only.



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## APPENDIX-1

zaman içinde her şeyin kendisini anlattığı – sadece kendisini anımsattığı bir tümce arıyordu – Bu KADAR İÇKİYE DAYANAN BEN – DİYORDU – Adamı arkasından iterek – SEN İNANMAZSIN – HİÇ İNANMAZSIN – HİÇ UMUT KALMADIĞINI GÖRÜRSEM – SANA ANLATACAĞIMI ANLATIRIM – SÖYLEYECEĞİMİ SÖYLERİM – GENE İNANMAZSAN – O ZAMAN GÜN AĞARIRKEN YOLA ÇIKARIZ – İÇKİLER YANIMDA – HAZIRLANMIŞ GIYINMIŞ OLURUM BOYUMDA BİR TABUTUN İÇİNDE SAKLANIRIM – MEZARLIĞA DA UĞRARIZ – ARABAYLA GİDERİZ – NE ONLAR BENİ TANIYABİLİRLER NE DE BEN ONLARI – (Düşüncelerinin burasına gelince biraz kuşkulu) – PEK KÖTÜ BİR GERÇEK BU – AMA GİTMEK ZORUNDAYIZ – Dedi yüksek sesle – GİTMEK GEREK – Dedi bir kez daha... Adamı itti. Adam durdu yürümüyordu. Kadın şimdi mi geçiyor bu an, yoksa eskiden mi yaşadım? diye düşündü. İnatla başını salladı adam, gitmemek için direndi. Birden kadının beline sarıldı ve bıraktı. Dalgalana dalgalana kendi başına yürüdü, kulübün kapısı önüne dek gidebildi, bir iki adım daha attı, ölmüştü...

O ZAMAN KADIN  
İNCE  
UZUN  
KESKİN  
DİŞLERİNİ  
GÖSTEREREK  
BAĞIRDI  
SENİN DE CANIN CEHENNEME DÖKÜZ ARKADAŞININ  
DA... BANA VOTKALARIMI BIRAK...

Üç gün dolaştı  
Üç gün sonra Kent'le kadın karşılaştılar  
Kent kadını anımsamadı bile  
Ne tuhaf değil mi?  
Hep yattığı yerde sigara içiyordu  
Yana yatmıştı  
Ana caddeye bakıyordu

basının üstünde kalkışlarda ve süratte yanıp sönen  
Lüfen kemerlerinizi bağlayınız

ON TAKE - OF AND LANDING

SAFETY ATTITUDE

EXITS

direksiyonla sürücünün arasında alışılmamış bir uzaklık vardı – arabanın ölçülerine göre sakallı sürücü Mercury Cougar'ın ön tarafında – orta bölümünde – ama biraz yandı –

IN FRONT OF

IN THE MIDDLE

AT SIDE

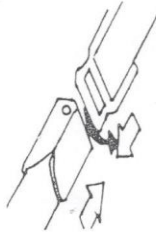
aradaki uzaklıktan ötürü ufak tefek cılız bir çocuk gibi duruyordu – hiç değilse Cougar'ın sürücüsü arabanın büyüklüğü yüzünden cüce görünmeye mahkûmdu – Alfa'nın sürücüsü "amma da rezale! ha," diyerek Cougar'ın kapısını kapatırken serçe: "direksiyon da altın kaplama mı" diye sordu – "sadece ortası" dedi Cougar kontağı çevirdi

FASTEN SEAT BELT

PALYAÇO RÜŞEN  
68

"ben Top Pop'a gidiyorum" dedi

Mercury Cougar kahraman pozuyla başını caddeye çevirdi ve hızla ilerli fırladı. Nis Pastahanesi'nde oturanlar 74 Cougar'ın kalkışını izlediler hayranlıkla – Alfa'nın sürücüsü "sonra Fenerbahçe'ye gel" diye bağırdu – fakat sözleri Cougar'ın 301 beygir gücünün gürültüsünde kaybolup gitti –



Polis Atlantik Sineması'nın kapısından bir tizi arabanın yanından geçerek olay yerine baka baka ilerledi. Giysileri yeni, düğmeleri parlalmış, belinde tabanca, yanında sallanan copu kalıplı kıyafeti bir polisii bu. Yüzüne doğru hafifçe yan yatmış şapkasının altında gülmüser gibi yuvarlak yanakları, beylik pos bıyıklarıyla insalcıl bir tıptı. Fakat üniforması yüzünden üstün-

PALYAÇO RÜŞEN  
69

wishing to be discourteous to his hosts, he gave in. He asked his students to write a paper on any problem in physics that interested them, and told them that he would give them all the highest mark, so that the bureaucrats would have something to write on their forms and lists. To his surprise a good many students came to him to complain. They wanted him to set the problems, to ask the right questions; they did not want to think about questions, but to write down the answers they had learned. And some of them objected strongly to his giving everyone the same mark. How could the diligent students be distinguished from the dull ones? What was the good in working hard? If no competitive distinctions were to be made, one might as well do nothing.

"Well, of course," Shevek said, troubled. "If you do not want to do the work, you should not do it."

They went away unappeased, but polite. They were pleasant boys, with frank and civil manners. Shevek's readings in Urrasti history led him to decide that they were, in fact, though the word was seldom used these days, aristocrats. In feudal times the aristocracy had sent their sons to university, conferring superiority on the institution. Nowadays it was the other way round: the university conferred superiority on the man. They told Shevek with pride that the competition for scholarships to Ieu Eun was stiffer every year, proving the essential democracy of the institution. He said, "You put another lock on the door and call it democracy." He liked his polite, intelligent students, but he felt no great warmth towards any of them. They were planning careers as academic or industrial scientists, and what they learned from him was to them a means to that end, success in their careers. They either had, or denied the importance of, anything else he might have offered them.

He found himself, therefore, with no duties at all be-